

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

Labour Market Partnership

Working Together



# Ards and North Down Employability and Skills Register for Participants

12 September 2024

## **Introduction.**

The Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership was established in August 2021 with the aim of improving employability outcomes and labour market conditions, creating employment and opportunity in the Borough.

A key resource required by both residents and employers as highlighted during extensive consultation, was the creation of an Employability and Skills register so that everyone within the Ards and North Down Borough could easily identify and access interventions to improve labour market conditions.

The register on the following pages details a comprehensive range of regional and local employability and skills delivery organisations and initiatives to provide stakeholders, including residents, with a complete understanding of the existing support landscape for the unemployed, economically inactive, or those who are employed but wish to reskill/upskill to access higher employment opportunities.

For further information, please contact Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership, tel. 0300 013 3333, extension 40958 / 40960 or email: [LMP@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:LMP@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

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## **Section 1**

### **Department for Communities Initiatives - General supports.**

#### **1.1 JobStart Scheme.**

The JobStart Scheme helps young people from the ages of 16 to 24 who are at risk of long-term unemployment get into the job market, by offering six-month job opportunities. Participating in the JobStart Scheme will:

- Develop employment skills.
- Provide a six-month paid job opportunity.
- Enhance CV and future job prospects.
- Increase confidence.
- Learn important work skills such as teamwork and problem solving and communication skills.

By the end of the scheme, participants may:

- Be offered a permanent job by the employer.
- Have the skills and experience to help find another job.
- Go into further education or training opportunities.

To be eligible to apply for the JobStart Scheme you must:

- Be aged 16-24 years old.
- Be at risk of long-term unemployment or struggling to get employment.
- Be currently unemployed.
- Have a National Insurance number and the right to work in Northern Ireland.

During the JobStart scheme, participants will receive at least the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week. The employer may choose to offer additional hours. Other costs such as uniforms or training required may also be covered. All employers in Northern Ireland can take part in the JobStart scheme.

If you receive Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support, and would like further information, contact a Work Coach on 0300 2007807 or visit your local Jobs & Benefits office:

Ards Jobs and Benefits: tel. 0300 2007822, email:

[newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor Jobs and Benefits: tel. 0300 2007822, email:

[bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Hollywood Road Jobs and Benefits: tel. 0300 2007822, email:

[hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

You will not be eligible to apply for the JobStart Scheme if:

- You are planning to take up an apprenticeship or enter education or further

education in the future.

- You are awaiting the outcome of a job interview.
- Your parent or guardian is receiving Child Benefit on your behalf.
- You have already reached 25 years of age.

## 1.2 JobStart 50+ Scheme.

The JobStart 50+ Scheme helps people from the ages of 50 to 64 who are at risk of long-term unemployment get into the job market, by offering six-month job opportunities.

Participating in the JobStart 50+ Scheme will:

- Develop employment skills.
- Provide a six-month paid job opportunity.
- Enhance CV and future job prospects.
- Increase confidence.
- Learn important work skills such as teamwork and problem solving and communication skills.

By the end of the scheme, participants may:

- Be offered a permanent job by the employer.
- Have the skills and experience to help find another job.
- Take up other training opportunities.

To be eligible to apply for the JobStart 50+ Scheme you must:

- Be aged 50-64 years old.
- Be at risk of long-term unemployment or struggling to get employment.
- Be currently unemployed.
- Have a National Insurance Number and the right to work in Northern Ireland.

During the JobStart 50+ scheme participants will receive at least the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week. The employer may choose to offer additional hours. Other costs such as uniforms or training required may also be covered. All employers in Northern Ireland can take part in the JobStart scheme.

If you receive Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support, and would like further information, contact a Work Coach on tel. 0300 2007807 or visit your local Jobs & Benefits office:

Ards tel. 0300 2007822, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel. 0300 2007822, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Hollywood Rd tel. 0300 2007822, email: [hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

You will not be eligible to apply for the JobStart 50+ Scheme if:

- You are awaiting the outcome of a job interview.
- You are below age 50 or have already reached 65 years of age.

### 1.3 Work Experience Programme.

The Work Experience Programme helps those who are unemployed to develop their employability skills and gain the experience required to get a job. DfC collaborates with employers to offer opportunities to obtain meaningful work experience for those who are seeking employment. Short work experience placements of between two and eight weeks are available with local employers for those aged between 16-65 years. During the placements, participants can learn about specific industries and job roles to assist in making more informed choices about their future, whilst also improving confidence and motivation.

Eligible applicants will be assisted in identifying suitable work experience opportunities, developing job-search skills, and gain advice on CV building and interview techniques. To be eligible for the Work Experience Programme, you must be:

- Aged 16-17 and receiving Universal Credit.
- Aged 18-65, receiving Universal Credit or Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support and actively seeking employment or
- Actively seeking employment if you are unemployed and not claiming benefits.

Those participating in a Work Experience placement will receive up to £50 per week (£10 per day) for taking part. Employers who provide a person with a Work Experience placement may receive an incentive payment of £250, provided the participant has completed at least one week on the work experience initiative. Taking part in the programme is voluntary and does not impact benefits.

Any eligible weekly travel costs and childcare costs will also be reimbursed.

Employers interested in participating will be asked to sign an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the programme. Employers will not be asked to make any payments to participants in the programme and participants retain their benefit entitlement during the period of work experience.

### 1.4 The Work Experience Programme (Opportunity Guarantee).

Opportunity Guarantee is a strand of the Work Experience Programme for young people aged 16-24 which provides:

- Work experience placements lasting 13 weeks.
- A guaranteed interview for a job or apprenticeship when the placement ends.

Those participating in an Opportunity Guarantee placement will receive up to £50 per week (£10 per day) for taking part. Employers who provide a person with an Opportunity Guarantee placement may receive an incentive payment of £250, provided the participant has completed at least one week on either work experience

initiative. Employers will also receive an additional £250 payment after the participant has completed the full 13 weeks of work experience.

Employers interested in participating will be asked to sign an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the programme. They need to be willing to host a participant for 13 weeks, be in a recruitment position and be willing to offer participants an interview for a job or apprenticeship. Employers will not be asked to make any payments to participants in the programme and participants retain their benefit entitlement during the period of work experience.

For more information, contact the relevant Jobs and Benefits Office:

Ards tel. 0300 2007822, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel. 0300 2007822, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Holywood Rd tel. 0300 2004250, email: [holywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:holywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

### 1.5 Job Apply NI.

Jobseekers can access current employment opportunities by visiting JobApplyNI. JobApplyNI is the Department for Communities' dedicated website for advertising vacancies and has full, part-time, and casual vacancies across a wide range of occupational areas. Users can search for jobs by:

- Keyword.
- Area Location.
- Sector.

JobApplyNI reaches a wide weekly audience, advertising current job vacancies throughout Northern Ireland, as well as vacancies in the cross-border regions of the Republic of Ireland. The site is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with major recruitment opportunities clearly highlighted in the 'latest news' section of the homepage. Employers can register and list current opportunities free of charge. Individual job seekers who register with JobApplyNI can apply for vacancies directly to employers by uploading and sending their CVs or completing application forms online as appropriate <https://www.jobapplyni.com/>

### 1.6 Advice from Job Coaches at Jobs and Benefits Offices.

Jobs and Benefits coaches provide employability advice to individuals. All offices are open for business, primarily on an appointment basis.

Job Coaches advise individuals looking for information relating to job vacancies and provide information about job trends, education, and training opportunities as well as translation and interpretation facilities. Specialist advice is also available to those with disabilities. Contact details below.

Ards tel. 0300 2007822, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel. 0300 2007822, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Holywood Rd tel. 0300 2004250, email: [holywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:holywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)



## **Section 2**

### **Department for Communities Initiatives - Support for disabled workers and their employers.**

#### **2.1 Workable (NI).**

Workable (NI) offers a flexible range of long-term support to help people with disabilities overcome any barriers to employment, and to find and keep work. The programme offers tailored support for employers and individuals with a disability to meet their specific needs in the workplace through:

- One-to-one support from a job coach to help the employee and their colleagues adapt to the needs of the job.
- Extra training for the employer.
- Disability awareness training for the employer and work colleagues.

The programme is delivered by three providers contracted by DfC as follows:

- Disability Action.
- Supported Employment Solution (SES).
- Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL).

Support within Workable (NI) will determine each individual's specific needs. Where possible, the applicant will attend a meeting at the delivery organisation's premises. However, where this is not possible, meetings can take place in the applicant's home, at a location within their local area, at a local Jobs and Benefits office, local library, or a designated place (including an employer's workplace) in which they feel comfortable. The programme can also be provided virtually if the person prefers to do so. A blended approach is also available.

Participants interested in accessing the Workable (NI) Programme or requiring more information can contact the work coaches in their local Jobs and Benefits offices, where an appointment can be arranged. Contact details below.

Ards tel. 028 91 513312, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel. 0300 2007822, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Hollywood Rd tel. 0300 2004250, email: [hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Alternatively, contact:

NOW Group, tel. 028 90 436400 or email: [admin@nowgroup.org](mailto:admin@nowgroup.org)

Disability Action, tel. 028 90 297880 or email: [normabolt@disabilityaction.org](mailto:normabolt@disabilityaction.org)

Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL) tel. 028 90 356600 or email:

[info@usel.co.uk](mailto:info@usel.co.uk)

Action Mental health, tel. 028 9693 2240 or email: [pkelly@amh.org.uk](mailto:pkelly@amh.org.uk) , website

[Home | Action Mental Health \(amh.org.uk\)](http://Home | Action Mental Health (amh.org.uk))

Cedar foundation, tel. 028 9061 2424 or email: [m.blair@cedar-foundation.org](mailto:m.blair@cedar-foundation.org)

To be eligible for the programme, participants must:

- Have a disability.
- Be at least 16 years of age.
- Be about to start a new job or be experiencing difficulties in their existing job.
- The job must involve 10 hours or more a week on a minimum of a six-month contract.

