

**Labour Market Partnerships**  
**Working Together**



**LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH  
LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP**

**Annual Report  
April 2024 - March 2025**

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## **LMP Chairperson Foreword**

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is pleased to present the Annual Report 2024-25 for the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership Action Plan. We are proud to reflect on a year of strong collaboration, innovation, and measurable progress in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing our local labour market.

In an ever-evolving economic landscape, our focus has remained steadfast: to support inclusive employment opportunities, enhance skills development, and align workforce capabilities with the needs of local employers. Through targeted interventions, co-designed programmes, and strategic partnerships with local businesses, community organisations, and education providers, we have made significant strides in supporting individuals to access sustainable employment and training pathways.

This year, we placed particular emphasis on addressing barriers to employment, including those who have no formal accreditations in literacy or numeracy, those with a disability or health-related challenges, and individuals furthest from the labour market. The development of employer-led initiatives and bespoke support services has enabled us to build more responsive and resilient employment solutions. This report provides a review of the wide-ranging activities undertaken by the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP during the third year of implementation.

Across Lisburn and Castlereagh, we aspire to grow our local economy so that it is a source of meaningful, rewarding work that reduces inequality. The Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP is committed to working in collaboration with other agencies to secure these aspirations and support our local communities with interventions tailored to their employment needs.

Through this collaborative approach, we have had the pleasure of working with a wide range of community groups, volunteers, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), other government agencies, local businesses and employers who have

generously contributed their time and efforts into developing their local communities and to make the work of the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP a success.

We have harnessed our knowledge and expertise, which has led to the development of a high-level Strategic Assessment and Action Plan to positively change the Lisburn and Castlereagh labour market. Our work is underpinned by data-led insights and a commitment to continuous improvement. As we move forward, we will continue to prioritise a place-based approach—one that reflects the unique economic strengths, demographics, and aspirations of Lisburn and Castlereagh.

We have also focused our attentions on upskilling those already in employment and seeking higher employment outcomes. Access to expensive industry specific qualifications can present a major barrier to entry, especially as our residents are already dealing with a significant rise in the cost of living. On that basis, the Partnership has developed a range of initiatives that will work to enhance the quality of life for our residents by providing a gateway to access higher paid employment and financial security. Furthermore, the programmes provide critical one-to-one support for our participants which enhances their confidence levels, thus improving the overall health and wellbeing of our residents, whilst building an inclusive employability landscape.

On behalf of the Labour Market Partnership, we extend my sincere thanks to the Members for their contribution to the continual development of the Labour Market Partnership Board and the successes achieved in 2024/25. We would also like to thank our colleagues in DfC for their continued support. Without the funding support from DfC, these programmes would not be possible and we are delighted with the opportunity to provide a range of programmes that enables us to build a strong, vibrant, and forward-thinking workforce across Lisburn and Castlereagh.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council also allocated a budget of £100,000 to deliver the Action Plan in full. Reflecting on 2024/25, the Board have achieved considerable successes across a range of our employability initiatives whilst working within the confines of available finance and resources.

The Action Plan identified interventions to be implemented across the Lisburn and Castlereagh region during the financial year 2024-25. It had a particular focus on improving employability outcomes by providing people with the skills, training and tools needed to enter into the labour market. In this regard, a total of 52 people were enrolled across 3 employability academies. The delivery of the Pathways to Employment for Individuals with a Disability Programme enabled an impressive 30 participants to gain accredited qualifications and connect with local employers to enhance their work experience. The Into Employment Academies, which targeted areas with high levels of deprivation and economic inactivity, had considerable impact and progressed from strength to strength over a short period of time. The delivery of the Self-Employment Support Programme is significant as 37 participants completed bespoke training with considerable one-to-one mentoring support providing them with the skills and confidence to start their own business. This was supported by a £500 start-up grant. We also introduced a range of exciting new opportunities to the Council area including our Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme, a Welding Academy and an Employee Upskilling Programme which provided participants with a range of qualifications in Leadership and Management.

The Lisburn Castlereagh LMP also provided a brokerage service between local employers and job seekers. Over 500 people attended two very successful job fairs that consolidated the LMP relationship with the business community.

These successes, combined with the establishment of a permanent LMP Board and the valuable learning acquired from the previous years has built a solid foundation for us to move forward and enhance the performance of the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP into 2025/26.

We look forward to the coming year and building on the success of the previous Action Plan, we are confident that 2025/26 will continue to build a more inclusive, skilled, and dynamic local workforce—ready to meet the demands of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

At all times, we are focused on the needs of the residents of Lisburn and Castlereagh, who require the support of the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP and its projects, to support them on their journey back into employment.

