

ANTRIM AND
NEWTOWNABBEY

Labour Market Partnership
Working Together



ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP

Annual Report

April 2024 – June 2025

Antrim and
Newtownabbey
Labour Market
Partnership are
here to support your
employment journey



Employment
Academies



Careers Fairs



Job Fairs



Promoting
Accessible
Employment



Employment
Support
Programmes



Upskilling



School and
Industry
Engagement



Apprenticeships



Contents Page

Chairperson Foreword	Page 3 - 4
Antrim and Newtownabbey Labour Market Partnership (LMP)	Page 5 - 8
Membership	Page 9 - 12
Action Plan 2024/25 Delivery	Page 13 – 48
Financial Statement	Page 49



Chairperson Foreword



**Councillor Neil Kelly
Mayor of Antrim and
Newtownabbey
2024-25**

It has been a privilege as the former Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey to have served as the Chair of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Labour Market Partnership (LMP). I am delighted to present the Annual Report for the financial year 2024/25, which details the successes and achievements of the LMP Action Plan.

On behalf of the Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP I would like to express our thanks to the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department of Education (DE) providing funding for LMP initiatives during 2024/25 and recognising the impact that Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP continues to have on the Borough's residents and businesses.

I wish to also extend my thanks and gratitude to the members of the Partnership. Each member brings local knowledge and expertise to the table which enable the successful and positive collaboration which drives the Partnership forward.

As a Partnership, we continue to support residents at every stage of their employment journey through our Pathway Programme and Employment Academies, and those looking to reskill or learn new skills to elevate their employability into better roles through our Upskilling Fund and Academies. As of September 2025, the LMP has engaged with 122 participants, supporting them in gaining qualifications and securing new or improved employment opportunities.

We continue to work with schools and young people at risk of leaving education without a pathway to training or employment. Our Transport and Logistics Masterclass, part of the Inspo programme and part funded by Council, welcomed 17 schools, including 3 SEN schools and 316 pupils. Once again, key transport and logistics businesses in the Borough have collaborated with us to deliver the event and display the wide range of careers in the sector.

Our Jobs, Career and Apprenticeships Fairs, alongside our smaller Job Fairs and Employability events, attracted over 1343 residents, and have become highly anticipated events in the LMP Calendar. We are thankful to the employers and support organisations who exhibited at these events, once again showing the power of partnership at a local level.

We were delighted this year to receive additional funding from the Department for Education, who recognised the growing pressures in the childcare sector. The LMP established an entry-level Childminding Academy and upskilling for established childminders, offering residents a flexible new career. The award of funding is another example of the collaboration our Partnership continues to foster.

Of course, the delivery of these initiatives would not be possible without acknowledging our delivery partners, who work closely on the ground with participants to support them through their journey towards employment.

It has been a pleasure to be involved with the continuing work of the Labour Market Partnership. I am delighted that the Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP has received funding for the financial year 2025/26 to further support residents and businesses in the Borough. I look forward to seeing the achievements and impact of the LMP this year.

ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY LMP

Introduction

Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) are a regional approach developed and funded by the Department for Communities (DfC). LMPs were established in each NI Council in 2021 to help improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multi-agency partnerships, achieving regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions and helping to connect employers with employees.

LMPs play a key collaborative and supporting role in the Northern Ireland Executives strategic objectives, including achievement of targets set in:

- Community Plan for the local area; and
- Programme for Government.

The relevant outcomes identified within the Programme for Government are:

- We have a more equal society.
- We have more people working in better jobs.
- We care for others and help those in need.

The DfC is the lead department for a number of indicators, through which progress on these outcomes is measured:

- Economic inactivity rates excluding students.
- Employment rate of 16-64 year old by deprivation quintile.
- % of people working part-time who would like to work more hours.
- % of population living in absolute and relative poverty.

The Department set high level Themes that LMP Action Plans must address:

- Economic Inactivity
- Unemployment
- Disability
- Skilled Labour

The LMP approach ensures employability delivery is reflective of local area needs and participant and employer needs in particular. The partnerships focus on improving labour market conditions and addressing issues with employers, training providers and community and voluntary organisations.

Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP

The first meeting of Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP took place on 24 November 2021, and the Partnership has continued to meet on a regular basis with meetings taking place at least 6 times per year. The LMP continues to develop strong partnerships with employers, training providers, and community and voluntary organisations to continually inform programme development and address local labour market needs.

Outcome Based Accountability

Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP use the DfC recommended Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) model in the development and measurement of the success of its Action Plans (APs).

OBA is a way of structuring planning to improve outcomes for whole populations and for improving services. The structure provided by OBA provides individuals, teams and groups of stakeholders with a common language and a framework for considering and planning actions, to improve outcomes at a population level or for beneficiaries/participants of programmes or projects.

The OBA approach focuses on outcomes that are desired and monitored, and evidences progress towards those desired outcomes. Key features of OBA include:

Population Accountability – this is about the well-being of whole populations (e.g. all people living in a local LMP area or all people living in Northern Ireland). This level of accountability is not the sole responsibility of any one agency or programme. It is about agencies across a number of sectors collaborating to improve outcomes. Outcomes are the conditions of wellbeing that are desired for a defined population.

At a population level, turning-the-curve is the main planning process within OBA which is structured under the following seven population accountability questions:

1. What are the quality of life conditions that we want for the children, adults and families that live in our community?
2. What would these conditions look like if we could see them?
3. How can we measure these conditions?
4. How are we doing on the most important of these measures?
5. Who are the partners that have a role to play in doing better?
6. What works to do better including no-cost and low-cost ideas?
7. What do we propose to do?

Performance Accountability – this is about the well-being of client populations who receive a service from an agency or service provider. Accountability for the success, or otherwise, of a programme, service or project rests with those who provide it. This looks at the actions we want to implement in order to effect change. In terms of the LMP these will be the projects and initiatives that have been agreed in the AP and delivered. Following the OBA methodology, prior to the commencement of each project and initiative, performance measures were established to enable progress to be tracked and reported under the following categories:

- How much did we do? (the quantity of effort, i.e. the number of beneficiaries of a project and the number of core activities carried out);
- How well did we do it? (the quality of effort, i.e. Timeliness of activities, attendance levels, satisfaction of beneficiaries, cost per unit, adherence to standards)
- Is anyone better off? (the impact on project beneficiaries. i.e. Behaviours change, attitudes shift, circumstances change, knowledge increases & skills improve).

Using these indicators and performance measure information, project information is reported quarterly to ensure the impact is measured and the right projects are being delivered to meet identified needs. This is completed alongside quarterly claims to help paint a picture of how the initiatives delivered have impacted the local area's labour market conditions.

Action Plan 2024/25 and Strategic Assessment 2024-27

The Partnership appointed a consultant to develop a three-year Strategic Assessment, individual yearly Action Plans, and to review the 2023/24 Action Plan. The review considered key findings, issues, statistics, strategic context and the plans relevant for delivery. The plan was updated to ensure the accuracy of statistics etc. and relevance for the 2024/25 period.

As part of the review, consultation was undertaken with the Partnership via surveys and dedicated workshop sessions, and a statistical audit, comprised of three elements:

- Strategic Document Review
- Labour Market Economic Profile
- Current Employability Support Review

These helped develop an Action Plan complementing current employability initiatives rather than duplicating provision in the Borough.

Following on from the 2023/24 Action Plan, the Economic Shock and Youth Unemployment themes were removed, and the Partnership agreed new themes to be established as local priorities:

- Economic Inactivity - People not in employment who have not been seeking employment within the last four weeks and/ or are unable to start work in the next two weeks;
- Unemployment - People who are without a job, currently available to work, and have been actively looking for work within the previous four weeks;
- Disability – People who report a physical or mental health condition(s) or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more where this reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities; and
- Skilled Labour Supply – DfE's 2021 Skills Barometer utilises the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Skills Classification.