## 2.2 Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB), Department for Communities.

The Department for Communities provides a range of support programmes for people with disabilities to progress towards, move into and retain employment. This support is provided through Access to Work (NI).

## 2.3 Access to Work (NI).

Access to Work (NI) can help people with disabilities who wish to take up employment or those who are already in work and experiencing difficulties related to their disability. It can also help employers who wish to recruit or retain people with disabilities in employment.

The programme helps with the practical problems caused by disability. It offers advice and support in a flexible way which can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job including getting to and from work. Funding towards additional costs which may arise because of a disability may also be available. This is assessed on an individual case-to-case basis.

Access to Work (NI) can help towards the cost of:

- Communication support for those with a hearing impairment and need a communicator in the workplace or at an interview.
- Provision of special aids and equipment to suit work needs arising from disability.
- Adaptations of premises and equipment in the workplace to help an employee with disabilities.
- Practical help if needed because of a disability, either at work or getting to and from work.
- Support when a person with a disability incurs extra costs in travelling to and from work because of disability.
- Support to assist employers where other additional costs arise because of disability - for example, extra 'in-work' travel costs, or provision of disability awareness training.

For further information, email [healthandworksupportco-ordination@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:healthandworksupportco-ordination@communities-ni.gov.uk) or speak to a job coach at local Jobs and Benefits Office.

Ards tel. 028 91 513312, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel. 0300 2007822, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Hollywood Rd tel. 0300 2004250, email: [hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

## 2.4 Condition Management Programme.

The Condition Management Programme (CMP) is a voluntary, short-term work-focused programme funded by DfC (Department for Communities) and delivered by healthcare professionals throughout the five healthcare trusts in NI. Participation in CMP lasts for up to 12 sessions and supports the participant to develop skills in managing their health condition, improving quality of life and in turn, their potential to develop skills, knowledge and confidence in pursuing “work” now or in the future.

The programme is primarily for those receiving Jobseeker’s Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Universal Credit. Individuals who are already supported by the Department for Communities’ in-work programmes, Workable (NI) or Access to Work (NI), can also avail of CMP to enable them to remain in work or return to work if they are on sickness absence.

Employees can access the programme by way of a self-referral, at which point an initial assessment will be made as to whether the programme is suitable for them. Led by Healthcare Professionals, such as Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Cognitive Behavioural Therapists, the CMP aims to help individuals manage physical and mental health conditions that can often make it difficult to enter, stay or remain in work offering advice on:

- Dealing with stress, anxiety, low mood/depression.
- Coping with pain and fatigue.
- Relaxation techniques.
- Communicating with confidence.
- Developing a healthier lifestyle.
- Looking after your back.
- Exploring potential work options.

CMP may be of benefit to those who:

- Are in work and struggling to stay in work due to a health condition(s).
- Have recently gone off work due to a health condition(s).
- Receive benefits and struggle to find work due to a health condition(s).

Those looking to access CMP can self-refer by calling SEHSCT CMP Office, tel. 028 92 605494 or email [conditionmanagement.programme@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:conditionmanagement.programme@setrust.hscni.net)

Work Coaches within the Jobs and Benefits Office can refer.  
 If supported by Workable and Access to Work, they can refer.  
 GP and Health Care Professionals can make the referral.

## 2.5 The Work Psychology Service.

The Work Psychology Service offers a retention assessment service for anyone in Northern Ireland who has a disability or healthcare condition and where their employment is at risk because of this. The assessment aims to identify strengths,

support needs and reasonable adjustments to enable them to retain and progress in work.

Employers and their employees who wish to be referred for an assessment can contact the Work Psychology Service by email to [wps@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wps@communities-ni.gov.uk) or tel. 028 90 376305. Alternatively, individuals can be referred to this service through their local Jobs and Benefits office.

## **Section 3**

### **Department for the Economy Support Initiatives – Careers Service.**

The Department for the Economy provides a Careers Service that provides impartial, all-age careers information, advice, and guidance, to help make informed choices about future career paths. The Careers Service offers a range of free online interactive tools to help individuals find out more about different careers and match their career options, based on their skills, interests and values.

#### **3.1 Employment, training, and careers.**

**Weblink:** [Employment, training and careers | nidirect](#)

This website provides information on the following:

- Apprenticeships.
- Careers.
- Jobs and Skills.
- Looking for work.

#### **3.2 Careers information for 11–19-year-olds.**

**Weblink:** [11 to 19: your learning and career options | nidirect](#)

This website will provide information for students as follows:

- Curriculums and subject choices.
- Careers online support (features interactive tools).
- Skills to Succeed – apprenticeship options, work experience placements, Further Education pathways and requirements, gaining further experience, options upon leaving school.
- Tips and information for parents.
- Financial advice and support for school/college.

#### **3.3 CV Preparation, cover letters and advice.**

A CV (curriculum vitae) is a brief list of facts about your education, work history, skills, and experience. Employers will ask for CVs as an essential part of the application process, and it is worth taking the time to get it right so you can sell yourself to an employer, highlighting your experiences and strengths.

Advice on how to prepare a CV and cover letter is available online at: [CVs and cover letters | nidirect](#)

This webpage includes the following content:

- All aspects of creating a new CV- what to include and how to present the material to the best advantage.
- Using your CV.
- Covering letter for your CV.

### 3.4 Careers Advisers.

In addition to the online resources, those interested can get in touch directly with a professionally qualified careers adviser who can help make informed choices about future career paths. Professionally qualified careers advisers can be contacted by submitting a query on the following link: [Ask Careers Form \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/ask-careers-form)

Telephone 0300 2007820, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm (except Thursday 10am – 5pm).

The query form aims to help individuals think about what areas are important when planning their future career. The application should take no longer than ten minutes to complete. Once an individual completes their application, they will receive a confirmation email. They will then be contacted, (usually within 24 hours of their application), by the Careers Service to arrange a suitable date and time to discuss matters further with a Careers Adviser. The information within the application will be used as the basis for the careers guidance interview to help individuals make informed, suitable, and achievable career decisions and plan next steps.

The Careers Advisers in the ANDBC area are located within Bangor and Newtownards Jobs and Benefits Offices, see contact details below.

Face-to-face appointments can be arranged via telephone to take place at any of the Jobs and Benefits Offices:

Ards tel. 028 91 513312, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel. 0300 2007822, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Hollywood Rd tel. 0300 2004250, email: [hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:hollywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Find your local careers office at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/find-your-local-careers-office>

Bangor and Newtownards Careers Office:

110 Hamilton Road, Bangor BT20 4LS, contact tel. 0300 2007820 Website [Careers](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/bangor-and-newtownards-careers-office)

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/bangor-and-newtownards-careers-office> - here you will find Opening Hours and Chat feature to speak with careers adviser.

### 3.5 Skills for Life and Work Programme.

Skills for Life and Work will help you build the confidence and skills you need to find work. If you are unsure about the kind of work you want to train for, it can help you to decide. You will be able to work towards recognised qualifications and get genuine experience in a workplace.

You will take part in Skills for Life and Work for between 24 and 30 hours each week for two years. If you have a disability, you can take part in Skills for Life and Work for three years. See eligibility criteria: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/skills-life-and-work>

This webpage also includes links to the following training opportunities and information:

- The Prince's Trust [Confidence, courses, careers | The Prince's Trust \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](https://www.princes-trust.org.uk)
- The Skills Academy for Trainee Civil Engineering Assistants  
Traineeships: [The Skills Academy for Trainee Civil Engineering Assistants | nidirect](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/skills-academy-for-trainee-civil-engineering-assistants)

### 3.6 Traineeships.

A traineeship gives you the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in the sector you are interested in, while also improving your employability skills, English, and Maths. It can help you progress to a full-time job, apprenticeship, or further education. See link: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/traineeships-explained>

### 3.7 Apprenticeships.

An apprenticeship can give you the training and qualifications you need to help you get ahead in your chosen career. There are currently three levels to choose from. See link: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/types-apprenticeships>

The Skills for Life and Work Programme is delivered by the following local training providers outlined below.

- Rutledge Training Ltd, Bangor – tel. 028 91 273474 or email: [Imagowan@rutledgegroup.co.uk](mailto:Imagowan@rutledgegroup.co.uk)  
Training areas offered: Administration and Management, Broad-based, Creative, Health, Social Care, Children and Young People, Hospitality, IT and ICT Services, Retail and Customer Care, Transport and Distribution.
- South Eastern Regional College Bangor and Newtownards Campus – tel. 07825 348645.  
Training areas offered: Broad-Based, Construction, Creative, Hospitality, Retail and Customer Care.

More information is available at [North Down and Ards - Skills for Life and Work | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/north-down-and-ards-skills-for-life-and-work)

## **Section 4**

### **Department for the Economy Support Initiatives delivered by FE/HE Colleges.**

#### **4.0 Department for the Economy Support Initiatives delivered by FE/HE Colleges**

##### **4.1 STEP UP Programme.**

The STEP UP Programme is fully funded by DfE, and managed and delivered by the FE/HE colleges. FE provision has four targeted projects, all delivered within 12 to 36 weeks dependent on the requirements of the applicant to build confidence, explore career options, build on existing skills, gain qualifications while also benefiting from one-to-one mentorship. A range of measures have been put in place by Higher Education Institutions to provide individualised support to encourage continued engagement, higher retention rates and onward progression opportunities.

