

Labour Market Partnerships  
Working Together



**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN  
LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP  
Annual Report  
April 2022- March 2023**

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## LMP Chairperson Foreword



**Frank Shivers**  
Bangor Chamber of  
Commerce

It has been my pleasure to chair the Ards North Down LMP and to work with so many committed, interested, and caring people. From the many volunteers, community groups, businesspeople and government agencies who have all given their time freely and generously to contribute to their communities and make the work of AND LMP a success.

Through this collaborative group we have delivered many of the key objectives of Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership. Projects like the HGV Training Academy, Academy for People with Disabilities and an Enterprise Skills Academy have provided skills and training for people furthest from the labour market and led to many securing employment with local businesses. The addition of events such as Job Fair Roadshows and an Industry Related Training Bursary Scheme have seen the LMP diversify their offering and support both individuals and businesses to obtain new talent as well as train and upskill employees.

A key objective of AND LMP moving forward is to secure its position by diversifying funding sources and will work actively to bolster funding for the work of the partnership beyond that of its core funder.

We look forward to the coming year and building on the success of the previous Action Plan and would very much thank the Department for Communities for the core funding of this vital project and Ards and North Down Council for their facilitation of and enthusiasm for the project.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP)

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 will be accountable to the Regional LMP, and this role will be undertaken by the Employability NI (ENI) Programme Board. Ards and North Down Borough Council will provide the secretariat on behalf of DfC who will provide the funding for the administration and operational costs of this new initiative based on approved Action Plans.

Following approval, work commenced on getting the LMP up and running, and based on the guidance from DfC, various bodies and organisations were invited to join the Partnership. A Strategic Assessment was undertaken, as required, under the Department for Communities Interim Labour Market Partnership Planning Guidance 2021-2023. The Strategic Assessment highlighted the key statistics for the labour market in Ards and North Down as understanding the current outlook of Ards and North Down's labour market, and analysing it effectively was a crucial first step to establish a successful Labour Market Partnership.

An Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) - Turning the Curve approach was used to develop the 2021-22 – 2022-23 Local LMP Action Plan by identifying themes and projects that would help to achieve the desired outcomes.

The following three themes were identified as local priorities in both the 2021-22 and 2022-23 Action Plans.

**Theme 1 – Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement**

**Theme 2 – Young People with employment challenges**

**Theme 3 – Covid-19 related labour market disruption**

Interventions/programmes/projects were developed to address issues identified within various employment sectors to meet sector/industry specific needs at a local level; review supply and demand levels for skills, expertise, qualifications etc at a local level, and commission new provision to fill any local gaps.

The goal of the LMP is to work in partnership with our statutory, voluntary and community organisations to assess local labour market conditions and develop plans on how best to get people furthest away from employment, into employment via the delivery of its Action Plan.

The Partnership recognised that there are many barriers faced by individuals in obtaining employment or training, such as no suitable qualification, poor skill-sets, no or little work experience, disability or other health problems, potential in reduction or loss in benefits; difficulties in childcare arrangements; cost of transport to attend training or work placement and others. Individuals with these problems are more likely to move into temporary jobs or have difficulty in finding sustainable employment.

Through a collaborative approach the LMP worked to ensure the correct programmes were implemented and that suitable support was provided to address the outlined themes identified as high priority for the AND area.

## Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership Membership

Frances McCormick	County Down Rural Community Network	
Kieran McKenna	South Eastern Regional College	
Victoria Boyd	South Eastern Regional College	
Nichola Lockhart	Ards Business Centre (Enterprise Agency)	
Emma Pearson	North Down Development Agency (Enterprise Agency)	
John Caldwell	Donaghadee Community Development Association	
Frank Shivers (Chair)	Bangor Chamber of Commerce	
John Dumigan	Portaferry Regeneration Ltd	
Alison Blayney (Vice Chair)	Kilcooley Women's Centre	
Jenna Pike	Steppingstones	