The Action Plan remained consistent with the aims and objectives of the Borough's Community Plan and Economic Strategy. Similarly, the key actions reflected the findings from the preceding statistical and consultative process, namely that, while the Borough shows high levels of employment rates and low levels of Claimant Count rates, the Borough has seen relatively low growth levels of workplace employment compared to other Councils. The Borough has also been adversely impacted by the pandemic and experiences a broad range of economic inactivity differences within the Borough's wards. These labour market challenges constrain faster economic growth, impacting on overall economic development.

The updated Action Plan was submitted to DfC for approval on 9 February 2024 and a Letter of Offer was received on 28 August 2024 to the value of £395,966.53 for the delivery of the 2024/25 Action Plan. This was accepted by Council.











Due to the delay in receipt of this letter of offer, the delivery timeframe for projects was extended by DfC beyond the 24/25 financial year to 30 June 2025. Due to staff resources and operational factors, full delivery of the operational budget was not







possible within this timeframe. DfC therefore allowed £150,359.21 of the allocation to be delivered through to October 2025 and final outcomes recorded by December 2025.

Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP Membership 2024-2025

<p>The Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Cllr Neil Kelly LMP Chair Alliance Party</p>		
<p>Ken Nelson LMP Vice Chair LED COM</p>		
<p>Mark Buick DfC - JBO Newtownabbey (Member until January 2025)</p>		
<p>Sharon Chambers DFC – JBO Newtownabbey (Member from May 2025)</p>		
<p>Cllr Robert Foster Ulster Unionist Party</p>		
<p>Emma Garrett Mallusk Enterprise Park</p>		

<p>Cllr Michael Goodman Sinn Féin (Member from January 2025)</p>		
<p>Deirdre Hasson Education Authority</p>		
<p>Cheryl Lane</p>		<p>NORTHERN Regional College</p>
<p>Cllr Roisin Lynch SDLP</p>		
<p>Jenny McAuley</p>		 <p>QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST</p> <p>ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INNOVATION CENTRE</p>

Jennifer McWilliams		
Cllr Lucille O'Hagan Sinn Fein		
Susan O'Kane Invest Northern Ireland		
Alderman Stephen Ross Democratic Unionist Party		
Lindsay Taylor Northern Health Trust		

<p>Andrea Thompson DfC – JBO Antrim (Member until November 2024)</p>		
<p>Cllr Billy Webb Alliance Party</p>		
<p>Anna Wylie NI Careers Service</p>		












Action Plan 2024/25 Delivery

The following provides information on delivery against the Strategic Priorities as determined by DfC and the associated targets within the Action Plan.

This report refers to the delivery of projects from the 2024/2025 Action Plan but it must be noted that with the agreement of the Department, delivery of some projects has been extended through to 31 October 2025 therefore outputs will be lower than expected and will continue to be measured to December 2025.

Strategic Priority 1

- **To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local LMP for the area**

Brief Description	<p>Establishment of the LMP with an established membership and respective sub-groups that meet regularly.</p> <p>Support the development of the LMP Action Plan for 2025-2026.</p> <p>Evaluate the 2024-25 Action Plan including progress and outputs.</p>
Cost	£6,268.95
Start & End Date	1/04/24- 31/12/25
Partners who are currently involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political Parties - DfE, NI Careers Service - DfC - Northern Regional College - Education Authority - Local Enterprise Agencies - Northern Health and Social Care Trust - Jobs and Benefits Offices Antrim and Newtownabbey - Invest NI - Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre (AMIC) - Post Primary Schools <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>

	<p>The LMP continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis and hold sub-groups with post-primary schools in the Borough.</p> <p>Work continues to establish a Business Sub-Group to engage with local ANBC businesses such as in logistics, health and social care, manufacturing sectors etc.</p> <p>The LMP is currently considering its membership and could involve further partners in future on the Board or on dedicated sub-groups or task and finish groups e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Representatives • Youth Representatives • Disability Representatives
What is happening to improve performance?	<p>The LMP continues to offer alternative afternoon and evening meetings and remote options to make meetings more accessible for Members of the Partnership.</p> <p>Further engagement pieces are being planned by the secretariat to highlight more of the programmes, such as scheduled employment academies and their work 'on the ground' to members.</p> <p>While the LMP did not set up a Business Sub-Group this year, the secretariat continues to engage with local businesses to gain insight into current and future industry skills, employment requirements and shortages to allow the LMP to develop suitable targeted interventions.</p>

Table of Key Outcomes

How much did we do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 LMP Meetings held. • 1 'refresh' exercise of the LMP Strategic Assessment undertaken. • 1 LMP Action Plan developed to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP. • 1 School Sub-Group meeting held. • 1 Evaluation currently being drafted to assess the success of the LMP Action Plan.
How well did we do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% LMP member attendance rate • 73% LMP sub-group member attendance rate • 100% of the 9 LMP Members feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Evaluation. • 100% of the 9 LMP Members feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Action Plan*

Is anyone better off?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of the 9 LMP members feel they are contributing to the delivery of the LMP* • 100% of the 9 LMP members feel that the LMP is making a positive difference* • 100% of the 2 Sub Group members reported increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues** • 100% of the 9 LMP members reported increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues*
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***Only 9 out of 16 members completed the survey.**

****Only 2 out of 15 members completed the survey.**

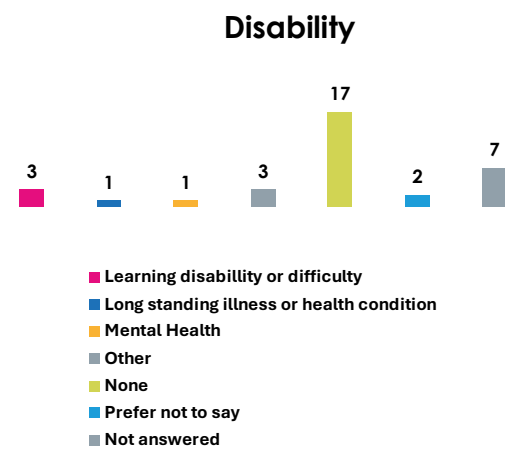
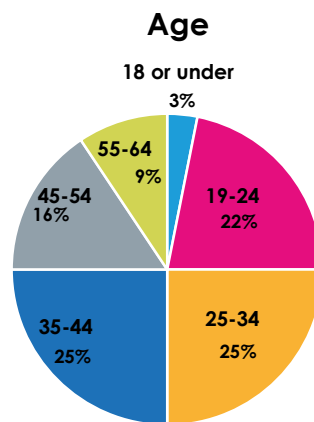
Strategic Priority 2

- To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally through delivery of a support pathway.

Brief Description	To support delivery of DfC's Employability NI (ENI) initiative and promote the work and initiatives of ENI and other relevant government departments by developing programmes of support for young unemployed people and claimants to move closer to the labour market
Cost	£204,264.58
Start & End Date	1/04/24 - 31/12/25
Project update	<p>The following initiatives have been delivered under SP2 of the 2024/25 Action Plan:</p> <p><u>Pathway Programme</u></p> <p>The Pathway Programme was targeted at 16-24 year olds to support them towards training or employment, providing bespoke support with different levels of support to tailor to the participant's need. Participants were given support with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barrier removal• CV writing• Interview preparation• 1-to-1 mentoring• Career specific support• Aftercare <p>Participants on the programme often experienced personal and educational challenges that lead to them becoming economically inactive.</p> <p>One Pathway Programme participant left education at 14 years old with no qualifications, and joined the programme to gain qualifications, confidence and to secure employment. He was referred to AN LMP's Warehousing Academy and later undertook Forklift training, gaining valuable skills in Manual Handling and control of Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). He completed the academy and earned his forklift licence and later found employment with a logistics company based in the Borough.</p> <p>His achievements were recognised through the Workforce Training Services Awards.</p>