Step Up in FE Colleges currently offers:

##### **College Connect 24+**

Those aged 25 and over who are currently not in education, employment or training can apply for College Connect 24+. An individual development plan, together with a range of flexible delivery modules and short accredited courses will build additional transversal skills to support individuals into further training, education or employment. It is employment focused and offers flexible interventions with a minimum 12-week delivery with potential for progression.

Participants will:

- Develop an individual learning plan.
- Receive mentorship.
- Receive free expert 1-2-1 career guidance from a Careers Advisor.
- Learn new skills.

##### **WRAP - Women Returners Access Programme**

Unemployed or economically inactive women who wish to build confidence, refresh skills, gain qualifications and work experience in areas of economic demand can apply to WRAP. Through job coaching and mentorship, support will be provided to create progression pathways including to further and higher education or employment.

Participants will:

- Receive support through mentorship, job coaching and action planning.
- Develop an individual learning plan.
- Receive free expert 1-2-1 career guidance from a Careers Advisor.
- Learn new skills.

The overall aim of the Step Up Programme is to:

- Increase access and participation of the under-represented priority cohorts in skills and education opportunities
- Onward positive destination of participants to further education, training, and employment.
- Support participants from the priority groups to gain an awareness of or remain in further education.

Step Up provides support for the following target groups

- People aged from 16 to 24 years old who are not in employment or education or training.
- People aged from 16 to 24 years old who are care leavers or have care experience.
- People aged 24 years and over who are unemployed or economically inactive.
- Young people and adults with a disability or Special Educational Need (SEN).
- Economically inactive women returners.

For further information on Step Up, contact:

South Eastern Regional College, tel. 0345 6007555 or email: [stepup@serc.ac.uk](mailto:stepup@serc.ac.uk)

#### 4.2 NI Traineeship Programme

A Traineeship gives participants the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in the sector they are interested in, while also improving their employability skills, English and Maths, and can help progress towards a full-time job, apprenticeship, or further education.

A Traineeship typically takes two years to complete on a full-time basis and is available to young people over 16 who are not yet in employment, but who are ready and able to engage in a challenging programme in their preferred occupational area through a Further Education College. While the target age group is 16 to 24 years, the Traineeship is open to all age groups.

The Traineeship Programme allows participants to achieve a full Level 2 qualification (equivalent to 5 GCSEs grades A\* - C) and includes the following key elements:

- Level 2 vocational qualification in the chosen occupational area.
- Vocational skills development.
- Transversal and digital skills.
- Work placement.
- Essential Skills numeracy and literacy.
- Additional qualifications deemed necessary for work within a sector for example Health and Safety, CSR, and manual handling.

To enter a Traineeship individuals must hold a minimum of a Level 1 qualification, defined as four GCSEs at grades D to G including Maths and English grades D to E,



or equivalent. Those that do not meet the entry criteria will enter an 'introductory phase' of the Traineeship. Upon enrolment, an initial assessment will be completed to confirm if the participant should enter the full Traineeship or the introductory phase.

The qualifications that underpin the Traineeship are aligned to the Apprenticeships 2021. Frameworks at Level 2 therefore allow a seamless transition to an employed apprenticeship route where appropriate.

Traineeship funding and support can include:

- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) - EMA is a means tested allowance which, if eligible, pays £30 per week to 16 to 19-year-olds. It involves attendance being monitored, and payment is dependent on full weekly attendance in all subject areas including placement. Bonuses are also payable on the achievement of qualifications. EMA application packs are available from FE college reception areas.
- Further Education Grant - Participants can apply for a Further Education Grant which is means-tested and non-repayable. Application packs are available from FE College reception areas.
- Hardship Fund - The Hardship Fund is available to those aged 18 or over suffering from financial hardship. Assistance from the Hardship Fund is means-tested and can only be provided once all other sources of funding have been explored. Childcare can be supported through the Hardship Fund if support is unavailable through the FE Award and Care to Learn.
- Travel - Participants will be eligible to apply for a bus pass if they are under 19 years old and live at least three miles away from their nearest college. Participants will also be reimbursed for their travel costs to work placement.
- Free School Meals - Those under 18 years of age may be entitled to free school meals.

Current Traineeships available at the colleges located within the ANDBC area are outlined as follows:

Bangor campus:

- Engineering
- Professional Chef
- Hospitality and Tourism Team member
- Animal Care
- Hairdressing
- Information Technology
- Travel & Tourism
- Business
- Sport

- Applied Science
- Barbering
- Creative Media Production & Technology
- Art and Design
- Music
- Beauty Therapy
- Hair and Media Make Up
- Professional Bakery.

Newtownards campus:

- Bricklaying
- Carpentry & Joinery
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Vehicle Maintenance & Repair (Light Vehicle)
- Information Technology
- Children's Care, Learning and Development
- Health and social Care
- Professional Chef
- Maintenance Operations (Construction)
- Retail.

For employers looking to get involved, the Traineeship provides them with the flexibility to teach trainees job-specific skills aligned to their industry and business. Employers interested in supporting a trainee through the work-based learning element of the Traineeship can contact their local Further Education College. Traineeship enquiries, tel. 0345 6007555 or email [admissions@serc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@serc.ac.uk)

Participating employers must agree to provide a minimum of 20% (one day per week) of the programme as work-based learning. FE Colleges work with employers to place trainees and to monitor and track progress on all aspects of work-based learning.

#### 4.3 Skill Up – The Flexible Skills Programme.

If you're aged 18 and over and eligible to work in Northern Ireland, a range of free accredited courses are available to help you re-train and re-skill, through SKILL UP.

##### SKILL UP | nidirect

South Eastern Regional College (SERC) is AND's local provider for Skill Up, but access to Skill Up can be made by various other routes such as NI's universities, Belfast Metropolitan College and the Open University.

SERC courses include:

#### Advanced Manufacturing:

- SIEMENS Mechatronics.
- Childcare.
- Level 3 Award in Working with Children and Young People with Special Needs.
- Level 3 Award in Supporting Children and Young People's Speech, Language and Communication.

#### Green Skills:

- Level 3 Award in the Installation and Commissioning of Electric Vehicle Charging Equipment in Domestic, Commercial and Industrial Locations.
- Design of Heat Pump systems.
- Level 3 Award in Design, Installation & Commissioning of Electrical Energy Storage Systems.
- Installation and Maintenance of Air Source Heat Pumps.
- OCN NI Level 2 Hydrogen Safety Awareness.
- OCN NI Level 2 Reducing Energy Use in Buildings.
- Level 2 Award in Retrofit.
- Level 3 Award in the installation & Maintenance of Small-Scale Photovoltaic PV systems.
- LCL Award in Hot Water Systems & Safety (including unvented hot water).
- LCL WRAS Awards Water Regulations Certificate.
- Level 3 Hybrid.
- Level 4 Hybrid.
- Level 5 Award In Green Technologies.
- Level 5 Award In Retrofitting Domestic Properties.
- OCN NI Level 2 Award in Reducing Carbon Footprints through Environmental Action.
- Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Fenestration Installation.
- Level 2 NVQ in Insulation and Building Treatments (Construction).
- Automotive Refrigerant Handling (F-Gas).
- EAL Level 3 Award in Electrical Installation, Inspection, Testing, Certification and Reporting.

#### Health and Social Care:

- NCFE CACHE Level 2 Certificate in Mental Health Awareness.
- NCFE CACHE Level 3 Award in Supporting Individuals with Learning Difficulties.
- NCFE CACHE Level 3 Award in Awareness of Dementia.
- OCN NI Level 3 Neurodiversity in the Workplace.

#### Hospitality:

- Level 2 Award In Food Safety and Hygiene.

- Level 2 Award In Identifying and Controlling Food Allergy Risks.
- Level 3 Award in Supervising Food Safety in Catering.
- Level 2 Award in Tour Guiding.
- Level 2 Award in Principles of Customer Service in Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism.

#### Other Transversal Skills:

- OCN NI Level 2 Award in Social Media.
- OCN NI Level 4 Award in Social Media and Digital Marketing.
- CMI Level 5 Award in Professional Coaching.
- CMI Level 3 Award in Project Management.
- CMI Level 5 Certificate in Project Management.
- CMI Level 3 Award in the Principles of Management and Leadership.
- CMI Level 5 Award in Management and Leadership.
- CMI Level 5 Certificate Leadership & Management.
- CMI Level 5 Diploma Leadership & Management.
- OCN NI Level 3 Award in Innovation & Enterprise in Practice.
- OCN NI Level 3 Award in Learning and Development (TTT).
- OCN NI Level 2 Certificate in Transversal Skills.
- OCN NI Level 2 Award in Transversal Skills.
- Level 3 Fire & Security Experienced Worker - EAL Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Providing Electronic Fire and Security Systems.
- IOE Level 2 Award in International Trade, Customs & Logistics.
- IOE Level 3 Customs Practitioner Award.
- IOE Level 4 Customs Practitioner Award.

#### Software:

- Introduction to Cyber Security.
- Level 2 Award Computerised Accounts.
- OCN NI Level 3 Award in Information Technology Applications - Unit, Computerised Accounting Software.
- OCN NI Level 2 Award in Cyber Security.
- For further information on the Skill Up programme at South Eastern Regional College, go to: [Skill Up at South Eastern Regional College\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)

#### 4.4 InnovateUs.

InnovateUs is a fully funded skills development programme implemented across Northern Ireland by six further education (FE) colleges. It provides a unique, customised training solution for small businesses, aiming to equip them with the essential skills to engage in innovation activities that foster growth and development. The program currently offers support in areas like Advanced Engineering &

Manufacturing, Health & Life Sciences, Food, Drink & Tourism, ICT, and Renewable Energy & Sustainable Technologies.