Paul McCormick

Head of Economic Development, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Chair of the Lisburn Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership

## **LISBURN CASTLEREAGH LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP) BACKGROUND & MEMBERSHIP**

The Department for Communities (DfC) made funding available for the establishment of new Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) across all 11 Councils in Northern Ireland. Each Council is accountable to the Regional LMP. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council provide the secretariat on behalf of DfC who provide the funding for the administration and operational costs of this new initiative based on approved Action Plans.

Work to develop the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP began in late 2020. The membership of the group developed over time and evolved in-line with guidance from DfC regarding the suggested membership and conflict of interest considerations.

By Summer 2021, the core partnership was in place. The LMP in Lisburn and Castlereagh has not deviated widely from the recommended membership of eight core partners thus creating a compact and coherent group of partners with all the experience and knowledge needed to deliver on the objectives of the Labour Market Partnership. The Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP currently comprises a representative from each of the following organisations:

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Economic Development Department
- Jobs and Benefits Office (DfC)
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
- Invest NI (DfE)
- Careers Service NI (DfE)
- Lisburn Area Learning Community Consortium
- Lisburn Chamber of Commerce
- SERC
- Disability Action

Membership of the LMP is reviewed throughout the process to ensure it is representative and meets local need. Furthermore, the LMP developed a business subgroup to meet periodically, providing a sounding board for the partnership going forward as well as raising awareness of the programmes on offer.

The LMP has shown considerable commitment to the task to date and have worked collaboratively to create an environment of trust and respect. The LMP have met as a group and engaged proactively to discuss issues and challenges impacting local people and local businesses and to bring forward innovative solutions. Collaborative working is a key resource that works in partnership with industry, employers, employees and communities in addressing their labour market and human resource needs.

In order to develop the 2024/25 Action Plan and associated submission for funding support from the Department for Communities (DfC) the LMP undertook a review of its initial one-year Action Plan as well as a Strategic Assessment of local labour market conditions in the LCCC area. The exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues. It was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing engagement and consultation across the council area.

Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP adopted an Outcomes Based Approach (OBA) – Turning the Curve, to measure impact and improve accountability. OBA provides a structured framework to consider and plan actions which will improve outcomes at a population level or for beneficiaries/participants of programmes or projects. As a result of the Planning Exercise the following themes were identified as a local priority:

- Economic Inactivity
- Disability
- Skilled Labour Supply

Taking the above into consideration, a turning the curve exercise was undertaken for these themes. Programmes were developed to address issues identified within various employment sectors to meet sector/industry specific skills, expertise, and qualifications at a local level to fill any employment gaps.

The Partnership recognise that individuals face many barriers on their journey back into employment which include:

- Limited qualifications
- Cost of living crisis which impacts individuals who are unable to afford high value qualifications to work in sector specific roles such as the transport industry.
- Little or no work experience
- Potential reduction or loss in benefits

Individuals facing these problems are more likely to encounter significant hurdles in finding sustainable employment. Through a collaborative approach, the Partnership has developed a wide range of initiatives to ensure that appropriate support is provided across the themes identified as high priorities for Lisburn & Castlereagh.

## **ACTION PLAN REPORT AND OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS / SUCCESSES**

This Annual Report refers to the third year of the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP, covering the period 1st April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. The objectives developed by the partnership during 2024/25 period are set out in the following pages.

During the reporting period, Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP developed its Action Plan under the following three strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority 1 - To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area.

Strategic Priority 2 - To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.

Strategic Priority 3 - To support delivery of Employability NI

**Strategic Priority 1 - To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area.**

**LMP Partnership Meetings**

<b>How much did we do?</b>	<b>How well did we do it?</b>
6 meetings of the Lisburn Castlereagh LMP	81% attendance at LMP Meetings
<b>Is anyone better off?</b>	
100% of attending members have better knowledge of what they are delivering collectively and are trying to achieve employability outcomes.	

**LMP Business Sub-Group**

<b>How much did we do?</b>	<b>How well did we do it?</b>
1 meeting of the Business Sub-Group	33% attendance at LMP Meetings
<b>Is anyone better off?</b>	
100% of attending members have better knowledge of what they are delivering collectively and are trying to achieve employability outcomes.	