Who took part in the Pathway Programme?*

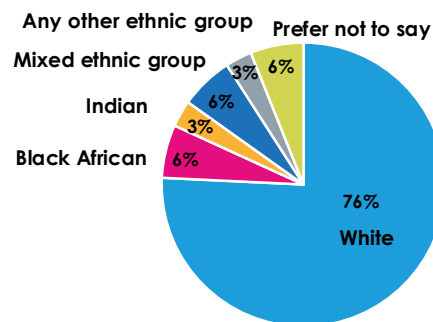


Gender

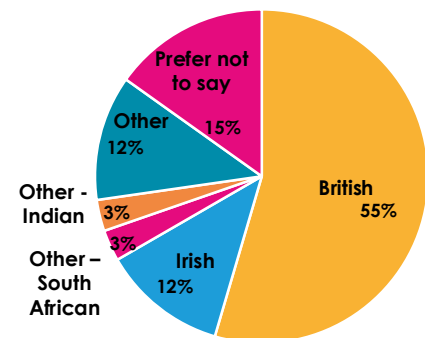
82% male

18% female

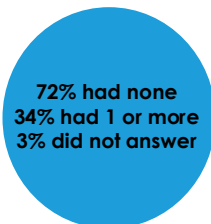
Ethnic Group



Nationality/Citizenship



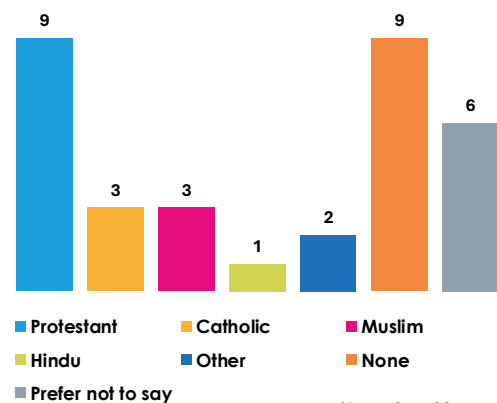
Dependents



Sexual Orientation



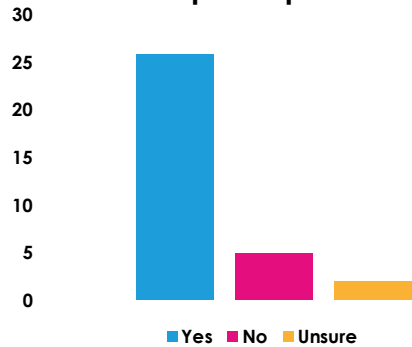
Religion/Denomination/Body



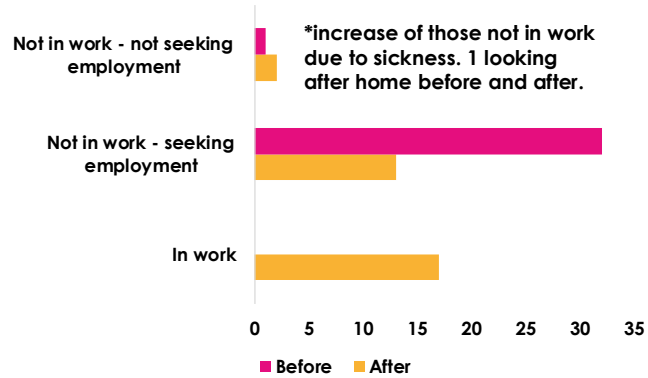
*Based on 33 responses

Before vs. After the Pathway Programme*

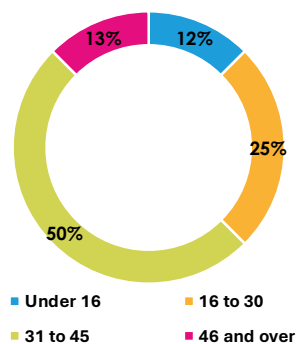
Is this the first LMP project you have participated in?



Employment Status Before and After Participating



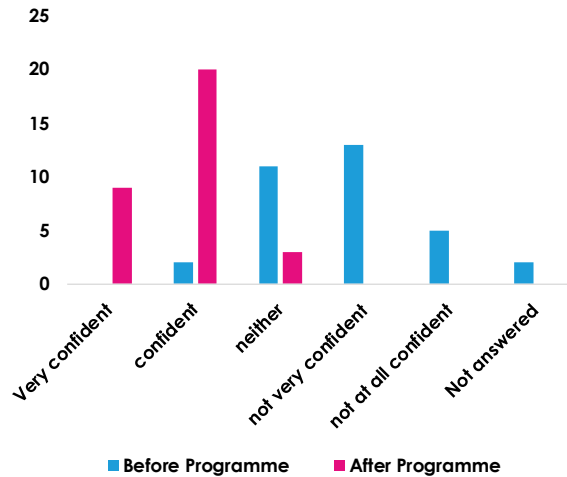
Hours Per Week After Finding Work



*Based on 32 responses

Before vs. After the Pathway Programme*

Confidence Before vs. After Pathway



Those who said they were **not very** or **at all confident** said this was because of low confidence, no qualifications and training, and language barriers

Those who said they were **confident** or **very confident** said this was because they were able to secure work, improved confidence and gained new skills, training, and qualifications, and because they felt more able to apply for jobs

81%

Felt they would not have secured employment, increased wages or skills if they had not taken part on the Pathway Programme.

The Impact of Pathway

Improved confidence

Would have still been job searching or unemployed

Would have no help to look for work

Improved mental health

Improved communication and employability

Would not have relevant qualifications

Would still be on benefits

*Based on 32 responses

Inspo Programme

With its name short for 'inspiration', the programme aimed to inspire school age residents to want to achieve more and prevent or minimize those at risk of leaving education with no destination or becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Careers and Apprenticeship Fair 2025

Following the success of last year's Careers Fair, the LMP once again hosted a Careers and Apprenticeships Fair at the Theatre at the Mill in February 2024.



The atmosphere was electric as over 978 young people from the Antrim and Newtownabbey area explored a diverse range of career and training opportunities, proving to be even more popular than its inaugural year.



50 employers, universities, training providers and support organisations brought valuable insights into the various career pathways and skills needed to enter their sector. Representatives included industries such as manufacturing, health and social care, hospitality and logistics, and more. They shared valuable advice to help young people navigate through their career journeys.

Not only did attendees interact directly with representatives from different sectors and gain first-hand knowledge of educational and apprenticeship opportunities but they also had the chance to 'have a go' at certain jobs.



These interactive sessions allowed for attendees to take part in activities such as hairdressing, welding, paving and landscaping.



Feedback from Careers and Apprenticeships Fair attendees was extremely positive, some were quoted as saying:

"Good event and well organised"

"Great to see local businesses at the event to raise awareness amongst pupils"

"Fabulous event"

"Extremely professional and informative and I would highly recommend to others"

Employers and support organisations also gave positive feedback:

"Was a very successful event and a lot of interest shown by the attendees..."

"The event was truly brilliant and we will definitely be back next year – if you'll have us!"

"Congratulations again on organising such a successful event – it was packed from start to finish, with a real buzz throughout the evening in all areas!!"

"It was really well attended and organised. We were delighted to be there and had so many great conversations."

"Thank you again for the invite – it's been my best event so far!"

Transport and Logistics Industry Masterclass

The Transport and Logistics Industry Masterclass has become a highly anticipated event for both primary and post-primary schools in Antrim and Newtownabbey. Now into its third year, the LMP once again partnered with Council, Young Enterprise, and local businesses to deliver a three-day industry introduction event for schools across the Borough.



**Transport & Logistics
Industry Masterclass**





The event introduced over 316 pupils to the range of career paths and opportunities within the transport and logistics industry.

Pupils heard first hand from industry representatives about their business and career journey, the skills required to work in the industry and the wealth of opportunities in the future. They also took part in a series of interactive workshops, getting a taste of what it is like to work in warehousing, logistics and driving, and learning about the vehicles out on the road.



Inspo Programme Support

Transport was provided to enable schools to attend employability and skills related events, taster days and industry visits including:

- School Summit NI, Crumlin Integrated College
- Trip to Transport Training Services, Thornfield House Special School
- Northern Regional College, Jordanstown School
- AMIC, Thornfield House Special School
- UCAS Exhibition, Parkhall Integrated College
- UCAS Exhibition, Ballyclare High School



Officers also attended Mock Interview Days and Careers Talks at Ballyclare High School to support pupils in developing their employability skills and discussing their potential career paths.



