



THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND IN NORTH EAST: KEY FACTS

2007 to 2013 Programme

Funding

£180 million ESF

£180 million national match funding

£360 million in total

Targets

Total number of people who will be helped to improve their skills and job prospects = 141,000

Number of people not in work who will be helped in to jobs by the end of their ESF course = 16,000

Number of the most disadvantaged people who will make positive progress towards jobs = 11,000

Number of disadvantaged young people who will be re-engaged in learning or a job = 7,000

Number of people who will gain (full) qualifications (including basic skills qualifications) = 26,000

Key regional priorities

The North East faces the following issues and challenges:

- employment rate below the national average;
- economic inactivity and unemployment rate above the national average;
- disproportionately high rates of incapacity benefit claimants, particularly long term claimants (over 6 months);
- disproportionately high rates of economic inactivity and unemployment among certain social groups (e.g. the over 50s);
- disproportionately high rates of economic inactivity in specific geographical areas (the North East region comprises urban, former coalfield and rural areas which have different issues and needs);
- low levels of entrepreneurship and business start up;
- systemic weaknesses in the regional arrangements for the engagement of 'hard to reach' groups;
- a significant proportion of people who have difficulty in retaining employment after being unemployed or inactive;
- disparate and underdeveloped case management, job placement and aftercare services across the region; and

Updated 06/11/2008

- addressing cultural and attitudinal barriers to employment, raising aspirations, tackling health issues that affect individuals' ability to work or train.

Priority 1 – Extending employment opportunities

The North East will seek to use ESF to address these issues and challenges through placing emphasis on the progression of the individual along the journey into work. ESF projects will be expected to demonstrate alignment with the Regional Employability Framework and to address the following issues and challenges:

- ensuring that solutions are tailored to and appropriate to local spatial conditions (for example within City Regions, former coalfields or rural areas) and where appropriate that ESF links into and adds value to local initiatives;
- encouraging projects that aim to engage with the 'hardest to help' groups supporting projects that provide life skills and appropriate vocational training;
- encouraging projects that provide effective and integrated job placement and aftercare;
- encouraging projects that demonstrate inter agency working, in order to better join up the service offer for individuals;
- placing strong emphasis on employer engagement and demand, particularly through the development of 'routeways', which will involve employers, providers and key agencies working together to provide opportunities for individuals to access entry level jobs and apprenticeships, including pre-employment training;
- giving attention to the recruitment needs of clusters of SMEs; and
- recognising the value of progression (i.e. progress towards labour market entry) as a 'soft' outcome and encouraging co-financing organisations to demonstrate how distance travelled by individuals can be effectively measured.

Priority 2 – Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce

Priority 2 interventions will directly contribute to the England ESF Programme and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) through:

- the Regional Employability Framework: strengthening the links between support for those not in work (ESF priority 1) and support for those in work (ESF priority 2), by providing a continuum of support;

- supporting individuals to progress up the 'skills escalator', particularly in placing emphasis on progression from NVQ level 2 to levels 3 and 4;
- ensuring provision is linked to evidenced employer demand and, where possible, supports the skill needs of those RES priority sectors that are eligible for ESF;
- developing more adult provision where this better meets the needs of SME employers (at all levels), ensuring that the offer aligns with the outcome of the Adult Apprenticeship pilots; and
- activities that support a higher success rate in delivery of mainstream programmes, activities that promote progression, or enhancements that generate and support additional entry onto these programmes.

Co-financing Organisations

Department for Work and Pensions

Learning and Skills Council.

2000 to 2006 Programme

Achievements

Number of people helped into jobs since 2000 = 41,000

Number of people gaining qualifications since 2000 = 100,000

Case study: Springboard/Essential Skills for Life

This project in Sunderland helps participants to develop confidence, self esteem and the essential skills needed for sustainable employment. The programme supports individuals to overcome the barriers they face and to compete in the labour market. It offers opportunities to improve communication skills, literacy/language/numeracy/key skills, and gain nationally recognised qualifications.

Participants undergo periods of work experience and/or work tasters with local employers. The project also encourages learning and the use of e-learning, offers further information advice and guidance, and promotes the benefits that lifelong learning brings in terms of personal and work related progression.

The project is aimed at people aged 18 and over who are unemployed and are not able or eligible to access mainstream provision. This includes those people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market such as lone parent, ethnic minorities, and disabled people. To date there have been 19 participants of whom one has gained employment, three have gained qualifications and five have qualifications pending.

Updated 06/11/2008