

Labour Market Partnerships
Working Together



**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN
LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP
Annual Report
April 2023- March 2024**

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LMP Chairperson Foreword



Patricia Mackey
Community Planning
Manager, Ards and North
Down Borough Council

It has been a privilege to chair the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership and experience first-hand the positive impact it is having on people who live and work in this Borough.

The goal of the LMP is to improve local conditions (skills and employment) and outcomes for all people. A comprehensive assessment of the local labour market conditions has helped identify need. Our multi-agency partnership has enabled us to leverage the expertise of different organisations, to identify challenges and then develop a plan that addresses these challenges at a very local level. Support has ranged from HGV Academies and Industry Related Training Bursary to job fairs and career videos for use in schools.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to work and build a better future for themselves and their families. Ards and North Down's LMP has helped job seekers find work, improved their skills and raised their aspirations. The LMP has also supported local employers to expand their skilled workforce.

We would like to thank the Department for Communities for funding the LMP and hope that by demonstrating the positive impact of the LMP, and how it improves local market conditions for both employers and prospective employees, that this continues. I would also like to thank the Council's LMP Team for managing the partnership and facilitating its action plan.

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.

Ards and North Down established its Labour Market Partnership on 17th August 2021 and has successfully delivered its Action Plan for 2021-2023 based on the findings from a Strategic Assessment of the Labour Market in the Ards and North Down Area. The Action Plan for 2023-24 was developed to continue the success of the previous Action Plan as well as building on local experience, knowledge of providers and expertise, and marry this with opportunities to address key areas of need within the AND Council area.

The following themes were identified as local priorities:

Theme 1 - Economic Inactivity

Theme 2 – Youth Unemployment

Theme 3 - Disability

Theme 4 - Skilled Labour Supply

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 aim 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)	
Frank Shivers	Bangor Chamber of Commerce	
John Dumigan	Portaferry Regeneration Ltd	
Alison Blayney (Vice Chair)	Kilcooley Women's Centre	
Jenna Pike	Steppingstones	
Ken Scott	Bangor Foodbank	
Dawn Taylor	Department for Communities (Jobs and Benefits Office- Bangor)	

Kerry DeLargy	Department for Communities (Jobs and Benefits Office- Newtownards)	
Cherith Quinn	Department for Economy (Careers Services)	
Ruth Harper	Workplus	
Colin Johnston	Galgorm Hotel Group	
Frank Given	Close Focus Ltd	
John McKibben	Invest NI	
Davina Gordon	Naissance Marketing	
Sean Hanna	NOW Group	
Jenny Potter	NOW Group	
Susanne McCorry	South Eastern Trust	
Selwyn Johnston	Action Mental Health	
Hilary West-Hurst	Education Authority	
Council Staff Members		
Clare McGill	Head of Economic Development	

Nicola Dorrian	Head of Community and Culture, Community and Wellbeing
Patricia Mackey (Chair)	Community Planning Manager
Irene Chong	Data and Evidence Analyst
Council Secretariat	
Karine McGuckin	Economic Development Manager
Nicola Webster-Pickett	Labour Market Partnership Manager
Linda Sims	LMP Administrative Officer

Action Plan Report and Overview of projects/successes

This Annual Report refers to the second Action Plan of the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (AND LMP) and covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

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 Labour Market Partnership for the Ards and North Down Borough.

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

Strategic Priority 3 - To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision (regionally or locally).

Strategic Priority 1 - To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the Ards and North Down Borough.

1. LMP Delivery and Development (including Sub Committee meetings):

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
11 meetings of the full LMP Partnership took place with an average of 57% attendance over the year.	2 Subcommittees were formed and 10 meetings across the year were held with an average attendance of 62%
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.	

2. Development of a Strategic Assessment 24-27 and 24-25 Action Plan:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
22 Consultations representing 11 organisations from the Partnership were held to review performance and discuss future activity. A "Turning the Curve" exercise was also facilitated with the LMP members. An external survey was also sent to all the businesses along with reviewing the latest statistics available for the Borough.	Development of a three-year Strategic Assessment and production of a 1-year Action Plan for 24-25.
Is anyone better off?	
From the findings of the Strategic Assessment the Action Plan for 2024-25 was developed, submitted and presented to DfC.	

3. Capacity Building Opportunities for LMP Members:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
4 Information/ training sessions were provided for the LMP members	LMP members reported increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues.
Is anyone better off?	
Of the LMP members that responded to a survey 100% responded positively that they felt the work of the LMP is making a positive difference and they had an improved understanding of their roles.	

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

Theme 1- Economic Inactivity:

1. Rapid Response Academies:

Project Aim: Responsive training for job opportunities. Academies will be responsive and designed around sector needs and opportunities that present themselves including academy duration and content as well as appropriate qualification.

A classroom assistant academy was decided on due to shortages identified in the Borough.