Employability Academies

Sector-based work academy programmes have been delivered for a number of years in a variety of sectors including the HGV, Retail, Construction, Warehouse and Security sectors creating a skilled workforce for local business.

They are designed in partnership with industry to fill entry level positions with residents of the Borough; typically those not currently in the labour market, who may not have the skillset, confidence or ability to directly apply for vacancies.

Academies help prepare participants to apply for jobs in a specific area of work and are designed to help meet immediate and future recruitment needs as well as to recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow local business.

An important feature is that they offer a flexible approach and can be adapted to meet the needs of local businesses.

Academies tend to last 1 week but can be extended depending on the skills required. They have four main components:

- an introduction to the sector/employer
- pre-employment training – skills provided are matched to business/sector need
- employability skills training including CV and interview preparation
- a guaranteed job interview.

A number of Employability Academies have been delivered throughout the delivery of the 2024/25 Action Plan, including:

- 2 x SIA Academies
- 1 x Health and Social Care Academy
- 2 x Warehouse Academies with optional forklift training
- 1 x Customer Services Academy
- 1 x Transport and Logistics Academy

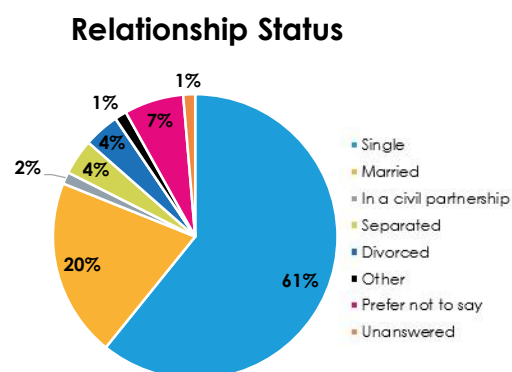
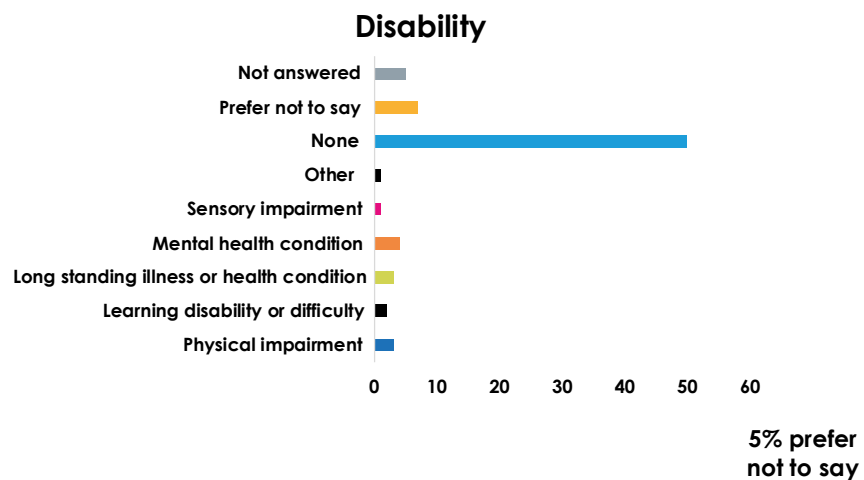
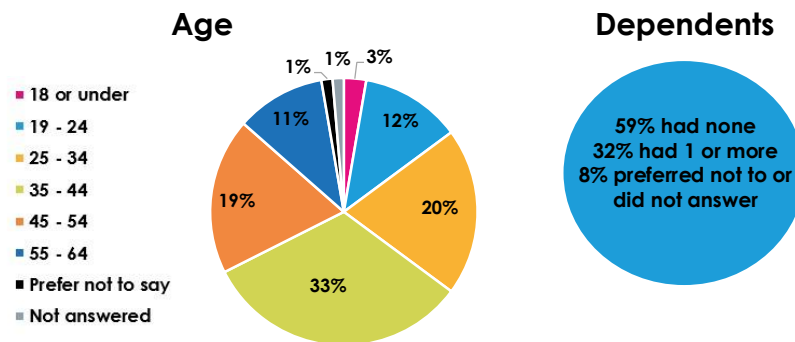
Residents also received a small amount of funding to participate on a Leisure Academy.



41 out of 64 participants who finished the Employment Academies have since gained new employment. 59 participants have gained qualifications in Some of the qualifications earned have included Customer Service, Class 1 and Security licenses, and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).

Delivery agents are continuing to support participants and aim to assist them into employment for up to 6 months after completing each academy. Final outputs, including job sustainment, are expected at the end of December 2025.

Who took part in the Employment Academies?*



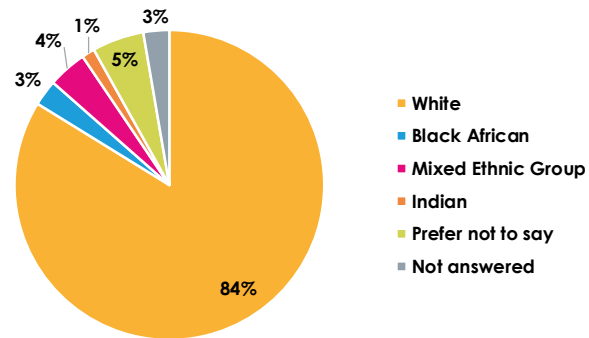
Sexual Orientation

73% were attracted to a different sex
10% were attracted to the same sex or answered other
18% preferred not to say or did not answer

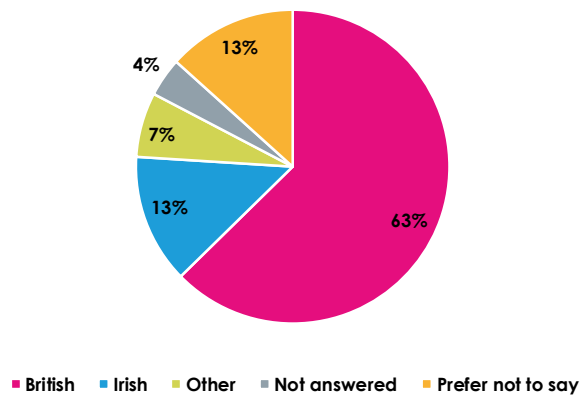
*Based on 74 responses

Who took part in the Employment Academies?*

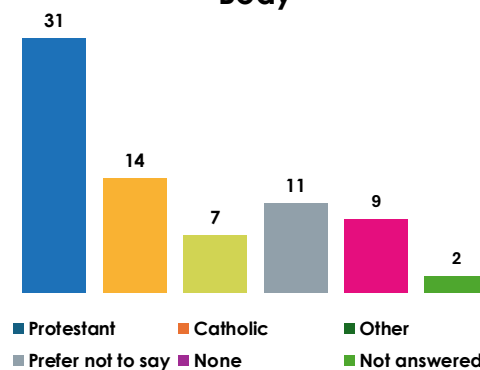
Ethnic Group



Nationality / Citizenship



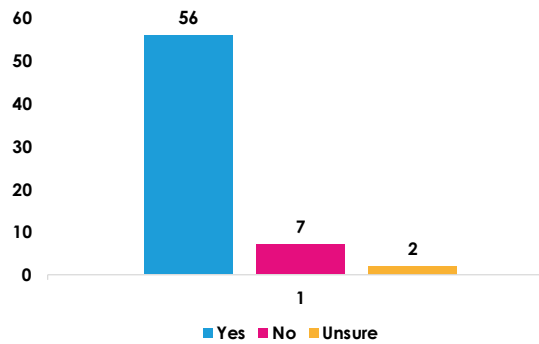
Religion / Denomination / Body



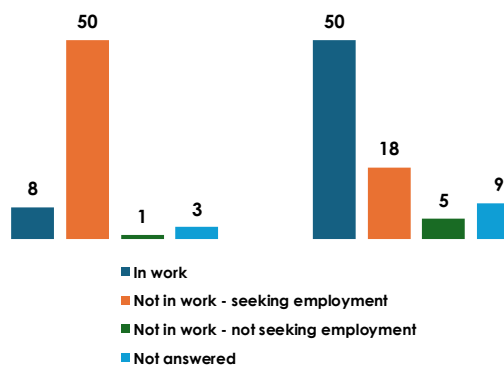
*Based on 74 responses

Before vs. After the Employment Academies

Is this the first LMP project you have taken part in?