**Development of Action Plan**

<b>How much did we do?</b>	<b>How well did we do it?</b>
1 Action Plan developed to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP	100% of LMP Members feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Action Plan and Strategic Assessment
<b>Is anyone better off?</b>	
1 LMP Strategic Assessment for 2024 - 2027 developed	

**Strategic Priority 2 - To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.**

**Delivery of LMP Academies and Programmes**

2024/25 programmes delivered included:

- Self-Employment Options Support Programme (Skilled Labour Supply)
- Pathways to Employment for Individuals with a Disability (Disability)
- Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme (Economic Inactivity)
- Employee Upskilling Programme (Skilled Labour Supply)
- Skills Boost for Business Growth Grant Programme (Skilled Labour Supply)
- Into Employment: Classroom Assistant Academy (Economic Inactivity)
- Into Employment: SIA Academy (Economic Inactivity)
- Into Employment: Digital Academy (Economic Inactivity)
- Transport Academy (Skilled Labour Supply)
- Welding Academy (Skilled Labour Supply)
- World Host Upskilling Academy
- Childcare Upskilling Academy
- Childminding Academy

The majority of programmes and academies were nearing completion by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Due to savings identified, which were reinvested into additional programmes of support, a longer timeframe was required and certain programmes have been extended until 31 December 2025.

## **Vision to Venture**

### **Self-Employment Options Support Programme**

Self-employment can be a favorable option for those who have existing commitments or struggle in traditional full-time employment. This programme was open to anyone within the council area who was unemployed or under-employed. Participants were provided with the opportunity to turn their aspirations of running their own business into a reality.

This programme focused upon improving employment outcomes through the promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship. Participants undertook an 8-week training programme with specialist business mentoring from industry experts throughout. Upon completion of the training, participants were provided with a £500 support grant to facilitate business start-up.



**Day One of Programme Delivery**

The programme has given the participants the confidence to move forward in their business journey. Already, this programme has assisted 30 participants to set up their own businesses and commence trading since the programme began in January 2025. In addition, a few of the businesses have started to create employment roles and many are hitting or exceeding sales projections.

A number of our businesses have started exploring exporting opportunities to the Middle East, China, the US and the Republic of Ireland, and at least two have started exporting goods and services. The Vision to Venture Programme has helped to create a community of new businesses in the Council area that are networking and learning from each other.



**Former Chair of LCCC Regeneration & Growth Committee, Alderman Amanda Grehan with Clarke McCabe and Irena Curtis on their graduation.**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
40 (100%) participants recruited	37 (92.5%) participants completing the programme 35 (87.5%) participants reporting satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
30 (75%) completing participants have reported they have commenced self-employment	<b>Target:</b> 17 (66%) participants still in self-employment 6 months after programme completion. NB Programme has not been completed for 6 months.

## **THRIVE Programme**

### **Pathways to Employment for Individuals with a Disability**

The need to support those who are economically inactive due to disability and the barriers they face into employment has been well documented. This programme focused upon improving employment outcomes through the delivery of specialist mentoring support to develop key skills such as CV writing, interview skills, confidence building etc. In addition, participants also obtained a number of accredited qualifications thus enabling participants to examine their aspirations and work towards securing employment or work placement with a suitable employer.

Initially, the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP had funding to support 25 participants, however, following a very successful recruitment campaign, a total of 40 applications were received. This year, the LMP piloted an innovative approach by partnering up with local employers such as Hendersons to assist with recruiting staff for a new Eurospar in the Council area, resulting in a high number of applications. The Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP sought additional funding and recruited all 40 participants onto this programme.



**Participants graduating from the THRIVE Programme**

## Case Study: Ethan Veale



Ethan was a participant on the THRIVE Programme and after successfully gaining a range of accredited qualifications, he was successful in securing employment with Foot Anstey McKees.

"I've been settling in well at Foot Anstey McKees, my work is varied and interesting. I enjoy it greatly. I'm also working with a brilliant team. I'd like to thank everyone at Foot Anstey McKees for being so welcoming and supportive these past few months. I'm very excited to continue my work going into the future.'

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
40 (100%) participants enrolled on LMP Programme	40 (100%) participants complete the programme
37 employers engaged	40 (100%) participants reported satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
30 (75%) participants gain a qualification 7 (17.5%) of participants who undertake further education or training following completion of the project 16 (40%) of participants gaining new employment.	

## Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme



**Jayne Hamilton, Studyseed CIC, Neil Crothers, Lisburn Castlereagh LMP, Former Chair of LCCC Regeneration & Growth Committee, Alderman Amanda Grehan and Danielle Pickering, Studyseed CIC at the Launch of the Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme**

The Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme was developed in response to a clear need within the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) area. With over 14.6% of the working-age population reported as having no formal qualifications, the programme aimed to tackle the challenges faced by economically inactive individuals, particularly those disengaged from traditional learning environments. The programme was designed to provide an innovative, engaging route to learning. Its emphasis was on literacy and numeracy skills, delivered through gamified learning, to support participants in achieving Entry-Level accredited qualifications, while also increasing their confidence and enhancing their employability.