Patrick Davidson	Princes Trust	
Sharon Chambers	Department for Communities (Jobs and Benefits Office)	
Heather Townsley	Department for Economy (Careers Services)	
Ruth Harper	Young Enterprise NI	
Alan McDowell	Refresh Appliances Ltd	
Frank Given	Close Focus Ltd	
John McKibben	Invest NI	
Sean Hanna	NOW Group	
Jenny Potter	NOW Group	
Hilary West-Hurst	Education Authority	
<b>Council Staff Members</b>		
Clare McGill	Head of Economic Development	
Jan Nixey	Head of Community and Culture, Wellbeing and Health	
Patricia Mackey	Community Planning Manager	
Irene Chong	Data and Evidence Analyst	

<b>Council Secretariat</b>	
Karine McGuckin	Economic Development Manager
Sharyn McMaster	Labour Market Partnership Manager
Linda Sims	Administrative Officer



## Action Plan Report and Overview of projects/successes

This Annual Report refers to the second year of the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (AND LMP) and covers the period 1st April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

During the reporting period, Ards and North Down LMP implemented 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.**

**Theme 1- LMP formation:**

**1. Development of the Strategic Plan for LMP:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
3 Workshops were held to review performance and discuss future activity.	Development and production of a 1-year Action Plan for 22-23, which was approved by DfC.
Is anyone better off?	
Of the 14 LMP members that responded to a survey 100% responded positively that they felt confident the work of the LMP would meet its intended target.	

**2. LMP Partnership and Subcommittee(s):**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
9 meetings of the full LMP Partnership took place with an average of 61% attendance over the year.	3 Subcommittees were formed with an average of 8 meetings each across the year
Is anyone better off?	
Over the course of the meetings decisions were taken and actions implemented to ensure the Action Plan's outcomes were achieved.	

**3. Scoping Study – Existing Provision in AND:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
2 scoping exercises were carried out	The findings were used to inform the Strategic Assessment.
Is anyone better off?	
From the findings of the Strategic Assessment the Action Plan for 2023-24 was developed.	

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

### Theme 1- Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement:

#### **1. Mentoring Programme 22-23:**

**Project aim:** The recruitment and training of up to ten mentors to add to mentors trained in year 1.

#### **2. Academy for People with a Disability:**

**Project aim:** Upskill unemployed people with disabilities and help them gain employment.



Launch Photo and links below to Press Releases.

[NOW Group Launches Employability & Skills Groups In Ards & North Down - Business Eye](#)

[NOW Group launches new employability and skills academies across Ards and North Down · BUSINESSFIRST \(businessfirstonline.co.uk\).](#)

#### **3. Leadership Training:**

**Project Aim:** Provision of leadership training to enhance job satisfaction, skills, good management, and therefore better culture, and employee retention.

On completion of the programme the Delivery Agent delivered additional mentoring support to the participants recruited and feedback from the participants was excellent.

#### **4. Community Job Fairs and Ards and North Down Job Fair:**

**Project aim:** Encourage economically inactive to take up jobs delivered in the community through community venues such as community centres and community houses.

LMP attended and supported the Ards and North Down Job Fair at Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex.

## **5. Industry Related Training:**

**Project aim:** Bespoke industry related training. Where employers have specific training requirements for employees, the employer can apply for training – funding will be provided to the training organisation.

## **Table of Key Outcomes – SP 2**

### **Theme 1 – Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement:**

#### **1. Mentoring Programme 22-23:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
8 mentors recruited and trained and received a mentor handbook	100% Mentors that responded feel confident to deliver their objectives
Is anyone better off?	
In conjunction with the Jobs and Benefits Offices the mentors have been matched with mentees and so far, 3 mentees have been supported	

#### **2. Academy for people with Disabilities:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
44 Participants enrolled across 4 academies: 1. Customer Service 2. Business Administration 3. Health and Social Care 4. Progression into Employment	37 out of the 44 participants completed the Academies (84%)
Is anyone better off?	
4 participants gained employment 22 participants availed of a work placement 100% of participants who completed the Academy gained a qualification 100% reported satisfaction with the Academy 100% have increased confidence because of the Academy	