InnovateUs entails a collaborative effort between businesses and experienced technical consultants who offer tailor-made, fully funded training for a duration of 10-60 hours, typically spanning six months. To qualify, companies must have fewer than 50 employees and be located in Northern Ireland. A member of the FE College's Business Development Team will initially meet with the business to discuss their needs and complete a short skills audit. Following this, a bespoke training plan is then created and delivered to their employees.

Training solutions are available in a wide range of skill areas and typical support provided through the programme is in the following areas:

- CAD Design.
- 3D Printing.
- Passive House.
- Sustainability/Resource Efficiency.
- Specialised ICT Software.
- New Product Development.
- Data Analytics.
- Virtual Learning Environments.
- Augmented and Virtual Reality Experiences.
- Cyber Security Essentials.
- Online Booking Systems.
- 3D and Photographic Virtual Tours.

By gaining these individualised skills, small businesses can then exploit innovative opportunities or undertake additional projects, which it is envisaged will contribute to the growth and development of the business and its employees. The programme intends to turn creative ideas into tangible results for a business including:

- Product diversification and differentiation.
- Launch first to market.
- Increasing sales and profit margins.
- Increase market share and competitive advantage.
- Improve employee motivation and morale.

For more information contact the local FE college (SERC).  
SERC email: [businessservices@serc.ac.uk](mailto:businessservices@serc.ac.uk)

#### **4.5 Skills Focus Programme.**

Skills Focus provides tailored skills provision for small to medium sized enterprises with fewer than 250 employees to help meet business needs and increase the skills levels of the existing workforce to level 2 and above qualifications.

Skills Focus aims to support, promote, and facilitate collaborative working between businesses and FE colleges and is 75% funded.

By increasing the skills levels, motivation, and productivity of the existing workforce through industry-specific and accredited qualifications, it is envisaged productivity will increase helping the businesses prosper. The programme involves:

- Training designed to meet the needs of a business.
- Flexible training delivery, either in a workplace or at the college.
- Increased innovation and growth within a business.
- The opportunity to acquire accredited qualifications and a more productive, skilled workforce.

For more information, contact the local FE college (SERC).

SERC email: [businessservices@serc.ac.uk](mailto:businessservices@serc.ac.uk)

#### 4.6 Higher Education Full Time and Part Time Programmes.

At SERC, you can access a variety of qualifications at different levels, all of which are recognised by employers and universities. There are a range of Higher Education programmes available within the NI Colleges. These include:

##### Foundation Degrees.

A Foundation Degree is a Level 5, higher education qualification mainly delivered through all six Further Education Regional Colleges as well as CAFRE and a local University (Queens University Belfast, Ulster University or the Open University). They combine academic and work-related learning designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attributes required in the workplace.

Local FE Colleges and employers partner in the design, development and delivery of these degrees so that graduates gain industry-specific skills and knowledge that they can then apply to benefit an employer's workplace. Available in a wide range of subject areas, Full-time Foundation Degrees normally last two years and can be flexible in their delivery to fit around an employee's work pattern. Students who complete a Foundation Degree also have the option of progressing to university to 'top-up' their qualification to an Honours Degree.

##### Higher Nationals.

Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) are work-related, or vocational, higher education qualifications. Higher Nationals focus on 'learning by doing' and give skills that you can use in a particular job. They are highly valued by employers and can also count towards membership of professional bodies and other employer organisations.

HNCs are level 4 and usually studied full-time over one year or part-time over two years. For those already in employment, a part time HNC lets you put the technical skills you learn into practice in your current job. HNCs are considered the first year of

an HND. They provide progression opportunities to the HND or degree programmes or opportunities into employment.

HNDs are level 5 and usually studied full-time over one year or part-time over two years. They provide progression opportunities to degree programmes or opportunities into employment.

## Bachelor's Degrees

A Bachelor's Degree is an undergraduate degree in which students study a subject of their choice and is commonly known as a university degree. Getting a Bachelor's Degree can open access to job opportunities, expose you to new ideas, and boost your earning potential and provide progression to further studies such as a Masters or Doctorate.

South Eastern Regional College offers three Bachelor degree programmes including:

- BSc Hons Cyber Security and Digital Forensics (Validated by The Open University).
- BSc Hons Cloud Computing Technologies (Validated by The Open University).
- BSc Hons Business Management (Validated by LJMU).

## General HE Entry Requirements.

Entry requirements for a Higher Education programme, dependent on the chosen course, are normally stated in terms of A-Levels or vocational equivalents such as BTEC National Diplomas. Applicants who may not have formal qualifications but who can demonstrate they have relevant experience, skills and aptitudes may also be considered through a process known as Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

For more information contact the local FE college in Ards and North Down: (SERC) tel. 0345 6007555 or email: [info@serc.ac.uk](mailto:info@serc.ac.uk)

## 4.7 Apprenticeships NI.

The Apprenticeships NI programme offers training across a wide range of apprenticeships to people aged 16 and over. An apprentice can be a new or existing employee, in a Northern Ireland-based company, working with experienced staff to learn and develop relevant skills. Along with on-the-job experience, an apprentice receives 'off-the-job' training, usually on a day-release basis with a training provider, to work towards achieving vocational qualifications and Essential Skills qualifications (Literacy, Numeracy and ICT) if necessary. The apprentice is normally with the employer four days a week and with the training provider one day a week.

There are currently three levels of apprenticeship to choose from. Level 2 is the first level and the one that most new apprentices choose. Depending on ability and

qualifications, participants can either progress from Level 2 to Level 3 or go straight in at Level 3. It usually takes up to two years to complete one level and up to four years to finish the two levels depending on their complexity and your ability.

Higher Level Apprenticeships at SERC offer qualifications from Level 4 to Level 6 and will take a minimum of two years to complete.

For more information, contact one of the local FE colleges:

SERC tel. 0345 6007555 or email: [apprenticeships@serc.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@serc.ac.uk)

Visit our website at [Apprenticeships - SERC](#)

#### 4.8 Higher Level Apprenticeships.

Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) are available to those who have completed A-Levels (or equivalent qualification) and offer qualifications from Level 4 upwards and take a minimum of two years to complete, with the length dependent on the chosen programme. Most HLAs are at Level 5 (Foundation Degree or equivalent).

Opportunities are currently available for individuals to gain qualifications from Level 4 upwards for both new employees and existing employees in a new job role. Entry requirements will depend on the apprenticeship pathway. However, to be eligible to take part in the Higher-Level Apprenticeship Programme, as a minimum, an individual needs to:

- Be employed or be about to take up paid employment as an apprentice or be an existing employee moving to a new job role, with a Northern Ireland-based company.
- Work a minimum of 21 hours per week (which includes time for 'off-the-job' training).
- Have achieved all necessary entry qualifications determined by the relevant sector.
- Pass any entry tests specified by the relevant sector; and
- Be the minimum school leaving age (16) in Northern Ireland.

For more information, contact SERC:

SERC tel. 0345 6007555 or email: [apprenticeships@serc.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@serc.ac.uk)

Visit our website [Apprenticeships - SERC](#)

#### 4.9 Workplus.

##### Apprenticeships.

These apprenticeships work on two concurrent levels:

- Employers approach Workplus if they are willing to offer apprenticeships.
- Individuals approach Workplus if willing to undergo an apprenticeship.

Apprentices under the scheme can be any age and it is an opportunity to learn as you earn. Using the Workplus platform employers can explore available



apprenticeships from various providers, receive support to choose the right pathway and promote apprenticeship opportunities. Applicants can access information about the apprenticeship and apply to employer and course. This is an efficient way to fill skills gaps by directly working with local companies.

The application process can be completed online at [www.workplus.app](http://www.workplus.app)

Enquiry email address: [Richard@workplus.app](mailto:Richard@workplus.app)

#### **4.10 Belfast Works Connect.**

##### Training Courses and Employability Schemes:

Offer free OCN training in:

- Basic ICT.
- Social media.
- Managing Personal Finance.
- Health and Fitness.
- Community Engagement and many more.

Also offer Essential Skills English, Maths, and ICT.

##### External Training:

- SIA.
- CSR.
- Dog Grooming and Barbering.

Belfast Works Connect also look at other training that clients may need to get the job they want. This is focused on individual needs.

##### Eligibility requirements.

We work with clients who are Economically inactive, such as:

- Clients on low capability benefits such as PIP, ESA.
- Parents with children under three looking to get back into training etc, carers, students.
- Target groups within age group 16 – 64.

##### We provide:

- Assistance methods such as webchats, appointments etc. for employers and general enquirers.
- One-to-one mentoring support, either face to face or online.
- We offer support into Volunteering or Employment and additional funding to help with travel costs, uniforms, childcare, further training etc.

Contact tel. 07955 528220. Email: [belfastworksconnect@ebm.org.uk](mailto:belfastworksconnect@ebm.org.uk)  
Website: <https://www.facebook.com/BelfastWorksConnectEastBelfast/>  
<https://ebm.org.uk/employability/>

## **Section 5** **Department for the Economy Support Initiatives – General Supports.**

### **5.1 Essential Skills Programme: Developing Literacy, Numeracy, and ICT Skills.**

#### 5.1.1 For Individuals.

Essential Skills is a fully funded training programme designed to help participants to develop literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills. The programme is available to anyone over 16 years of age and all free courses can be undertaken at a college, at work or with a community organisation at different times of the day. Classes are small and informal.

Those taking part in the courses can:

- Learn at their own pace.
- Practice how to use the skills you learn in everyday situations.
- Gain qualifications that employers will recognise.