The programme consisted of two core strands—literacy and numeracy—each delivered through two cohorts of 10 participants. The small-group model enabled tailored delivery and created space for intensive support through non-traditional classroom-style learning and one-to-one mentoring. Baseline assessments and interest mapping informed the content, enabling real-life themes such as shopping, sports, social media, planning journeys, and parenting to be seamlessly integrated throughout. This reduced resistance to learning and made sessions relevant, personal, and confidence-boosting.

This has changed my life. I'm not stopping now!

Beyond classroom delivery, the programme embedded holistic support through personalised mentoring and a workplace ready programme, which were designed around each participant's goals, learning needs, and employability aspirations.

I've tried to do my lvl 2 maths multiple times but sadly I suffer with anxiety from being bullied in school as a child so when it came to exams I failed as my mind went into a state of panic. I have worked really hard during this course to feel very confident in numeracy. No panic attacks not anxiety just a good bit of fun with me finally gaining my lvl 2. I feel this way of gaining maths and English is the way forward and should be something rolled out across schools. The tutors were able to not only teach us in a way everyone could understand but also be able to engage and build relationships to help us succeed. I've been so glad to be apart of it and thank you for everything.

The success of the project is a result of a strong foundation in community engagement and partnership working. Recruitment efforts leveraged existing relationships and networks, including the Atlas Women's Centre, local Job and Benefits Offices (JBOs), and other community groups.



**Former Chair of LCCC Regeneration & Growth Committee, Alderman Amanda Grehan with participants who graduated from the Gamified Programme.**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
40 (100%) participants enrolled on LMP Programme	33 (82.5%) complete the programme. 33 (82.5%) of participants reported satisfaction with the project.
Is anyone better off?	
32 (80%) participants gain a qualification 21 (88%) completing participants feel more confident regarding their employability	

## Employee Upskilling Programme

This programme supported employers to upskill staff to enable career progression for those underemployed or employed and seeking career progress, creating employment vacancies and opportunities for those entering the labour market. This initiative achieved targets set and will help support the Government's drive to increase the numbers of adults engaging in lifelong learning. A total of 76 participants were enrolled across the various programmes:

- CMI Level 3 Award in Project Management
- CMI Level 5 Award in Principles of Management and Leadership
- CMI Level 7 Award Certificate in Strategic Management and Leadership in Practice
- Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering
- OFTEC 50 Boiler Repair
- Level 2 Award in Trade and Export



Some of the digital graphics used to promote the Employee Upskilling Programme

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
76 (100%) participants enrolled on LMP Programme	72 (94%) complete the programme. 72 (94%) of participants reported satisfaction with the project
10 employers engaged	10 (100%) of employers reported satisfaction with the project

### Is anyone better off?

58 (80%) participants gain a qualification

8 (80%) of employers have created new jobs as a result of the support received

42 (58%) of completers have moved into higher paid employment

## Skills Boost for Business Growth: Grant Programme



This small grant scheme was open to local businesses in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area to support industry-related training. This programme helped to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally.

Employers could avail of up to £2,000 of grant support (£500 per employee).



The programme aimed to improve employment opportunities by offering entry level positions or upskilling opportunities as a result of training. The LMP funded a range of training initiatives ranging from qualifications to become a personal trainer, principles of providing effective customer service, first aid training, a Level 3 OFTEC award in Oil Heating and licenses to operate telehandlers.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
1 Tranche of Funding	20 (76.0%) complete the programme.
8 Employers Engaged	20 (76.0%) of participants reported satisfaction with the project.
26 (100%) participants enrolled on LMP Programme	8 (100%) of employers reported satisfaction with the project

### Is anyone better off?

20 (76.0%) participants gain a qualification  
10 (50%) completers have the capacity to increase hours/earnings  
6 (75%) of employers are able to create new entry level positions and or higher-level positions for the employees as a result of the upskilling activity.

## Into Employment: Female Returners

### Classroom Assistant Academy

The Classroom Assistant Academy supported women to return to work following an extended career break. This programme was aimed at unemployed or economically inactive women as an opportunity to build confidence, refresh skills, and work towards industry recognised qualifications leading to a guaranteed job interview with a local employer.