Employment Status Before and After Participating



Confidence before and after taking part in the academy



Before vs. After the Employment Academies

Confidence Before vs. After

Those who said they were **neither or not very confident** said this was because of their age and health, changes in the workforce, gaps in employment, and low confidence.

Those who said they were **confident or very confident** said this was because they earned new skills and qualifications, had gained greater confidence, had good employability support, and had good support from training providers.

Felt they would not have secured employment, increased wages or skills if they had not taken part on the Employment Academies.

85%

The Impact of the Employment Academies

More awareness of
job opportunities

Improved
confidence

New
qualifications
and skills

Would not have
been able to fund
training myself

Support in
applying for jobs

Improved
communication
and employability

Can finally do
something I
enjoy

Childminding Academy

The LMP received funding from the Department of Education (DE) to develop a Childminding Academy aimed at people not currently working to encourage new childminders into the sector. Antrim and Newtownabbey were able to fund 12 residents to become childminders, while the regional initiative trained 146 new childminders overall, adding support to this essential service.

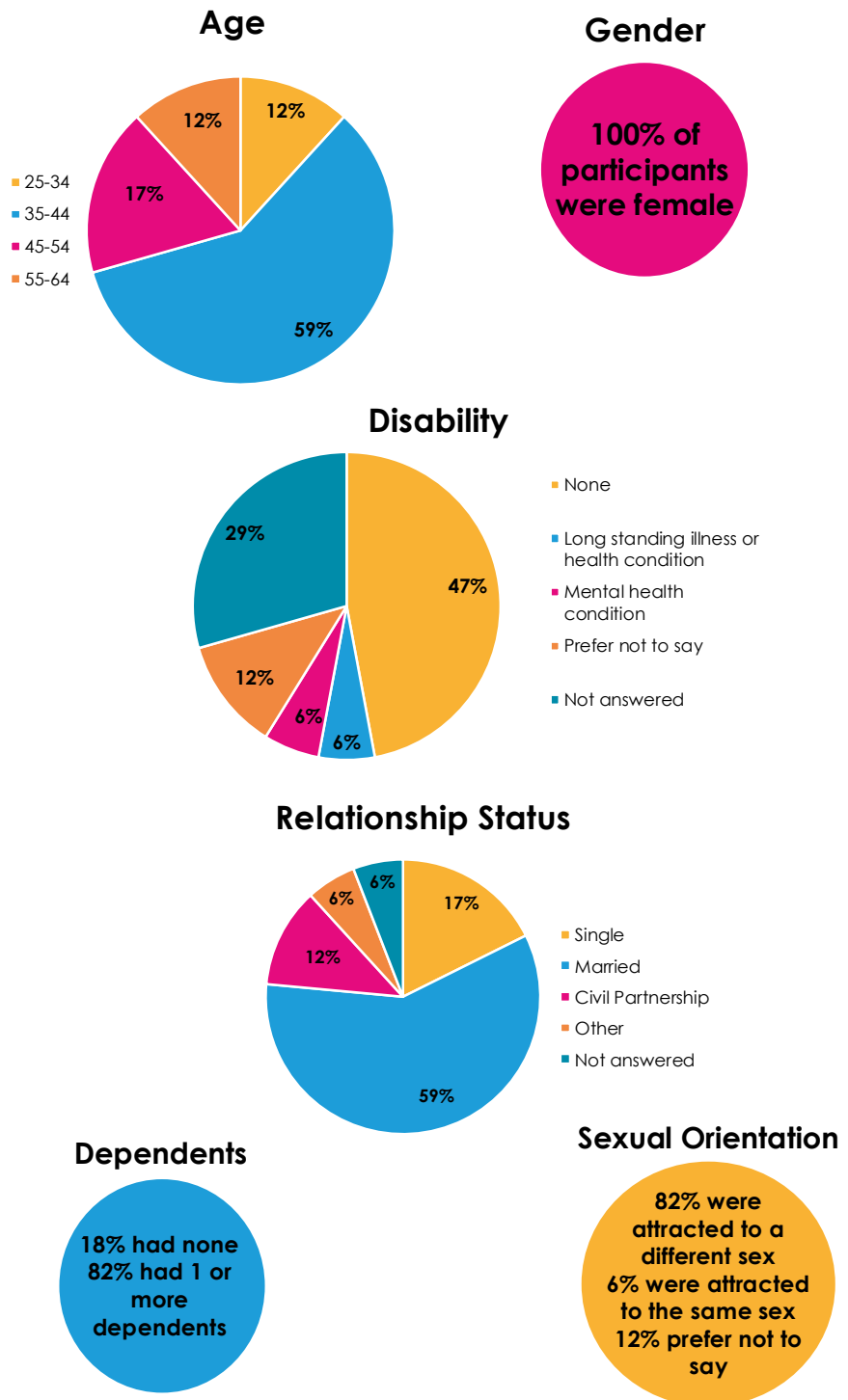
One participant described her experience and the support she received through the Childminding Academy as "incredible":

"I tried getting back to the field of childcare when my first born was younger and spent a year as a one-to-one support nursery assistant and started studying ... Desperate to get back into work, I looked at jobs and found several but daycare costs are insanely high and it just wasn't affordable. I questioned why on earth would I pay to have my children minded when I could stay at home with them and open our home to children to mind.

The initial costs associated with childminding including training and adaptations to the home...made that goal seem unreachable. The academy has made that possible, a reality. Without the academy I would be unable to get set up and ready to start my career working with children and the likelihood is I would have been forced to take up a job I didn't want and pay fees I would be struggling to manage...

The Academy is a lifeline for any parent who wants to work from home and engage with their children and with others. The training offered has been delivered well and efficiently, staff have been amazingly helpful and supportive...I think it's an incredible step to help people into work, I appreciate it so much. All I can really say is thank you for the support and the opportunity. You are changing lives for the better and giving people hope."

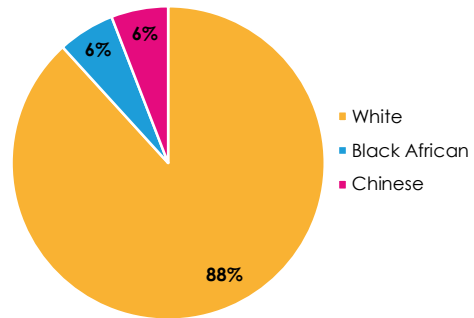
Who took part in the Childminding Academies?*



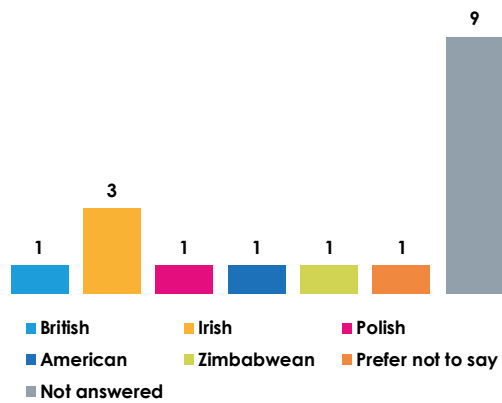
*Based on 20 responses

Who took part in the Childminding Academies?*

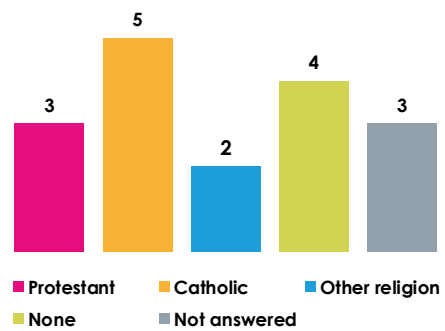
Ethnic Group



Nationality/Citizenship



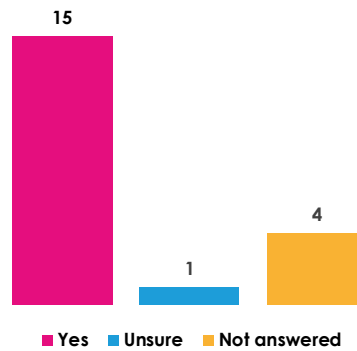
Religion/Denomination/Body



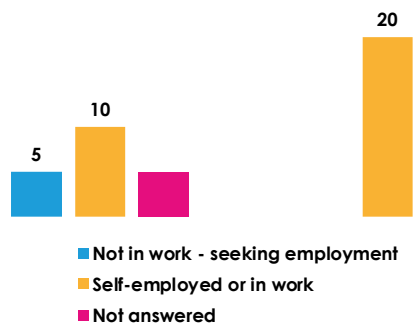
*Based on 20 responses

Before vs. After the Childminding Academies

Is this the first LMP project you
have taken part in?