#### **3. Leadership Training:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
1 Academy delivered 10 participants recruited	9 participants completed the Academy
Is anyone better off?	
100% of participants were satisfied with the training they received 100% of participants reported developing skills as a result of attending the Academy	

#### 4. Community Job Fairs and Ards and North Down Job Fair:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
4 Job fair Roadshows 1 Large Job fair event	261 people attended the events
Is anyone better off?	
8 attendees gained employment 57% of employers indicated they had met suitable candidates 97% of employers who attended were very satisfied/satisfied with the event	

#### 5. Industry Related Training:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
16 employers applied for funding 71 employees enrolled on the programme	93% completed the programme 86% of participants reported satisfaction with the programme
Is anyone better off?	
6 employers were able to create entry level positions as a result of the training initiatives Ongoing monitoring will provide number of participants moving into higher paid employment	

### Theme 2 – Young People with employability challenges:

#### 1. Enterprise Skills Academy:

**Project aim:** Support young people to consider self-employment and create a job through business skills workshops and one-to-one mentoring.

The Enterprise Skills Academy was delivered by the South Eastern Regional College.

#### 2. Videos for Schools:

**Project aim:** Develop relationships between employers and schools/colleges to ensure students are aware of job opportunities in their own Council area.

The videos produced featuring local businesses were:

Health and Social Care	Positive Futures
Computer Infrastructure	Simply NUC
Hospitality and Catering	Old Inn, Crawfordsburn
Creative Industries	Seacourt Print Workshop (features self-employment)
Creative Tech	Yellow Moon
Financial Services	Portaferry Credit Union

Software Engineering	See.sense
Construction	JSW Developments (features apprenticeships)
Wholesale/retail	Corrie's Butchers
Administration	Mango

## Table of Key Outcomes – SP 2:

### Theme 2 – Young People with employability challenges:

#### **1. Enterprise Skills Academy:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
20 participants recruited onto the Academy. 9 participants presented their business ideas in a Dragon Den style pitch	100% satisfaction with the standard of the programme
Is anyone better off?	
100% of participants feel confident to start their own business 45% of participants are planning to set up a new business	

#### **2. Videos for Schools:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
10 Businesses recruited to appear in videos 10 Videos produced and sent to a sample group.	100% satisfaction with the speakers and video content
Is anyone better off?	
100% of the sample pupils who saw the video reported understanding local job opportunities.	

## Theme 3 – COVID-19 related Labour Market Disruption:

### **1. HGV Academy:**

**Project aim:** To provide opportunities to obtain or upskill an HGV License and engage with local employers to ascertain potential job vacancies as HGV drivers.

Employers that have recruited staff include:

- Road Safety NI
- Pritchett's
- Lakeland Dairies
- HGVT Ltd
- CCRS Recovery
- Surface escape
- AN Landfill
- Haldane and Fisher



Launch and Press Release Photo of the HGV Academy at the City Hall, Bangor

### **2. Reskilling for Job Vacancies (Health and Social Care Academy):**

**Project aim:** Engagement with local employers to ascertain potential job vacancies and engagement with employers to ensure training is provided to match job vacancies (eg HGV drivers, hospitality workers, health and social care workers).

## Table of Key Outcomes – SP 2

### Theme 3 – COVID-19 related Labour Market Disruption:

#### **1. HGV Academy:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
30 participants were recruited onto the Academy Delivery was extended to allow an additional 15 participants to be recruited	100% of participants gained a qualification
Is anyone better off?	
12 participants gained new employment (86%) Ongoing monitoring will provide the number of participants moving into employment as they complete the Academy	

#### **2. Reskilling for Job Vacancies:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
55 participants were recruited onto the Academies 4 Academies were delivered 1. Health and Social Care Entry Level 2. Health and Social Care Upskilling 3. Childcare Entry Level and Upskilling 4. Health and Social Care Level 3	65% of participants completed the programme 11 participants had 1:1 sessions with SERC Careers Team
Is anyone better off?	
100% of participants who completed the Academy received a qualification.	