Before taking part in the programme, individuals will initially take part in an Essential Skills assessment to ascertain the level of entry (i.e., Level 1 or 2) most applicable to them.

Courses are available through the following organisations located within the ANDBC area:

- Rutledge Training Ltd., tel. 028 91 273474.  
[CMcChrystal@rutledgegroup.co.uk](mailto:CMcChrystal@rutledgegroup.co.uk)
- SERC – tel. 0345 6007555 or [admissions@serc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@serc.ac.uk)

#### **SERC Careers Service.**

SERC Careers Service provides impartial careers information, advice and guidance to current and prospective students, as well as anyone in the local community. The team of professionally qualified Careers Officers offer a service that is confidential and tailored to client needs. SERC Careers Service can help with:

- exploring career options and choosing courses/careers
- making applications for further study including UCAS
- signposting to careers information and opportunities, including volunteering
- job searching, applications, CVs and interview preparation.

For more information or to book an appointment to discuss career options, please email [careers@serc.ac.uk](mailto:careers@serc.ac.uk) or telephone SERC on 0345 6007555.

## 5.2 Assured Skills Programme.

The Assured Skills Programme is a short, demand-led, pre-employment training programme, which is fully funded by the Department for the Economy (DfE), to upskill individuals and help them compete for guaranteed job vacancies in new foreign direct investment (FDI) companies and expanding local businesses. New inward investors, or existing employers considering expansion, who are Invest Northern Ireland clients may be eligible for Assured Skills.

Under the Assured Skills Academy Model, where a company or a consortium of companies have an identified skills need, DfE will consider developing a short-term pre-employment training intervention to meet that need. This typically involves a six-to-eight-week pre-employment training programme delivered by a local college or university. The programme is designed to upskill individuals in the skills needed by industry for current job vacancies.

The Academy Model is flexible, and versatile and has been used to help companies recruit new staff in areas such as data analytics, business consultancy, legal services, financial services, software development, cyber security, welding, and numerical control machining.

Companies seeking support through the delivery of a pre-employment training programme should contact DfE's Employer Skills Branch on tel. 028 90 416972 or email: [assuredskills@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:assuredskills@economy-ni.gov.uk)

New inward investors or existing employers considering expansion, who are Invest Northern Ireland clients and are interested in the programme should contact their Invest Northern Ireland Client Executive in the first instance. The Client Executive will be able to advise if Assured Skills is relevant to their needs and contact the Assured Skills team on their behalf accordingly.

The Academy Model can be beneficial for those that are unemployed, under-employed, an 18-year-old school leaver, graduated or have experience but would like to change direction in their career, with the vast majority of Academy programmes aimed at providing graduate-level opportunities for unemployed graduates.

Those involved in the academies receive training allowances, including a weekly allowance of £115 and reimbursement for weekly travel expenses as well as potentially being eligible for childcare allowance. The Academies have around an 80 per cent success rate of participants progressing into full-time employment. Current academies, if any are ongoing, are advertised online at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assured-skills-academies>

Vacancies may also be advertised on the following websites:

[JobApplyNI](#),

[NIJobs.com](#) | [Jobs NI](#), [Jobs in Northern Ireland](#), [Recruitment NI](#)

[Find Northern Ireland Jobs with nijobfinder](#)

The Assured Skills programme offers pre-employment training to give you the skills needed to compete for new employment opportunities. It works with companies in Northern Ireland that have current job vacancies available and offers pre-employment training to meet the skills needed for those jobs.

If you successfully complete an Assured Skills Academy Training Programme, you will be offered a job interview with the recruiting company.

### Training allowances

When you are in a training academy, you:

- will receive a weekly training allowance of £175
- will be reimbursed weekly travel expenses
- may be eligible for childcare allowance.

### Register your interest

To receive updates on new academy opportunities or to find out more about the assured skills training programme, contact the [Department for the Economy - Employer Skills Branch](#).

### **Jobs secured through previous academies**

People who have previously taken part in academies have secured full-time jobs in different areas such as:

- cyber security
- data analytics
- financial services
- legal services
- software development
- software engineering
- software testing
- Welding.

## **Section 6**

### **Ards and North Down Borough Council Support Initiatives.**

#### **6.1 Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership.**

Ards and North Down (AND) Labour Market Partnership (LMP), established as part of the DfC's Employability Programme, aims to help people into meaningful employment through a range of training and support programmes.

The AND LMP Action Plan for 2024/2025, which is aimed at addressing local industry skills and employment needs, plan to offer the following academies from early Autumn 2024:

- Transport Academy.
- Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy.
- Admin Academy.
- Academy for People with Disabilities.

In addition, an Employer-Led Upskilling Grants Programme, Job Fairs, Skills and Employment Support Clinics and an Employer Engagement Session will also be delivered.

All programmes will target:

- Economically inactive.
- Long-term unemployed.
- People with disabilities.
- Those impacted by unforeseen changes in the economy.
- Skilled labour supply issues.

For further details on all programmes, academies and upcoming events, visit <https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp>

Ards and North Down LMP can be contacted on tel. 0300 0133333 or email: [lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

#### **6.2 Go Succeed – NI Business Support.**

Go Succeed is the new go-to source for expert business advice led by Northern Ireland's 11 local councils. Whether you are a budding entrepreneur just starting out, are looking to grow your business, or are planning to scale up, our team of industry experts will provide tailored support and guidance to help you achieve your business goals.

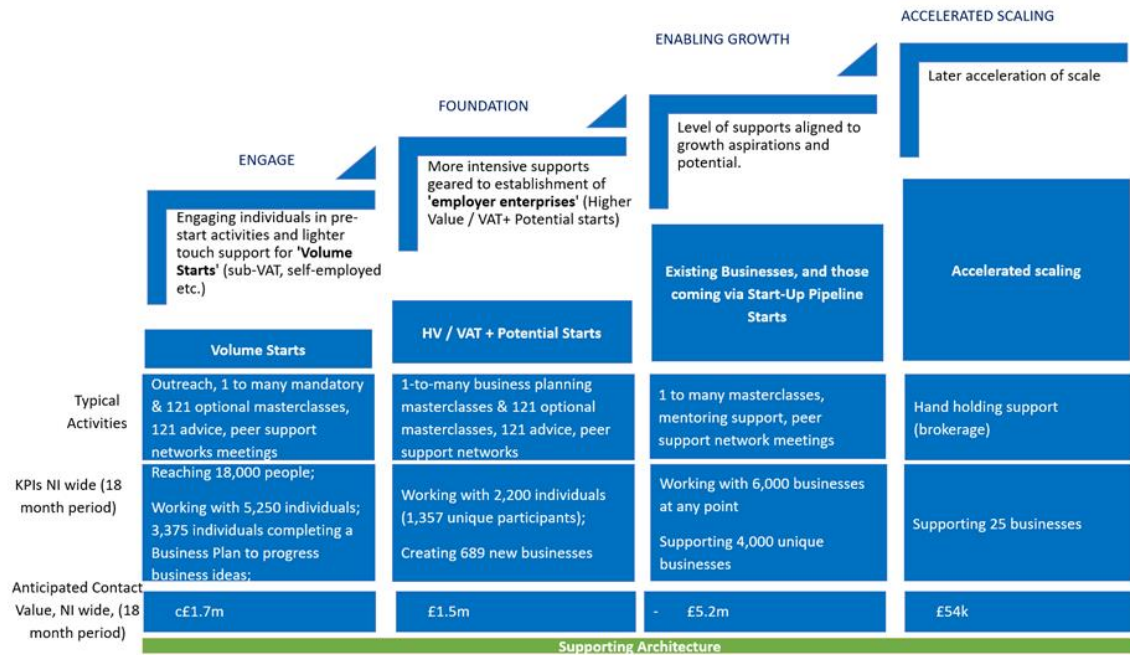
**Start** – have an idea but don't know if it could be a business.

**Grow** – business is performing but don't know how to take it to next step, for example in areas like product/service development, sales/marketing, people development, finances and operations & processes.

**Scale** – next step potential to become Invest NI clients.

There are four elements of the service:

1. Engage - Engaging individuals at the pre / early start-up phase.
2. Foundation - Support for founding of higher value / VAT + potential businesses.
3. Enabling Growth - Existing Businesses aligned to aspirations and potential.
4. Accelerated Scaling - Supporting start-ups and existing businesses that can generate at least £1m in revenues after three years.



“What’s in it for you.”

- Series of Webinars Masterclasses – online and in person.
- Large Scale Events.
- Themed Networks.
- Focused Mentoring for all 4 pillars/elements.
- Under Engage there is Idea Development.
- E&F develop a Business Plans.
- Growth and Scaling work with mentor to produce Strategic Growth Plans.
- Grants for those in Foundation and Growth element.
- The Go Succeed Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000.00.
- Referral and Signposting to other support services.

Next step is to register on Go Succeed.com or ANDBusiness.co.uk, once you've registered on the portal you will be assigned a mentor to assess your needs and get you started on Go Succeed.

For more information on Go Succeed, please use the following link:

[Go Succeed - NI Business Support \(go-succeed.com\)](http://go-succeed.com)

## **Section 7**

### **Shared Prosperity Funded Projects.**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) succeeds the EU Structural Fund (ESF) with almost £127 million been made available to invest into 3 priorities; Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills.

Approx. £56 million investment has been allocated towards helping economically inactive within Northern Ireland back into the labour market across 18 projects, 11 of which operate within the Mid-Ulster area.