Rapid Response Academies outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
22 participants recruited.	19 out of 22 participants have gained qualifications (Safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid)
Is anyone better off?	
15 participants have gained employment. 3 participants are in a placement. 14 participants undertook the OCN NI Level 3 qualification.	

Theme 2 – Youth Unemployment:

1. 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 12 videos produced featuring local businesses were:

Sector	Company
Health and Social Care	Positive Futures
Computer Infrastructure	Simply NUC
Hospitality and Catering	Old Inn, Crawfordsburn
Creative Industries	Seacourt Printshop (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
Design Engineering	Redburn Design
Agri Food Sector	Mash Direct

Videos for Schools outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
12 Businesses recruited to appear in videos 12 Videos produced and sent to a sample group.	100% satisfaction with the speakers and video content
Is anyone better off?	
The videos have been shared with the Career's Teachers in all 13 Post Primary schools in the Borough and they have currently been viewed a total of 789 times.	

Theme 3 – Disability:

1. Academy for People with Disabilities:

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



Launch photo for the Academy for People with Disabilities taken at the Launch of the 23-24 Action Plan, City Hall, Bangor in November 2023.

Academy for people with Disabilities outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
33 Participants enrolled across 3 academies: 1. Customer Service 2. Employability 3. Catering and Hospitality	27 out of the 33 participants completed the Academies (81%) 20 Local employers engaged with
Is anyone better off?	
11 participants gained employment 10 participants are in work placements 100% of participants who completed the Academy gained a qualification 100% reported satisfaction with the Academy 100% have increased confidence because of the Academy	

Theme 4 – Skilled Labour Supply:

1. Transport Academy:

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

Employers that have recruited staff include:

- McGimpseys
- NI D Agency
- Independence Coaches
- South Eastern Trust
- Blue Arrow
- Tesco
- Spar (Henderson)
- Amazon
- Harry's For Hire
- RSC Contracts
- World Furniture
- Hays
- Brookstreet
- Lidl
- Blue Yard



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

Transport Academy outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
66 participants were recruited onto the Academy	100% of participants who completed the academy gained a qualification
Is anyone better off?	
59 participants have currently completed the academy. 56 participants gained new employment. 3 participants have just passed and are currently seeking employment	

2. Employer Led Upskilling Programme:

Project aim: Bespoke industry related training. Where employers have specific training requirements for employees, the employer can apply for training grants towards job specific qualifications and fund retrospectively externally funded academy training.

Employer Led Upskilling Programme outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
39 employers engaged with 107 employees enrolled on the programme	85% completed the programme 87% of participants reported satisfaction with the programme. 90% employers reported satisfaction of the project
Is anyone better off?	
60 participants gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project 86% participants reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the project. Ongoing monitoring will provide number of participants moving into higher paid employment or working additional hours.	

3. Academies:

Project Aim: To develop skills for available work opportunities. Academies will be aimed at identifying needs in sectors and aimed at people who wish to obtain a new qualification and available job opportunity.

Due to the number of applicants received for the classroom assistant academy it was decided to run two cohorts.

Academies outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
24 participants recruited.	16 out of 24 participants have gained qualifications (Safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid)
Is anyone better off?	
8 participants have gained employment 2 participants are in a placement 4 participants are seeking placements/ employment 6 undertook the OCN NI Level 3 qualification	

Strategic Priority 3 - To support delivery of existing employability or skills provision.

Promotion of regional projects/initiatives and building confidence through locality-based engagement:

1. Careers Convention:

Project aim: Deliver an event which raises awareness of job opportunities with local employers in ANDBC area.

This event took place in Aurora Aquatic and Leisure complex on the 7th February 2024.



Careers Convention outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
1 event delivered in Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex, Bangor	212 people attended the event. 29 Employers and support organisations attended
Is anyone better off?	
90% of attendees surveyed rated it good/ excellent 50% of employers reported the event would assist in filling vacancies 3 people have taken up Jobs as a result of attending the Careers Convention. 100% of employers who attended rated the event as good/excellent. Further ongoing monitoring of the exhibitors will provide the number of participants who have taken up employment.	

2. Disability Employment and Support Day:

Project aim: Deliver an event that offers specific employment and support opportunities to people with a disability or neurodiverse condition, their carers and parents/ guardians.

Information event to help people with disabilities entering the workforce

AN information session dedicated to helping those living with disabilities entering the workforce, has been endorsed by the Mayor of Ards and North Down.

The Disability Employment and Support Day is set to take place in Bangor's Signal Centre next Wednesday, February 28.

The event is free to take part in, with employers, potential workers, along with their carers, parents and guardians being invited to attend.

Exhibitors at the centre will be giving advice to potential workers on employment options, benefits and other assistance they may need.

Aid for those with disabilities and neurodiverse conditions also include related packages and programmes.