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

### Theme 1 – Promotion of regional projects/initiatives and building confidence through locality-based engagement:

#### **1. PR Campaign to Promote AND LMP:**

**Project aim:** Promote regional programmes to local people through Council ezines and literature.

Articles promoting the upcoming Academies and LMP work were shared through the Council's ezines.

### Table of Key Outcomes – SP 3

#### Theme 1 – Promotion of regional projects/initiatives and building confidence through locality-based engagement:

#### **1. PR Campaign to Promote AND LMP:**

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
14 Articles in Council's Ezine 36 Social Media Posts 11 Website updates and links to other initiatives 340 hits on the website Press release for the HGV Academy Press release for the Academy for People with Disabilities.	38% of followers engaged with the Social Media Posts 517 open rate Q1, 285 open rate Q2, 75 open rate Q3 and 114 for Quarter 4. cumulative open rate of 991. There are 1560 businesses registered to receive AND Business ezine. Press releases were featured in various media
Is anyone better off?	
64% of Businesses aware of the regional academies and LMP work	


## **Financial Statement**

An audit of AND LMP was completed in March 2022.

A review of the governance arrangements of the Labour Market Partnership and controls to manage expenditure against the LMP Funding Agreement was conducted in March 2023. The report concluded that overall, there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control.

Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership adheres to Ards and North Down Borough Council's policies and procedures in terms of systems of governance, risk management and control.

The Chief Executive of Ards and North Down Borough Council, who acts as the Chief Financial Officer, has signed off on the Ards and North Down LMP Financial Statement for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

Statement of Income & Expenditure				
Ards and North Down Borough Council Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership Statement of Income & Expenditure Year to 31 March 2023				
	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Total</b>
		<b>Charged</b>	<b>Accrued</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
<b>Funding</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Funding from DfC (Administration)	95,681.72	91,616.96	3,790.36	95,407.32
Funding from DfC (Operational)	284,279.52	53,883.59	224,028.42	277,912.01
Funding from Department of Economy	50,000.00	34,490.00	15,510.00	50,000.00
Contribution from Council				
Contributions from (Other Please state)				
Contributions from (Other Please state)				
	<b>429,961.24</b>	<b>179,990.55</b>	<b>243,328.78</b>	<b>423,319.33</b>
<b>Payments</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Salaries	88,581.72	89,257.08	2,492.42	91,749.50
Staff Costs	300.00	104.88	92.94	197.82
Running Costs	3,900.00	35.00	280.00	315.00
Training	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Audit Fees	1,500.00	2,220.00	925.00	3,145.00
Insurance	1,400.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total DfC Administration</b>	<b>95,681.72</b>	<b>91,616.96</b>	<b>3,790.36</b>	<b>95,407.32</b>
Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	14,450.00	12,450.00	2,000.00	14,450.00
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	241,829.52	41,433.59	194,028.42	235,462.01
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	28,000.00	0.00	28,000.00	28,000.00
<b>Total DfC Operational</b>	<b>284,279.52</b>	<b>53,883.59</b>	<b>224,028.42</b>	<b>277,912.01</b>
Payments - Department XXXX (Admin)				
Payments - Council Contribution (Admin)				
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)				
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)				
<b>Total Other (Admin)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Payments - Department of Economy (Operational)	50,000.00	34,490.00	15,510.00	50,000.00
Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)				
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)				
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)				
<b>Total Other (Operational)</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>34,490.00</b>	<b>15,510.00</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>
	<b>429,961.24</b>	<b>179,990.55</b>	<b>243,328.78</b>	<b>423,319.33</b>
Certificate of Chief Executive				
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.				
			10.05.23	
Chief Executive			Date	