Over the 5-day course, female returners were provided with an introduction into the role of a classroom assistant. It supported women by empowering them to feel prepared to apply for jobs in the



education sector. The Lisburn & Castlereagh LMP received a high volume of applications for this programme, our target was to recruit 10 participants, however, we were able to offer 13 people a place on the academy. 4 people went into direct employment upon completion of the programme as the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP teamed up with local schools who had live vacancies

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
13 participants enrolled on LMP Programme	13 (100%) academy participants complete the programme. 13 (100%) completing participants who reported satisfaction with the LMP project

### Is anyone better off?

13 (100%) completers feel more confident regarding their employability

9 (70%) completing participants gain employment

### Into Employment: SIA Academy



The course was delivered over a series of 5-day intensive workshops, specifically created to help participant's fast track their way into employment. Participants were provided with the opportunity to undertake the relevant training to acquire a SIA Licence, as well as being offered the opportunity to improve employability, interview, communication and teamwork skills, leading to a guaranteed job interview with a local employer.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
6 participants enrolled on LMP Programme	6 (100%) academy participants completed the programme 6 (100%) participants who reported satisfaction with the LMP project
Is anyone better off?	
5 (83%) completing participants gain employment. 5 (83%) of those who gained employment are still in employment 6 months after completing the programme.	

## Into Employment: Digital Academy



The online training programme was delivered over six-weeks. aims of the programme were to contribute to a reduction in skills shortages and improve employability outcomes for residents by providing qualifications and personal effectiveness assistance to support entry into the employment. Participants achieved an OCN NI Level 2 Social Media qualification, which is designed to give learners the opportunity to explore how social media can be used to make use of networks to engage with individuals and groups.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
12 participants enrolled on LMP Programme	8 (66.6%) academy participants completed the programme. 8 (66.6%) participants who reported satisfaction with the LMP project
Is anyone better off?	
8 (66.6%) completers gain a qualification. 8 (66.6%) of completers feel more confident regarding their employability 8 (66.6%) of completers gain new employment	

## Transport Academy



**Former Chair of LCCC Regeneration & Growth Committee, Alderman Amanda Grehan with Emma Finney, Lisburn Castlereagh LMP and Michael Hanna, McCulla Ireland at the Launch of the Transport Academy**

HGV drivers are in high demand, but entry into the sector is restricted due to the high costs of training and licencing which presents a considerable barrier for participants. This programme delivered fully funded training to help participants across Lisburn & Castlereagh access employment in the transport sector. The Lisburn Castlereagh LMP offered participants the choice to undertake their category C (Class 2) HGV licence or a category D Bus Licence. Working in collaboration with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, the Lisburn & Castlereagh LMP recruited 19 participants onto the programme, who are currently working towards completion.



### Case Study: Ela Fratczak

Ela has fulfilled the dream she always had – to drive a bus. After coming across the Lisburn & Castlereagh Transport Academy on social media page, she immediately applied to participate in the programme.

Following an interview exercise, Ela was accepted onto the Academy. Shortly after completing her training, Ela was offered a position as a bus driver with Translink and her new adventure has begun!

'I would recommend this programme to anyone who has always wanted to obtain their HGV / Bus Licence, the programme has provided me with the skills and training to embark on a new career and I can't thank the Lisburn & Castlereagh LMP enough for this amazing opportunity!"

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
19 participants enrolled on LMP Programme	15 (79%) participants complete the programme. 15 (79%) Completing participants reported satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
<b>12</b> (80%) participants gaining new employment. <b>Target: 6</b> (75%) participants still in employment 6 months after completing the programme <i>NB: Programme still ongoing</i>	

### **Welding Academy**

The engineering sector across Lisburn & Castlereagh is hugely important to the local economy and employees with welding skills are in high demand. On that basis, the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership successfully delivered an innovative Welding Academy to 15 of our local residents.

During the course of this programme, participants received industry standard training to gain a UK welding standard (British Standard 4872) certificate. The training provided them with the skills to take up welding roles in this important sector. The training was delivered by SERC at their dedicated training facility in Dundrod. One-to-one mentoring support with the Careers Team at SERC matched participants with local employers leading to an employment outcome of 80%, thus reaching our targets in full.



How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
15 participants enrolled on LMP Programme	15 (100%) participants complete the programme. 15 (100%) completing participants reported satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
9 (75%) participants gaining new employment.  9 (75%) participants still in employment after 6 months.	