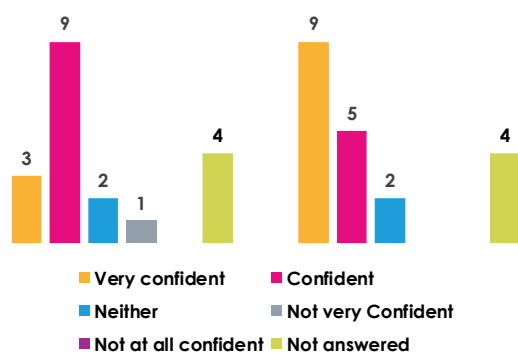


Employment Status Before and After Participating



3 self-employed were
able to further open
spaces to special
needs children and
increase their income

Confidence before and after taking part in the academy



Before vs. After the Childminding Academies

Confidence Before vs. After

Those who said they were **neither or not confident** said this was because of low confidence and self worth.

Those who said they were **confident or very confident** after the academy said they already had enquiries as to childminding services and praised the support they had during training.

Felt they would not have secured employment, increased wages or skills if they had not taken part on the Childminding Academies.

50%

The Impact of the Childminding Academies

New skills and
qualifications

Better work/life
balance

Increased
confidence

Improved
understanding of
the sector

Improved
understanding of
the sector

Better off financially

Upskilling Programmes

Upskilling programmes are designed to address pressing recruitment challenges faced by various sectors by equipping people with the practical industry knowledge and skills necessary to advance their careers.

Classroom Assistant Upskilling Programme



The programme enabled classroom assistants already working in a classroom setting to upskill to a Level 3 Diploma in Specialist Support for Teaching & Learning in Schools (SSTL), enabling them to access permanent employment opportunities.

To date, 22 participants have completed the Upskilling Academy and the Level 3 Qualification, and are working with the delivery agent to secure permanent employment. Final employment outputs for the programme will be reported by December 2025.

Employee Upskilling Programme

The programme funded training for businesses to upskill their employees into new roles and open up entry level positions. The following businesses availed of funding:

- Ashcroft Trailer Hire
- Vaughan Engineering Services Ltd
- Derek Johnston Electrical Services Ltd
- Montgomery Distribution Ltd
- Woodside Motorfreight Ltd

To date, 7 participants have moved into new roles with higher paid employment. Some businesses are currently finalising their training, with final outputs to be reported by October 2025.

OCN NI Level 3 Award in Working with Children and Young People with Special Needs

The LMP utilised DE funding to support upskilling established childminders with a Level 3 qualification. The qualification

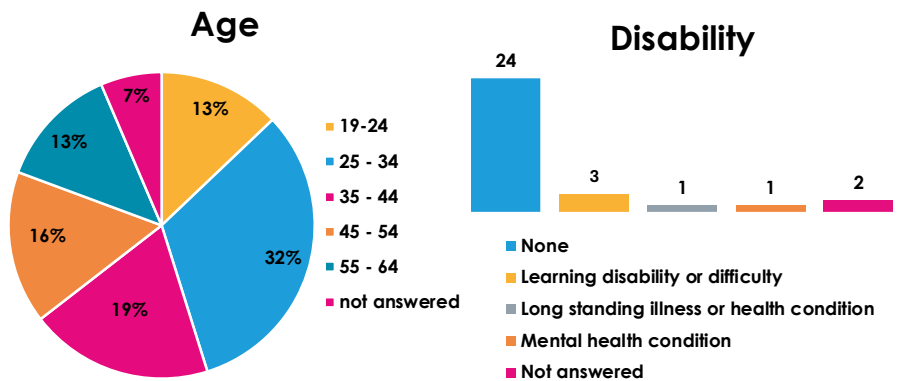
provides participants with the skills and knowledge required to enable them to work effectively with children and young people with special needs.

The training addressed the growing need for childminders in the Borough to open up more spaces to minding children with special needs.

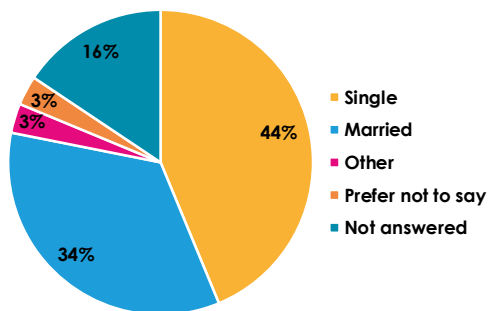
Support and Employability Programmes for People with Disabilities

Unfortunately, this project in the Action Plan could not take place this year as an Engagement and Outreach Officer was not recruited. The Deputy Director of Economic Development engaged with 10 Employers and 5 Disability Groups to highlight current supports and gaps in support in the area.

Who took part in the Upskilling Programmes?*



Relationship Status



94%
answered
their ethnic
group was
white

Dependents

32% had no dependents
49% had 1 or more dependents
19% did not answer or preferred not to say

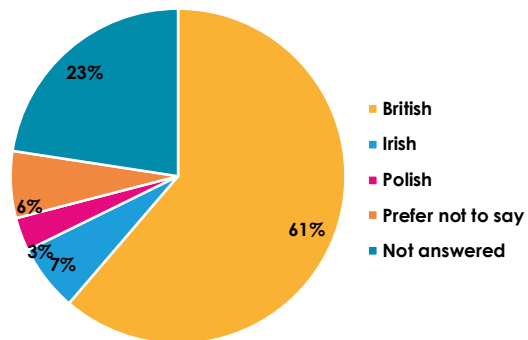
Sexual Orientation

77% were attracted to a different sex
6% were attracted to the same sex
16% preferred not to say or did not answer