Benefits for employers consist of support packages tailored for when they employ someone with a disability, and information on

training for staff.

This project comes from the council's latest Labour Market Partnership (LMP). These LMPs are funded by the Department for Communities and aim to introduce employment strategies to council areas.

Mayor Jennifer Gilmore said the Ards and North Down LMP helps to create new opportunities for the people of the borough.

"It addresses issues with jobs and training at a local level through locally focused programmes," she said.

"The Disability Employment and Support Day is the LMP's newest programme and will help to provide further support to our local employment market."

Employers are encouraged to attend the event this Wednesday from between 9.30am and 11am. Those working towards entering the job force are invited to attend between 11am and 1pm.

More information can be found at andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp.



Launching the information event are Amy Blair, of Usel, Wendy McGee, of the NOW Group, Mayor Jennifer Gilmore, and Madeline Heron and David Moore, also of the NOW Group.

Press release featured in the Spectator Newspaper on the 22nd February 2024.

This event was held in the Signal Centre on the 28th February 2024 and below are some pictures of the exhibitors.



Disability Employment and Support Day outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
1 Event delivered in the Signal Centre, Balloo Road. Bangor	95 people attended the event. 12 Support organisations attended
Is anyone better off?	
<p>11 attendees signed up to programmes on the day. 100% of attendees rated the event as good/ excellent. 93% of attendees felt more informed about the opportunities and support available in Ards and North Down. Further ongoing monitoring of the exhibitors will provide any additional numbers of participants who have signed up to the programmes on offer.</p>	

3. Ards and North Down Job Fair:

Project aim: Deliver a Job Fair which raises awareness of all job opportunities in the Borough and offers employment support to those that require it.

This event was held in Ards Blair Maybe Wellbeing and Leisure Complex on the 21st March 2024.



Ards and North Down Job Fair outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
1 Large Job fair event delivered in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex	266 people attended the event. 60 Employers and support organisations attended. 93% of employers reported satisfaction with the event
Is anyone better off?	
<p>75% of attendees intend to apply for at least one job as a result of the event. 82% of Employers reported the event would assist in filling vacancies. 5 people have taken up Jobs as a result of attending the Job Fair. Further ongoing monitoring of the exhibitors will provide the number of participants who have taken up employment</p>	

4. PR Campaign to Promote AND LMP:

Project aim: Promote the work of the LMP to local people through a targeted PR campaign.



PR Campaign to Promote AND LMP outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
18 Articles in Council's Ezines Social Media post on the Council's platforms Press release for the Transport Academy Press release for the Academy for People with Disabilities. Press release for the Careers Convention Press Release for the Disability Employment and Support Day Press release for the Job Fair.	9,817 views on the LMP website from Jan- March 2024 14,029 Post Impressions and 13,289 Post Reach from the Council's Facebook posts. 203,211 Post Impressions and 45,994 Post Reach from the paid PR Campaign. 63% of followers engaged with the Social Media Posts Press releases were featured in various media
Is anyone better off?	
Over 100 Expression of interests have been received to register for our upcoming academies. 90% of members feel the PR Campaign has had a positive impact on raising awareness of the LMP.	

Financial Statement

An audit of AND LMP was completed in March 2024.

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 2024. 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 Interim 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 1st April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

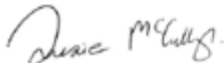
Statement of Income & Expenditure

Ards and North Down City Council
 Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership
 Statement of Income & Expenditure
 Year to 31 March 2024

	Total Funding	Expenditure Charged	Expenditure Accrued	Total Expenditure
	£	£	£	£
Funding				
Funding from DfC (Administration)	102,580.32	103,428.83	0.00	103,428.83
Funding from DfC (Operational)	317,839.60	233,999.61	63,461.82	297,461.43
Funding from DfE				
Contribution from Council				
Contributions from (Other Please state)				
Contributions from (Other Please state)				
	420,419.92	337,428.44	63,461.82	400,890.26
Payments				
Salaries	98,593.35	97,770.68		97,770.68
Staff Costs	500.00	250.02		250.02
Telephones	100.00	0.00		0.00
Printing and Stationery	250.00	0.00		0.00
Audit Fees	3,000.00	5,408.13		5,408.13
Photocopying	136.97	0.00		0.00
Total DfC Administration	102,580.32	103,428.83	0.00	103,428.83
Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	21,903.88	20,593.83		20,593.83
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	259,032.51	182,782.92	63,461.82	246,244.74
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	36,903.21	30,622.86		30,622.86
Total DfC Operational	317,839.60	233,999.61	63,461.82	297,461.43
Payments - DfE (Admin)				
Payments - Council Contribution (Admin)				
Payments - xx				
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)				
Total Other (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - DfE (Operational)				
Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)				
Payments - xx (Operational)				
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)				
Total Other (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	420,419.92	337,428.44	63,461.82	400,890.26

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

17-May-24
Date