## WorldHost Supervising Customer Service Academy

This fully funded two-day workshop provides the foundation for establishing a culture of excellence and driving business transformation. The World Host Upskilling workshop was aimed at those supervising customer service at an operational level and are responsible for ensuring their team deliver outstanding customer service, every time. Eight participants successfully completed this workshop in March 2025 with another ten completing in September 2025.



**Participants from the World Host Academy**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
18 participants enrolled on LMP Programme.	18 (100%) participants complete the programme. 18 (100%) Completing participants reported satisfaction with the programme.
Is anyone better off?	
18 participants have moved into employment / sustained employment. <b>Target:</b> 6 (75%) participants still in employment 6 months after completing the programme. <i>NB: Programme still ongoing</i>	

## Childcare Upskilling Academy



This upskilling initiative was funded via additional funding secured from the Department for the Economy (DfE) and enabled 9 participants to work towards the Level 3 NCFE CACHE Diploma in Children's Care, Learning & Development. This course is designed to help participants build the knowledge and skills needed when working with children and covers a diverse range of job roles and occupational areas in children's

settings, including early years. This qualification fulfils the registration and regulatory requirements for childcare practitioners in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that this course will be completed in December 2025.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
9 participants enrolled on LMP Programme.	<b>Target:</b> 8 (80%) participants complete the programme. <b>Target:</b> 6 (75%) Completing participants reported satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
<b>Target:</b> 7 (88%) participants gaining a qualification. <b>Target:</b> 6 (75%) participants move into higher paid employment <i>NB: Programme still ongoing</i>	

## Childminding Academy



This academy was funded via additional funding secured from the Department for Education (DE) in response to a shortage of registered childminders across Northern Ireland. The academy, which was delivered by Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA) supported 10 participants through the process of becoming a registered childminder.

The Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership also delivered 2 additional initiatives that provided existing childminders with qualifications in supporting children with special education needs.

5 existing childminders were supported to undertake the OCN NI Level 3 Award in Working with Children and Young People with Special Needs

6 existing childminders were supported to undertake Level 1 Makaton, a unique communication programme that uses symbols (pictures), signs (gestures) and speech to enable people to communicate.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
9 participants enrolled on LMP Programme.	9 participants complete the programme. 9 (100%) Completing participants reported satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
9 participants gaining a qualification. <b>Target:</b> 6 (75%) participants move into higher paid employment. 5 have moved into higher paid employment as of October 2025. <i>NB: Programme still ongoing</i>	

### **Strategic Priority 3 - To support delivery of Employability NI.**

Theme: Increased awareness of employability programmes available to residents

#### **Delivery of LMP Job Fairs and Employability Events:**

The Lisburn Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership met all SP3 targets in 2022/23.

<b>How much did we do?</b>	<b>How well did we do it?</b>
2 Job Fairs and 4 Employability Events	733 (100%) attendees report satisfaction with events
539 Participants attending jobs fair events	
<b>Is anyone better off?</b>	
733 (100%) Attendees at events reported increased awareness of LMP programmes	
388 (72%) Attendees surveyed at the Job Fairs intend to apply for a job as a result of the events	
466 (86%) Referrals to local LMP provision	
232 (43%) Referrals to regional employability programmes	

#### **Lisburn & Castlereagh Job Fair**

**Dundonald International Ice Bowl, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024**



**Former Chair of LCCC Regeneration & Growth Committee, Alderman Amanda Grehan connecting with local employers and residents at the November Job Fair**

The Lisburn & Castlereagh LMP welcomed residents to its job fair at Dundonald International Ice Bowl, Castlereagh area. While the Job Fair was for all residents within the Lisburn and Castlereagh area, priority was given to employer exhibitors within the Castlereagh area as the second Job Fair gave priority to employer exhibitors in the Lisburn area.

102 people attended the Job Fair. This event facilitated 16 employer exhibitors and 6 support organization's exhibitors resulting in recruitment opportunities for over 480 job vacancies.

### Lisburn & Castlereagh Job Fair

#### Lagan Valley LeisurePlex, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Exhibitors had the opportunity to showcase their job opportunities and speak directly with people who are currently seeking employment. The event assisted local employers in the area to recruit talented members of staff. The larger Job Fair was a massive success in supporting the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market by bringing together 8 support organisation exhibitors and 63 employer exhibitors who were recruiting for over 650 job vacancies and attracting 437 attendees on the day.