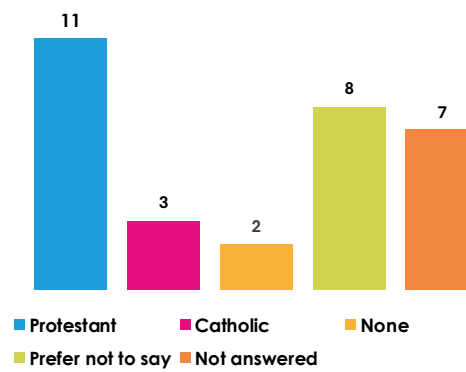
*Based on 31 responses

Who took part in the Upskilling Programmes?*

Nationality / Citizenship



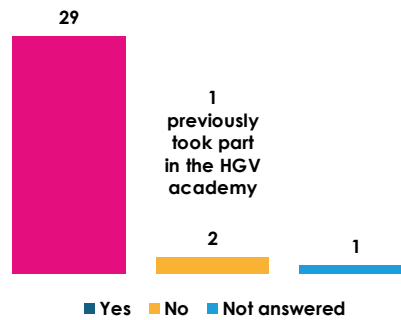
Religion / Denomination / Body



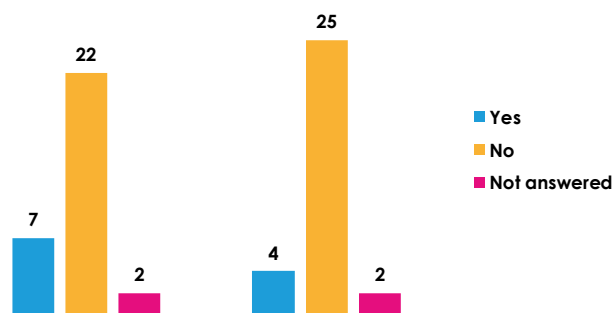
*Based on 31 responses

Before vs. After the Upskilling Programmes*

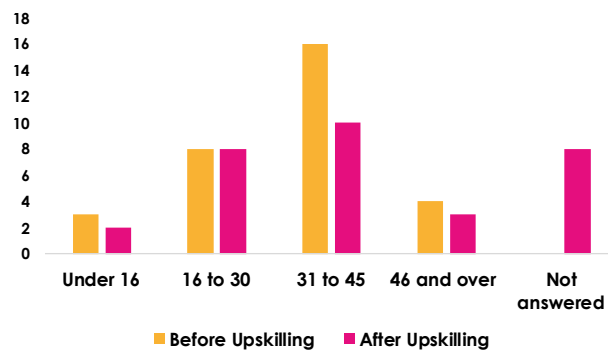
Is this the first LMP project you have taken part in?



Benefits Before and After the Upskilling Programme



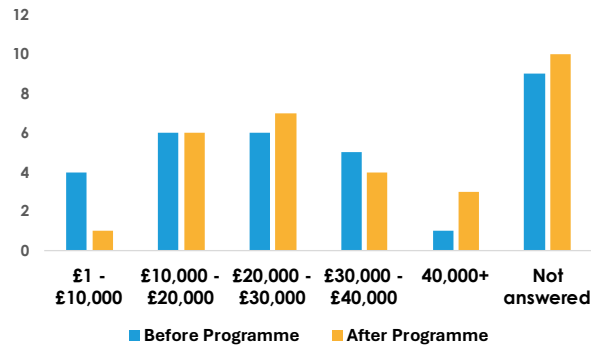
Hours Worked Per Week Before and After



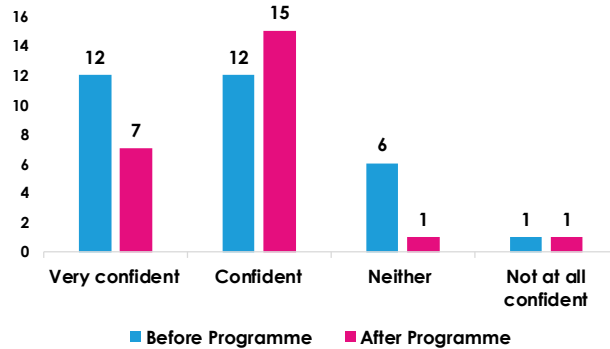
*Based on 24 responses, 9 still completing training

Before vs. After the Upskilling Programmes*

Salaries Before and After



Confidence Before and After Programme



71%

Felt they increased wages or skills if they had not taken part on the Upskilling Programmes.

The Impact of the Upskilling Programme

More job security
Improved confidence
Can provide support on a professional level
Can now access permanent employment
Can provide support on a professional level
Would have had to fund training myself
Improved skills and confidence
Can provide support on a professional level

*Based on 24 responses, 9 still completing training

What is happening to improve performance?

The secretariat continually analyse project delivery, monitoring information, discuss provisions with delivery agents, participants and the partnership and other key stakeholders to make improvements to these programmes.

	We are developing more opportunities to promote the work of the LMP through positive PR, including press releases, social media, videos and case studies.
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Table of Key Outcomes

Some key outcomes such as 'Into Employment' and '6 Monthly Employment' are still being measured post-programme completion. Recorded below are outcomes achieved to date as of October 2025.

Programmes such as the Classroom Assistant Academy, Employee Upskilling Fund, and Employment Academies were granted extensions to November and December 2025 to allow participants to complete training and gain qualifications.

How much did we do?	<p>Pathway Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33 participants enrolled on the Pathway Programme <p>Inspo Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1341 attendees at Inspo Programme events 13 Post Primary Schools engaged in Inspo Programme 21 Employers engaged in Inspo Programme <p>Employment Academies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77 participants enrolled on the project <p>Upskilling Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 participants enrolled in the Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy 27 enrolled in the Employee Upskilling Fund <p>DE Funded Childminding Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 participants enrolled <p>DE Funded Childminder Upskilling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 participants enrolled
How well did we do it?	<p>Pathway Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 of 33 (96%) participants who enrolled completed the project 29 of 32 (91%) participants reported satisfaction with the project 32 participants received barrier removal support <p>Inspo Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 247 out of 293 attendees (84%) who returned surveys were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Careers Fair, Transport and Logistics, and Inspo Funded Transport events 9 out of 9 employers who returned surveys (100%) reported satisfaction with the Careers and Apprenticeship Fair event

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 out of 8 (75%) participants who returned surveys reported satisfaction with the project (NRC Taster Day)* <p>*8 of 17 participants returned surveys.</p> <p>Employment Academies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 of 77 participants enrolled completed the project • 64 out of 77 participants surveyed who completed reported satisfaction with the LMP project.* <p>*Testing for 20 participants has yet to commence and will conclude by December 2025.</p> <p>Upskilling Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 participants enrolled completed the Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy, with 1 due to complete in November. • 22 of the participants who completed the Academy reported satisfaction with the project • 12 participants completed upskilling training in the Employee Upskilling Fund* • 12 of 12 participants who completed reported satisfaction with the Employee Upskilling Fund <p>*9 participants are still completing their Upskilling Training.</p> <p>DE Funded Childminding Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 participants completed the programme • 11 participants were satisfied with the project <p>DE Funded Childminder Upskilling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 participants completed the programme with 2 to complete by December 2025 • 6 participants reported satisfaction with the project
Is anyone better off?	<p>Pathway Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 out of 32 participants (78%) attended a job interview as a result of participation on the project • 18 out of 32 participants (51%) gained new employment* • 29 out of 32 (91%) participants reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the project <p>*Please note that 1 participant gained employment through the Pathway Programme, while 17 participants enrolled through the Employment Academies and gained employment through these programmes.</p> <p>Inspo Programme</p>

- 243 of 293 (83%) attendees who returned surveys report better awareness of local careers and routes to employment
- 10 Post-Primary schools report better awareness of local careers options and pathways
- 8 employers offered work placement opportunities through the Careers and Apprenticeship Fair

Employment Academies

- 50 of 70 participants (71%) have gained new employment
- 27 of 50 (54%) participants are still in employment after 6 months*
- 68 of 70 (97%) participants gained a qualification as a result of participation on the academies
- 64 of 70 (91%) participants reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the academies*

*participants who have recently entered employment and have not reached 6 months have not been included in this performance measure

Upskilling Programmes*

- 10 of 34 (29%) participants moved into higher paid employment
- 7 of 10 participants (70%) still in employment after 6 months
- 34 of 34 participants (100%) gained a qualification after completing the project

*9 participants are still completing their Upskilling Training and testing continues for participants who are awaiting progression or looking for higher paid employment.

DE Funded Childminding Academy

- 11 completers gained a qualification as a result of participation on the academy
- 10 of 11 completers (91%) moved into self-employment*
- 4 of 10 participants (40%) still in employment after 6 months**

*The remaining participants are undergoing the registration process to become childminders

**The other 6 participants are newly employed, and have not reached 6 months in employment.

DE Funded Childminder Upskilling

- 6 participants gained a qualification as a result of participation on the academy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 participants moved into higher paid employment* • 3 additional spaces open to SEN children* <p>*Testing for these employment measures will continue to December 2025.</p>
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Strategic Priority 3

- **To support delivery of Employability NI**

Brief Description	To support delivery of Employability NI and promote the work and initiatives of ENI and other relevant government departments.
Cost	£21,104.16
Start & End Date	1/04/24 – 30/06/25
Project update	<p>The LMP delivered a number of Job Fairs and attended several employability events in partnership with the local Jobs and Benefits Offices and DfC Employability Branch.</p> <p>The LMP, in alignment with National Apprenticeship Week 2025, created a PR campaign around the Careers and Apprenticeship Fair in February, as well as highlighting apprentices within the Council on social media.</p> <p>An Engagement and Outreach Officer role which was included within the Action Plan unfortunately did not progress this year due to organisation restructuring. Should there be any delays in recruiting an officer this year, the secretariat will procure a consultancy piece to evaluate disability support in the area.</p> <p>The LMP webpage on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council website continues to be updated with the latest LMP initiatives and other relevant projects and programmes.</p> <p>https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/jobs/get-into-work/</p>
What is happening to improve performance?	The LMP continues to promote and raise awareness of regional programmes and its initiatives as well as employment and skills opportunities and events through different channels and events.