#### **7.1 SkillSET (SET – Support, Employment, Training).**

Managed by Action Mental Health, in partnership with Cedar Foundation, Orchardville, NOW Group, Royal National Institute of Blind People, Adapt NI and Mencap, SkillSET will deliver an innovative programme of specialist employment, preparation, and training with particular emphasis on those with disabilities and or health conditions, across Northern Ireland. This partnership of seven regional and national disability organisations from the voluntary sector, brings vast experience of supporting economically inactive people towards securing sustainable employment. SkillSET will provide specialist, targeted support to those with disabilities / health conditions who face multiple barriers in accessing employment and are furthest from the labour market.

To find out more about delivery in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, tel. 028 90 461834 or email: [info@amh.org.uk](mailto:info@amh.org.uk)

Ards and North Down Borough Council Area: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/north-down-and-ards-skills-life-and-work>

Action Mental Health New Horizons, tel. 028 91 822410 or email:

[ArdsNH@amh.org.uk](mailto:ArdsNH@amh.org.uk) , website [Home | Action Mental Health \(amh.org.uk\)](http://Home | Action Mental Health (amh.org.uk))

#### **SkillSET (NIACRO).**

Managed by NIACRO, SkillSET offers vocational training for those with a conviction or licence restrictions who wish to pursue employment in construction, hospitality or warehousing e.g., Level 1 Site Health and Safety, CSR, Level 2 Risk Assessment, plant training, bespoke hospitality training packages provided by Springboard UK, OCN Level 1 Employability, OCN Level 1 Life Stories.

Disclosure advice is available for anyone with a conviction who is seeking advice or support around disclosing a conviction e.g., understanding and clarifying spending periods, support with writing a disclosure statement for employers, colleges, or universities, AccessNI checks and challenges.

These offers are available both in custody and in the community.

For further information tel. 028 90 320157 or email: [working.well@niacro.co.uk](mailto:working.well@niacro.co.uk)

### Aspire Mentoring

In addition to SkillSET, NIACRO also offer a mentoring programme for young men who are under PBNI supervision, leaving prison or in the early stages of their community sentence. To find out more about Aspire, tel. 028 90 320157, or via the website link: [NIACRO | www.niacro.co.uk](https://www.niacro.co.uk)

### **7.2 EMPOWER.**

Employment support programme for people who are disabled, have a health condition, or identify as autistic or neurodivergent and are unemployed.

Partnership of Usel, Disability Action and Specialisterne NI.

Support for 2,000 people.

Commitment to support 1,000 people into employment April 2023-March 2025.

### USEL

USEL is the largest provider of disability employment support in Northern Ireland, supporting more than 1,000 adults to find and stay in work.

### Disability Action

Disability Action is the largest pan disability organisation in NI with services reaching more than 45,000 disabled people each year.

### Specialisterne

Working across NI, their specialist team support autistic and neurodivergent people to secure employment and thrive at work. See contact details below.

Rachel McHugh, email: [rmchugh@usel.co.uk](mailto:rmchugh@usel.co.uk) tel. 07525 129665.

Amy Blair, email: [ablair@usel.co.uk](mailto:ablair@usel.co.uk) tel. 07785 429624.

### **7.3 Work It Out.**

Managed by DFPF Ltd (People 1<sup>st</sup>), the Work It Out programme is an essential skills course helping the economically inactive to get a maths/numeracy qualification which employers recognise. The programme is all about building confidence and aims to transform participants' lives both financially and emotionally.

To be eligible, participants must be:

- economically inactive
- recently made redundant
- returning to work after having a family
- returning to work after being long or short term unemployed.

Participation on this programme does not affect your benefits. Participants can learn at their own pace to achieve Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications which are available online. Contact tel. 028 90 669669 or email: [c.norris@people-1st.co.uk](mailto:c.norris@people-1st.co.uk)



#### 7.4 Exploring Self-Employment and Enterprise Skills Together.

Enterprise Northern Ireland, The Prince's Trust and Local Enterprise Agencies have formed a partnership to deliver the Explore Enterprise Support Service. This programme aims to assist 1,000 individuals to develop a range of interpersonal, enterprise and employability skills. Personalised one-to-one support tailored to the individual's specific needs will provide an insight into starting a business or allows participants to take the first steps to gaining employment.

The Explore Enterprise Support Service will afford participants the opportunity to receive:

- Tailored mentoring support and guidance.
- A bespoke Personal Development Plan.
- Opportunity to work towards a Level 2 qualification in Enterprise and access to a range of workshops covering topic such as finance, marketing, business idea generation and employability.
- Collaboration with the wider support ecosystem to offer additional assistance and guidance, providing the individual with a holistic support network.
- Searching for further education courses or other relevant training.

To qualify for the Explore Enterprise Support Service, individuals must be economically inactive and over 16 years of age.

The programme is currently being delivered at Ards Business Hub:

tel. 028 91 819787 or email: [info@ardsbusiness.com](mailto:info@ardsbusiness.com) and North Down Development Organisation, tel. 028 91 271525 or email: [mail@nddo.co.uk](mailto:mail@nddo.co.uk) in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area. Register online at: [Pre Start \(enterpriseni.com\)](http://Pre Start (enterpriseni.com))

#### 7.5 Multiply Scheme.

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) have been successful recently in receiving funding for four projects under the Multiply Scheme. This will focus on numeracy deficiencies within the borough and will specifically focus on the following 4 projects/areas:

- Engaging with mature Learners.
- Numeracy Bootcamp – skills for life cooking.
- Numeracy bootcamp – skills for life debt.
- Maths for Speakers of Other Languages (MSOL).

The purpose would be to provide basic projects in Maths to empower adults in the areas of Personal Growth, Knowledge etc. Multiply is suitable for anyone over 18 years of age that do not hold a maths qualification. The sessions are for basic maths skills delivered within the community for those that educational establishments would be a barrier.

## **Section 8**

### **Support for Women to access employment**

#### **8.1 Women in Business.**

Women in Business (WIB) is a non-profit organisation based in Belfast, and the main network for women in the workplace across Northern Ireland. WiB's vision is to equip women with the skills they need to gain employment, start their businesses, or develop their careers. Those seeking to become a member can do so through the WIB website at: [Join Today | Women in Business NI](#)  
WomeninbusinessNI.com.

#### **Yes, You Can Programme.**

Yes, You Can is a free, female enterprise programme, designed to support women through the idea, start up and growth stages of their business journey, facilitated by Women in Business. The programme incorporates four separate strands of support, designed to help women with the challenges and opportunities they face at various stages of business ownership.

#### **Strand 1: Imagine It.**

Imagine It Bootcamps are full-day interactive workshops for 20 women who need some guidance when it comes to pursuing their business idea. Taking place across five separate locations in Northern Ireland, the bootcamps encourage change, confidence and communication as an entrepreneur and help the participants to focus on their business ideas and provide practical advice on how to drive it all forward.

Each bootcamp is hosted by two experienced facilitators, along with guest speakers from the local entrepreneurial community who will share their business tips and secrets to success. The bootcamps also provide networking opportunities to connect with like-minded women [Yes You Can | Imagine It Bootcamps | Women in Business NI](#)

#### **Strand 2: Explore It.**

Explore It is a hybrid 5-month programme for cohorts of 15 women who are in the idea stage or early trading stages of business. With ongoing support, participants will be guided on how to put what they learn into practice through Business Start training, Digital Marketing training, Peer Advisory Groups and 1:1 Buddy Support. You can apply via this link: [Yes You Can: Explore It | Women in Business NI](#)

#### **Strand 3: Grow It NI and Grow It All-Island.**

Grow It provides an opportunity for up to 30 female founders to take time out from their business, to think, analyse and plan with other entrepreneurs, learning from other participants and facilitators to stimulate creative business ideas.

Areas such as Analysis, Marketing, Sales, Leadership, Finance and Planning are all explored and considered over a six-month period. The All-Island programme is aimed at businesses who would specifically like to foster cross-border connections.

To qualify for Grow It, you must be a female business owner based in Northern Ireland or ROI who would like to achieve growth or further growth in their business and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Full time trading 3+ years.
- Annual Turnover of £60k+.
- Other income/investment of £60k-200k.
- Employing staff.

[Yes You Can: Grow It | Women in Business NI](#)

#### **Strand 4: £20K Pitching Competition.**

The Pitching Competition provides a platform for women entrepreneurs from across the island of Ireland to pitch their business idea. The final six will each receive £3,000 (or Euro equivalent) and will then be invited to take part in a final live pitch, at the Women in Business All Island Entrepreneurs Conference, where they will have the opportunity to win a further £2,000 (or Euro equivalent) and receive press coverage on their success.

WiB also run the Building Futures programme, a free 7-week programme for women who are not currently in employment with the aim of supporting women to make money by turning their creative ideas into a small business. More information here:

[Building Futures Programme | Women in Business NI](#)

WiB members can book an online appointment for an hour's free business coaching from the Entrepreneurship Team.

More information can be found at Entrepreneurship | Women in Business NI or by contacting Vicky Blades, Entrepreneurship Programme Coordinator on [vicky@womeninbusinessni.com](mailto:vicky@womeninbusinessni.com)

## **Section 9.**

### **Enterprise Northern Ireland Initiatives, Local Enterprise Agencies and Training Organisations.**

#### **9.1 The Prince's Trust.**

The Prince's Trust believes every young person should have the chance to succeed. As one of the UK's leading youth charities, The Prince's Trust supports young people aged 11-30 to build their confidence, learn skills to get a job, or even start a business. Working in partnership, The Prince's Trust helps those facing the greatest adversity, providing free courses, grants, and mentoring opportunities.

The Prince's Trust Northern Ireland is located at Weaver's Court in Belfast.