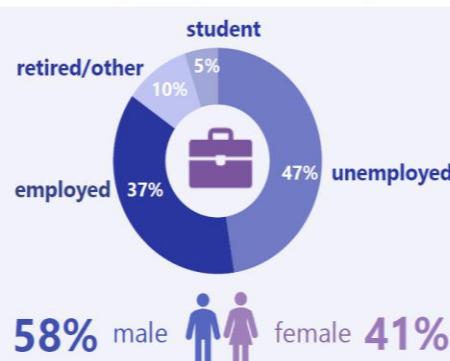
#### Lisburn and Castlereagh Job Fair 27 February 2025



**650** jobs on offer

**437** attendees

**53%** attendees educated to A-Level or above



**63** employers

**8** support organisations

**79%** employers: event assisted with filling vacancies

#### age of attendees:

**78%** 18 to 49

**22%** other



attendees very satisfied or satisfied with event



**50%**  
attendees intend to/  
applied for jobs

employers very satisfied or satisfied with organisation and set up of event



**97%**

## **Employability Event for Young Adult Learners**

### **Lisburn Jobs and Benefits Office, November 2024**

Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership, in collaboration with Lisburn Jobs and Benefits Office, recently held an employability event for young adult learners from Beechlawn School, Royal Hillsborough, to help them prepare to leave education and enter the workforce.

The event took place at the Lisburn Jobs and Benefits Office. 35 students took part in this interactive event where they were coached through role play interviews and shown how to search for jobs using the Job Centre's 'Digizone' technology.

Students were also informed of the help and support available to them from the Job Centre and other organisations, as well as the role of Universal Credit and how it can help them achieve their goals. Representatives from USEL, Stepping Stones NI and The Now Group gave talks on courses that are available



**Pupils from Beechlawn School with the Lisburn Jobs & Benefits Team**

## **Health & Wellbeing Event**

**Lisburn Jobs and Benefits Office, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2024**



The purpose of this event was to inform LCCC residents who are economically inactive and also newly self-employed people who had queries on what help they could receive to improve their business. Experts were on hand to cover all stages of self-employment, from having an idea to running a business and increasing revenue.

Support organisations in attendance included the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership, Tangible Consulting, Lisburn Enterprise Organisation, Go Succeed, SERC, and the work coaches from the Lisburn JBO to promote how Universal Credit can support looking to become self-employed. For those who are affected by hearing loss, Adapt NI were present and for the under 25s the Kings Trust, were in attendance to discuss their self-employment provisions. 35 people attended this event.

## **Self-Employment: Next Steps**

**Lagan Valley Island, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

The purpose of this event was to signpost aspiring entrepreneurs to a range of additional support available for those entering into Self Employment. Speakers included SERC, Bank of Ireland, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and Tangible Consulting who provided information about a range of support available under Go Succeed, Innovate Us, Invest NI etc. Attendees also engaged in a show and tell session to showcase their new businesses. 40 people attended this event.



## Women into Employment: Female Empowerment

Lagan Valley Island, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025



Inspired by the Open University's *Momentum* campaign, the Lisburn and Castlereagh LMP's focus was on supporting local women who have been out of work for extended periods due to maternity leave, caregiving responsibilities, illness, or career breaks.

The Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership brought together a range of organisations to showcase programmes, training, and support available to our residents and local networks. Speakers included the Lisburn Chamber of Commerce,

Jobs and Benefits Office, Atlas Women's Group, Studyseed CIC, Women's Tec, and Women's Support Network shared resources and insights.

The employability event for female returners to the labour market was highly successful, attracting enthusiastic participation and positive feedback. Attendees gained valuable insights, boosted confidence, and made key professional connections. Workshops, CV support, and networking opportunities empowered women to re-enter the workforce with renewed motivation. Many expressed appreciation for the tailored support, marking the event as impactful and inspiring. 22 people attended this event.

### **DisAbility Employability Event**

**Lagan Valley Island, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025**



Lagan Valley Island became the hub for a powerful employability event, bringing together local residents with a range of disabilities, support organisations, and employers. The aim was to dismantle employment barriers and promote inclusive, sustainable career opportunities

across the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area. The event welcomed a wide range of expert speakers and partners, including USEL, SES Workable, The NOW Project, Stepping Stones NI, Advice NI, Universal Credit, and Lisburn Jobs & Benefits Centre, reinforcing the LMP's commitment to inclusive employment.

Workshops, talks, and stalls created an engaging space for attendees to gain knowledge about upskilling, reskilling, mentoring, and support available across the local council area. Real-life challenges were discussed, alongside actionable pathways to help residents move closer to employment. Attendees appreciated the welcoming, empowering atmosphere, where shared experiences led to valuable peer support and motivation.