Table of Key Outcomes

How much did we do?

1 large job and apprenticeships fair took place at the Valley Leisure Centre on the 25 October in cooperation with DfC Employability Branch. The job fair had 84 exhibitors and 485 attendees.



Antrim and Newtownabbey Jobs and Apprenticeships Fair

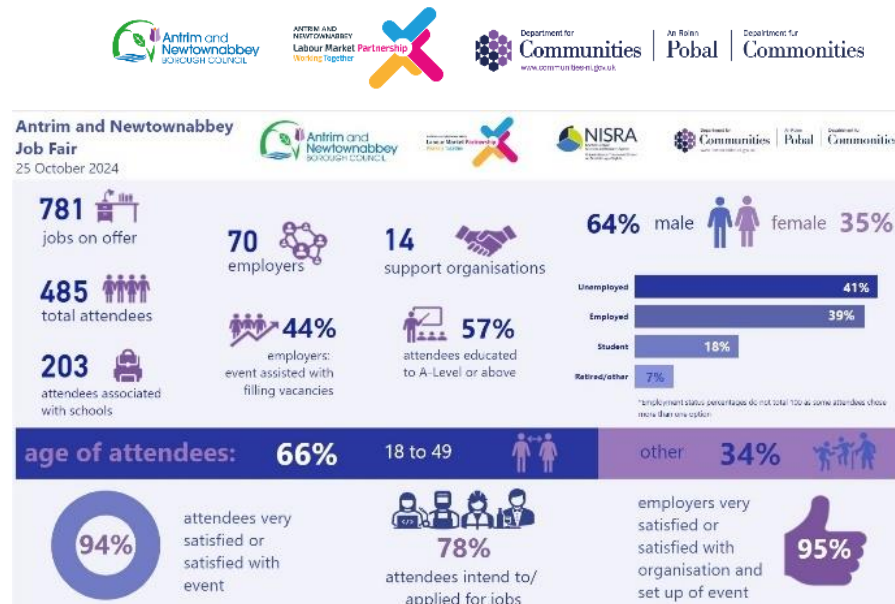
Friday 25 October 2024, 11.00am – 2.00pm
Valley Leisure Centre, Newtownabbey

Antrim and Newtownabbey Labour Market Partnership is hosting a Job Fair, supported by the Department for Communities.

Find job opportunities, chat with local employers from various sectors and improve your employment prospects with practical advice and support.

BSL and ISL signers 11.00am – 1.00pm

For more information: [JobApplyNI.com](https://www.jobapplyni.com) or email: dfcemployerservices@communities-ni.gov.uk



The job fair had a 1 hour slot for school students to attend before the event (11am-12pm). 203 students from 5 schools attended.





The LMP once again worked in partnership with the Jobs and Benefits offices within the area to deliver the following events throughout the year:


- 2 x Jobs fairs - 29/06/24 & 17/10/25
- 2 x Employability and Wellbeing fairs 30/01/25 & 22/02/25



Across all our employability events, 81 employers were engaged, 35 employability and skills providers were engaged, and 1341 people attended these events.

Apprenticeship Week 2025 took place in February. The LMP opted to promote the Careers and Apprenticeship Fair through a social media campaign and through advertising banners, posters and leaflets throughout the Borough.

The LMP encouraged Council to highlight a Parks Apprentice in Council through their [social media](#).

	 <p>The LMP also held a Celebration Event, celebrating the achievements of the participants on the LMP programmes and thanking partners who delivered and collaborated with the LMP.</p> <p>A promotional video was developed to showcase the achievements and work of Antrim and Newtownabbey LMP, which can be viewed here.</p>
How well did we do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 employers out of 19 reported satisfaction with the Careers Fair campaign (68%) • 72 out of 81 (89%) employers reported satisfaction with our employability events • 160 out of 166 attendees (96%) rated the job fairs and wellbeing and employability events as helpful for finding work/training opportunities/employability support • 30 out of 31 (97%) employability/skills providers reported satisfaction with the job fairs and wellbeing and employability events
Is anyone better off?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 out of 10 referrals from exhibitors at the Careers Fair were made to other regional employability programmes • 9 out of 19 (47%) employers who participated reported the Careers Fair campaign would assist in filling vacancies • 34 out of 81 (42%) employers reported the jobs fairs and wellbeing and employability events would assist in filling vacancies • 114 out of 160 (71%) attendees applied for at least one job as a result of the jobs fairs and wellbeing and employability events • 151 of 160 (94%) attendees feel more informed of career opportunities after attending the jobs fairs and wellbeing and employability events

Financial Statement

An audit of LMP activity in 2024/25 was completed in August 2025. The objective of the audit was to understand and assess the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, providing assurance on the probity and proper use of funds with a regular review of operational effectiveness and corporate governance arrangements.

The report concluded that overall, there is a 'Satisfactory' level of assurance. Based on the work completed Internal Audit are satisfied that the processes and controls in place in respect to the LMP are adequate and effective.

Signed Financial Statement for 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025


Statement of Income & Expenditure				
Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council Antrim & Newtownabbey Labour Market Partnership Statement of Income & Expenditure Year to 31 March 2025				
Overall Funding				
	Total Funding	Expenditure Charged	Expenditure Accrued	Total Expenditure
Funding	£	£	£	£
Funding from DfC (Administration)	100,791.48	100,791.48	0.00	100,791.48
Funding from DfC (Operational)	295,175.05	96,105.94	199,069.11	295,175.05
Contribution from Council (Admin - Salaries-Running)	26,172.59	35,180.31	0.00	35,180.31
Contribution from Council (Operational)	6,503.84	6,503.84	0.00	6,503.84
Contributions from (DE - Childminding)	16,936.68	10,030.50	6,906.18	16,936.68
Total Overall Funding	445,579.64	248,612.07	205,975.29	454,587.36

Payments	£	£	£	£
Salaries	98,362.23	98,362.23	0.00	98,362.23
Running Costs	2,429.25	2,429.25	0.00	2,429.25
Total DfC Administration	100,791.48	100,791.48	0.00	100,791.48

Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	10,500.00	4,018.95	6,481.05	10,500.00
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	247,675.05	80,052.31	167,622.74	247,675.05
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	37,000.00	12,034.68	24,965.32	37,000.00
Total DfC Operational	295,175.05	96,105.94	199,069.11	295,175.05

Payments - Council Contribution (Admin - Salaries)	26,172.59	35,020.29	0.00	35,020.29
Payments - (Other - Running Costs) (Admin)	0.00	160.02	0.00	160.02
Total Other (Admin)	26,172.59	35,180.31	0.00	35,180.31

Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)	6,503.84	6,503.84	0.00	6,503.84
Payments - DE (Operational)	16,936.68	10,030.50	6,906.18	16,936.68
Payments - DfE (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Other (Operational)	23,440.52	16,534.34	6,906.18	23,440.52
	445,579.64	248,612.07	205,975.29	454,587.36

Certificate of Chief Financial Officer				
Subject to the central charges shown above properly reflecting actual costs incurred by the Council on 'behalf of' the Labour Market Partnership. I am satisfied that the expenditure shown has been wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by the Council on the Labour Market Partnership and that the grant receivable is in accordance with the regulations and conditions applicable.				
		4 June 25		
Chief Financial Officer		Date		