The Prince's Trust fund participant travel costs and provide lunch while on programme. They can also fund childcare costs. Participating on the programmes will not impact benefits, including those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. To contact The Prince's Trust, call the customer service team on 0800 842842 or contact the outreach team at [outreachni@princes-trust.org.uk](mailto:outreachni@princes-trust.org.uk)

In addition to programmes funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund detailed in Section 7, The Prince's Trust also delivers the following programmes:

#### 9.1.1 Explore.

The Explore programme is for 16 to 30-year-olds who are not sure about their next step and is directed by individual goals. Participants will progress into employment, training, education, or volunteering by completing progression-related qualification units, exploring sector-specific skills, developing confidence and self-awareness, and receiving tailored one-to-one and progression support up until their 'next step'. The programme is delivered at the Belfast office.

For more information, visit [Explore programme | Goal-setting and personal development \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](https://princes-trust.org.uk/explore-programme-goal-setting-and-personal-development)

#### 9.1.2 Explore+.

The Explore+ programme is for 16 to 24-year-olds and provides the opportunity to learn new skills and train. The programme lasts for six months and offers a mix of group activities and one-to-one support to develop the skills and confidence young people need to move forward. Activities relate to key skills to support young people in life and work, including good relations, personal development, citizenship, employability, and positive progression. Participants also receive regular one-to-one support to help them take their next steps towards their goals. The programme is delivered at the Belfast office.

#### 9.1.3 Team Programme.

The Team Programme is for 16 to 24-year-olds and is run in conjunction with delivery partners in North West Regional College in Derry/Londonderry. The Team Programme is a 12-week personal development course. This course is aimed at those not in employment, lacking in confidence or unsure of what they want to do in life. Participants are given the opportunity to gain work experience, recognised qualifications, participate in a community project, and residential outdoor pursuits. Although the course is not academically-focused, the Team Programme provides young people with the opportunity to work towards a qualification (Certificate in Employment Team Working & Community Skills Levels 1 and 2).

For more information visit [Boost your confidence with Team | Get a job \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](https://princes-trust.org.uk/boost-your-confidence-with-team-get-a-job)

#### 9.1.4 Get Started Programme.

The Get Started Programme is for 16 to 30-year-olds. Participants can take part in a five-day long introductory course designed to give a flavour of certain occupations, develop new skills, and build confidence. The courses take place in different subject areas including beauty, fire and rescue, health and fitness, photography, and filming. On completion, participants receive a Prince's Trust qualification or beauty qualification (course depending).

For more information visit [Get Started | Free careers courses | How we can help \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

#### 9.1.5 Get into Programme.

The Get Into programme is for those aged 16 to 30 (minimum age of 18 for some programmes) looking for 'on the job' experience and training. The programme allows participants to work with top employers in retail, hospitality, and security, while improving participants' employability skills. Opportunities for employment are available on course completion. Courses run from three to four weeks from the Belfast centre, with work placements available in various locations across Northern Ireland.

For more information visit [Get experience with Get into | Get a job | How we can help \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

#### 9.1.6 Get Hired Programme.

The Get Hired programme is for those aged 16 to 30 who are ready for work. The programme lasts for two days, with the first day encompassing an introduction to the potential employers and interview preparation with The Prince's Trust. The second day entails a job interview with an employer. Previous employers have included Sectra, EE, and Health and Social Care.

Employers can contact The Prince's Trust if they would like to get involved with this programme.

#### 9.1.7 Development Awards.

Individuals aged between 16 to 30 can apply for grants to help remove barriers to work, education, or training. Development Awards can go toward course fees, equipment, uniforms, or textbooks for courses or jobs, and travel fees to attend training or their job (if they are newly employed). Evidence will be needed to prove enrolment on the course or the offer of employment, plus proof of the cost of the item (e.g., a list of equipment from a college tutor).

For more information visit [Get funding to train and learn | Development Awards \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

#### 9.1.8 Enterprise.

Enterprise is an online course to support young people aged 18-30 to start their own business. They can participate in online workshops at a time that suits them and get

two years of one-to-one support from The Prince's Trust to develop their business plan. Participants can also get a volunteer mentor with business experience and apply for grants of up to £500 and £5000 to help them launch.

For more information visit: [Support for starting a business | Free Enterprise programme \(princes-trust.org.uk\)](#)

## 9.2 Young Enterprise Northern Ireland.

Young Enterprise Northern Ireland (YENI) is an Enterprise Education Charity, based in Belfast, but with regional teams serving the whole of the country. After losing their funding from government departments, the organisation is now supported primarily by Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast, NI's local councils, and their business backers located throughout NI. Most of their programmes are operated in schools; however, they also offer the Start Up Programme, which is for FE and HE students (see details below). They also offer a range of entrepreneurship online learning resources on their website, through their YE Academy platform, which allows students, parents, and teachers to provide interactive solutions for classroom-based or home-learning.

For more information visit [Young Enterprise NI - Young Enterprise NI \(yeni.co.uk\)](#) contact tel. 028 90 327003, or email [info@yeni.co.uk](mailto:info@yeni.co.uk)

### 9.2.1 Start-Up Programme.

The Start-Up Programme provides an employability and entrepreneurship experience for HE and FE students. It allows university/local FE college students to develop employability skills and prepare for the world of work through a practical programme where participants set up and run their own student company for up to 12 months.

As part of the programme students:

- Are provided with an extensive range of online resources.
- Attend local competition events as well as potentially attended events at a European level.
- Have access to a YE Trading Station – a bespoke online sales platform for YE student companies.
- Have opportunities to receive mentoring from a Business Volunteer and to attend bespoke enterprise workshops.

The programme can be operated at the FE colleges located in the Ards and North Down area, and the Young Enterprise NI contact is South East Area Manager, Freddie Harris. tel. 07809 656666, or email: [freddie.harris@yeni.co.uk](mailto:freddie.harris@yeni.co.uk)

## **SECTION 10 Support, Training and Employability Pathways for People with Disabilities**

### **10.1 Adapt NI.**

AdaptNI is a CIC not-for profit, with a social purpose in Northern Ireland that specialises in employment support and skills development. With a mission to empower individuals to achieve their career aspirations, AdaptNI provides the Deaf, Hearing Loss and Tinnitus Communities with tailored support, training, and guidance to create opportunities for personal and professional growth. AdaptNI supports the Deaf, Hearing Loss and Tinnitus Communities on every step of their career journey.

### **Upcoming courses**

#### **SET Self-Employment Training**

Six-week free Self Employment Training Academy.

On Wednesday evenings, starting Wed 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 6-9pm @ Jordanstown School

Fully Accessible

Eligibility: Open to anyone with a hearing loss

Opportunity to apply for up to £500 start up grant

Funded by 'The Ulster Society for the promoting the Education of the Deaf and the Blind'

To secure place or further information email: [info@adaptni.co.uk](mailto:info@adaptni.co.uk)

#### **SkillSET Employability Course**

AdaptNI's SkillSET Employability Course is tailored to provide participants with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to navigate today's job market successfully. Our course offers a supportive and inclusive environment, ensuring that those from the Deaf and hearing loss communities can reach their full potential.

Eligibility: 16+ Currently unemployed and not in Education

Fully Accessible

Dates: September 17<sup>th</sup> 9.30am – 4pm

September 24<sup>th</sup> 9.30am-4pm

October 1<sup>st</sup> 9.30-4pm

October 8<sup>th</sup> 9.30-4pm. Accredited Training Course Level 2 Customer Service

To secure place or further information email: [info@adaptni.co.uk](mailto:info@adaptni.co.uk) or website [www.adaptni.co.uk](http://www.adaptni.co.uk)

## 10.2 Mencap NI.

Mencap NI have been supporting people with a learning disability to find and keep jobs in Northern Ireland for over 30 years. Mencap's Employment and Personal Development (EPD) service support people with a learning disability in different ways.

Mencap can help you to think about what types of work you might like to do and then set up a work placement for you to learn how to do this job. We will work with you to create a plan that says what you want to achieve, how long this will take and what support you will need.

SkillSET Mencap (funded by UKSPF) is a disability employment programme providing support to adults with a range of disabilities. This is a specialist employment support project which is person-centred and innovative. We deliver employment preparation and training to individuals with a learning disability, dual/multiple disability including autism/mental health who are economically inactive and want to enter paid sustainable employment. Everyone on SkillSET Mencap will have a designated Employment Officer who will support them to develop their skills and build experience to achieve paid work - your support will be tailored to you. SkillSET Mencap is being delivered NI-wide, with local offices located in Belfast, Newry, Omagh and Derry/Londonderry.

Mencap NI's EPD service also deliver the Workable NI (WNI) programme funded by the DfC across Northern Ireland through the Supported Employment Solutions (SES) partnership. We support people with a learning disability to keep a paid job, to do the best they can in their job and to become more independent in their workplace. The programme also allows Mencap to support the employer by advising on reasonable adjustments and providing Learning Disability Awareness Training (LDAT).

Mencap Learning Disability Awareness Training (LDAT) sessions are delivered by Mencap Disability Equality Officers who have first-hand experience of living with a learning disability. The aim of the training session is to provide participants with a greater awareness and understanding of learning disability.

Training is available for employers, organisations, groups, schools, or any individual who wants to increase their knowledge and understanding of learning disability. It is recommended that a maximum of 20 participants attend a training session to allow for greater interaction between participants and Disability Equality Officers. The interactive training session typically lasts between 1.5 and 2 hours depending on the number of participants present. Session lengths can be adjusted to accommodate participant requirements.

For more information on LDAT or to book a session please contact:

Orla McElhatton, Service Manager, tel. 07557 943360.

Email: [OrlaMcElhatton@mencap.org.uk](mailto:OrlaMcElhatton@mencap.org.uk)



For further information of any of our Employment & Personal Development programmes across NI, please contact:

Rachel Havern, Area Operations Manager tel. 07595 652283.