Residents received tailored advice, registered for training programmes, and explored the wraparound support available to them. The event not only raised awareness but also sparked action—providing a real sense of progress for inclusive employment in the community. 37 people attended this event.

### **Be Inclusive: Development of an Employer's Training Package**

On 26 September 2025, the Lisburn and Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership launched its *Be Inclusive* training series with an engaging and thought-provoking seminar for local employers. Twenty-three businesses took part in the free session, which explored how inclusive workplace practices can drive business growth, staff well-being, and stronger organisational culture.

The training offered practical guidance on recognising and addressing barriers such as unconscious bias and structural inequality, while providing tools and checklists to help embed inclusive practices at every level.



**Pictured (l-r): Councillor Claire Kemp, Regeneration & Growth Committee Chair; Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Alderman Amanda Grehan; Paddy Rooney, Deputy Secretary for the Work & Health Group and Paula Jennings, Stepping Stones NI at the launch of the Be Inclusive: Employer's Training**

The event also introduced a new *Inclusive Employer* badgemark, designed to recognise businesses committed to taking positive, measurable steps towards inclusion. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many reporting a renewed commitment to building inclusive workplaces and expressing

strong interest in the badgemark scheme. The session marked an important step in supporting local employers to create environments where everyone can thrive.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and deliver 'Be In Work' an employer's toolkit aimed at increasing the number of people with a disability or long-term health condition into paid employment and creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce and society</li> <li>• Recruited 25 local employers to participate in the 'Be In Work' Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 (100%) of employers reporting satisfaction with the 'Be In Work' Employer's Toolkit</li> </ul>
<b>Is anyone better off?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25/25 (100%) referrals to regional employability programmes</li> <li>• 20/25 (80%) of attendees reporting increased awareness of Regional and LMP Programmes</li> <li>• 25/25 (100%) of attendees reporting the programme has increased their knowledge of the work of the LMP / Employability NI</li> </ul>	

## Financial Statement

A comprehensive audit of LCLMP was carried out for the 2024/25 period. Findings concluded there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control in place.

Statement of Income & Expenditure				
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council				
Lisburn & Castlereagh Labour Market Partnership				
Statement of Income & Expenditure				
Year to 31 March 2025				
Overall Funding				
	Total Funding	Expenditure	Expenditure	Total
Funding	£	Charged	Accrued	Expenditure
Funding from DfC (Administration)	92,115.67	90,832.92	650.00	91,482.92
Funding from DfC (Operational)	299,767.32	93,607.12	205,613.80	299,220.92
Funding from DfE (Childcare)	25,000.00	0.00	25,000.00	25,000.00
Contributions from DE(Childminding)	26,000.00	6,476.74	19,523.26	26,000.00
Contribution from Council (SP2.2.1, SP2.2.2, SP2.3 & SP2.6)	100,000.00	73,400.00	26,600.00	100,000.00
Contributions from (Other Please state)				0.00
<b>Total Overall Funding</b>	<b>542,882.99</b>	<b>264,316.78</b>	<b>277,387.06</b>	<b>541,703.84</b>
DfC Administration				
Payments	£	£	£	£
Salaries	90,000.00	90,000.00	0.00	90,000.00
Audit Fees	1,000.00	500.00	500.00	1,000.00
Mileage & Training	1,115.67	332.92	150.00	482.92
<b>Total DfC Administration</b>	<b>92,115.67</b>	<b>90,832.92</b>	<b>650.00</b>	<b>91,482.92</b>
DfC Operational				
Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	7,000.00	5,453.60	1,000.00	6,453.60
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	244,304.63	61,829.04	182,475.59	244,304.63
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	48,462.69	26,324.48	22,138.21	48,462.69
<b>Total DfC Operational</b>	<b>299,767.32</b>	<b>93,607.12</b>	<b>205,613.80</b>	<b>299,220.92</b>
Other Funding (Admin)				
Payments - Council Contribution (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Other (Admin)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Other Funding (Operational)				
Payments - DfE Childcare (Operational)	25,000.00	0.00	25,000.00	25,000.00
Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)	100,000.00	73,400.00	26,600.00	100,000.00
Payments - DE Childminding (Operational)	26,000.00	6,476.74	19,523.26	26,000.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)				0.00
<b>Total Other (Operational)</b>	<b>151,000.00</b>	<b>79,876.74</b>	<b>71,123.26</b>	<b>151,000.00</b>
	<b>542,882.99</b>	<b>264,316.78</b>	<b>277,387.06</b>	<b>541,703.84</b>
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.				
				
Chief Financial Officer		23-May-25		Date