Email: [Rachel.Havern@mencap.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.Havern@mencap.org.uk)

### 10.3 Make the Call Service (Department for Communities).

Contact the Make the Call service to check if you're getting all the benefits, services and supports you're entitled to. This service can be accessed through Ni Direct at: [Contact the Make the Call team | nidirect](#) or by tel. 0800 232 1271. Email [makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:makethecall@dfcni.gov.uk). Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (excluding public holidays).

If you use sign language, you can use British Sign Language (BSL) or Irish Sign Language (ISL) to contact Make the Call Service:  
To use the video relay service:

- [Check that you can use the BSL video relay service\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- [Check that you can use the ISL video relay service\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- Contact:  
[contact Make the Call Service via the video relay service\(external link opens in a new window / tab\)](#)
- The interpreter will check whether you require BSL or ISL

This service is for Northern Ireland residents only.

Make the Call will carry out a needs assessment based on your personal circumstances and look at what benefits, supports and services that may be available to you.

If you are considering a move to Universal Credit from another benefit, you should seek independent advice before making your claim. You can also use a benefit calculator: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/benefits-calculator>

### 10.4 Stepping Stones NI.

Training courses and Employability Schemes.

Stepping Stones deliver a range of accredited qualifications level 1 – 3 and in-house soft skills designed to support people into employment.

Stepping Stones focus is primarily people living with disability or barriers to learning.

Academies are delivered across the across the trust area and have partnerships with local businesses. These weeklong learning hubs lead to a guaranteed interview. These build on academic, social and emotional wellbeing and to date have a very high success rate of employment and job retention.

### Training.

Emergency First aid at Work level 3

Food Safety level 2

World Host – Principles of customer care

### Eligibility

Eligibility requirements as per our funding UKSP Is that Clients are economically inactive, i.e. “Not seeking employment within the last two weeks and not starting employment within the next two weeks.”

We specialise with disabilities as well as working with minority groups – eg NEET, elderly and women (target groups).

Assistance methods such as webchats, appointments etc. for employers and general enquirers: [www.steppingstonesni.com](http://www.steppingstonesni.com) or please email [beinformed@stepping-stones.org.uk](mailto:beinformed@stepping-stones.org.uk)

### Possible pathway outcomes following training

Possible pathways and outcomes following our trailing include employment, further education or placements. We have also had clients return to education or move on to other signposted charities to continue their journey.

Those enrolled in academies benefit from a 6-month planned support into employment and when successful a further 6- months support in their gained employment.

Contact details:

Training Manager – Jane Gilmore.

[Jane.gilmore@steppingstones.org.uk](mailto:Jane.gilmore@steppingstones.org.uk) tel. 07514 663922 or email

[beinformed@stepping-stones.org.uk](mailto:beinformed@stepping-stones.org.uk)

### **10.5 Specialisterne NI.**

Specialisterne NI is a social enterprise which contributes to Specialisterne’s international goal of 1 million careers for autistic and neurodivergent people. By

connecting neurodivergent people with employers, we create solutions that reduce the barriers for autistic and neurodivergent people to be part of communities, and to enjoy careers.

### Programmes Offered:

#### Employability Programmes.

Specialisterne NI deliver employability programmes for autistic and neurodivergent people aged 16+, with no upper age limit.

The outcomes that the programmes aim to achieve are;

- Having a career
- Reducing Attitudinal and Communication Barriers
- Feeling Represented
- Feeling Socially connected
- Increase in confidence.

The first step is to have an initial meeting where we discuss the programme and what we can offer. If you are interested in signing up, we will collect some details on your availability, and your contact preferences.

We undertake a baseline review to see how you feel in terms of having a career, attitudinal and communication barriers, feeling represented, feeling socially connected and confidence. Together we will explore what success would look like for you and will tailor the goals to meet your needs. This can be reviewed periodically to ensure that the programme is working towards your aims.

#### **1-1 coaching**

You will meet one to one with the Specialisterne consultants to discuss work related strategies, review progress and discuss areas for development.

#### **Job Club**

Job club will be an informal session where topics suggested by participants are explored. These can be participant led, consultant led or external speaker led depending on the subject area.

#### **Support**

The Specialisterne consultant will support you to make job applications, secure interviews, and attend mentor sessions. Throughout the programme we will support you in job seeking behaviours This support can take several forms:

- Support to job search
- Identify roles that match your skills
- Apply for appropriate jobs
- Secure interviews and prepare skills
- Support after interview if success to prepare for commencing role

- Support if interview unsuccessful to learn and develop
- Support to identify potential course or further training.

### Social Programmes

ALL2Gether is Specialisterne's social programme for those who are 18 years and over. It is aimed at building confidence, feeling more represented in society and helping to build connections with other people. The programme is delivered online with some in person groups as well. They run different interest groups throughout the week based on participant suggestions, and it is a "hop on hop off" style.

Specialisterne also offer one-to-one sessions where participants can come and talk about what they have been doing lately and cover any areas they would like.

Enquiries for all programmes can be directed to [monica.owen@specialisterne.com](mailto:monica.owen@specialisterne.com)

Website: <https://www.specialisterneni.com/>

### 10.6 Now Group.

NOW Group is an award winning social enterprise - our services focus on supporting people into employment, training and volunteering.

We are passionate about supporting people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs with a future. We do this by offering a range of services that support people at whatever stage they are - whether that is just leaving school or college, unemployed, returning to work or graduates. We also offer a family service for new or expectant parents with a learning difficulty or autism and social groups.

We provide a wide range of OCN NI accredited and non-accredited training courses designed to improve employment opportunities for participants. Our accredited training academies are 12-15 weeks long and involve participants undertaking a 6-week work placement (1 day per week for 6 weeks). The academy model ensures that participants experience both theory and practical based work throughout the course. The course also allows the participant to experience a real working environment whilst gaining knowledge of industry specific skills and enhancing employment opportunities. Our non-accredited training courses are focused around soft-skills and will encourage independence and resilience whilst improving employment opportunities simultaneously.

Through our UKSPF we support people every step of the way on their journey to employment. We offer accredited training to build up skills and confidence as well as work place experience and voluntary placements. Our dedicated staff work with people to help them become job ready and then secure employment.

We also support people already in work as part of the Workable (NI) programme. This service supports employees with any form of learning difficulty or autism who are working 10 hours or more. It also works with employers to provide disability awareness training and advice around reasonable adjustments.

We support people age 16+ who are economically inactive

We support one to one with a dedicated Employment officer in one of our local offices, coffee shops or libraries. We can also offer online support and group activities such as job clubs and skills groups.

Employment Development Manager -Paddy Crothers  
paddy.crothers@nowgroup.org 073 9456 5133

Employment Development Manager – Workable Niamh Rainey  
niamh.rainey@nowgroup.org 07719518322

<https://www.nowgroup.org/training-jobs>

## **Section 11.** **Sector-Specific Training Councils.**

### **11.1 Transport Training Services.**

The Transport Training Services (TTS) is a social enterprise focusing on apprenticeships and career development training specifically for the retail motor trade in Northern Ireland. They deliver a range of accredited courses and bespoke training to develop talent for the motor industry profession as well as providing industry-leading apprenticeships to support the automotive industry in securing its future workforce.

#### **11.1.1 Apprenticeships.**

Transport Training Services (TTS) has developed a comprehensive three-step apprenticeship programme designed to prepare candidates for successful employment. The programme begins with pre-entry aptitude tests in numeracy, literacy, and mechanical comprehension, ensuring all candidates meet essential entry requirements. Additionally, candidates receive instruction in the skills and attitudes necessary for the workplace.

Once employed, apprentices undergo their training at TTS, learning to identify and use basic trade tools and safely operate common workshop equipment. The apprenticeship duration is normally three years for technical programmes, and two years for customer-facing roles. Apprentices attend TTS one week every two months, complemented by robust pastoral care to support their progress and workplace integration.

For the remainder of the time, apprentices work full-time with their employers, typically Monday to Friday. Training at the TTS centre in Nutts Corner includes a mix of practical workshop tasks, classroom theory, and e-learning, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience.



Apprenticeships are available for candidates of all ages, including existing employees, who are eligible for the DfE-funded Apprenticeships NI, and are offered in the following areas:

- Light Vehicle Technician.
- Heavy Vehicle Technician.
- Body Repair Technician.
- Paint Technician.
- Tyre Technician.
- Customer Service Adviser.
- Auto-Electrics and Mobile Electrics Maintenance and Repair.
- Parts Adviser.
- Vehicle Sales Executive.
- Team Leading and Management.

Those interested can apply for apprenticeships on the Transport Training Services website: [Apprentice Form - Motor Industry - Transport Training](#).  
Contact tel. 028 90 825653 or email: [mail@transporttraining.org](mailto:mail@transporttraining.org)

Scan the following QR Code with your phone or tablet device to go directly to their online apprenticeship application form:



### 11.1.2 Training Courses.

Current training course offerings are detailed on Transport Training Services website available at: [Automotive, Transport & Logistics Training | Belfast | Northern Ireland \(transporttraining.org\)](http://transporttraining.org) Training courses are offered in each of the following areas:

- Driver Training including CPC.
- Compliance.
- Transport Manager CPC.
- Vehicle sales programmes.
- Customer service.
- ADR Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road.
- Specialist Transport Courses.
- Specialist Motor Training.
- Down forklift training <https://downforkliftraining.co.uk/contact-us>

[Contact Us \(downforkliftraining.co.uk\)](https://downforkliftraining.co.uk)

Those interested in any of the above training courses can contact TTS at tel. 028 90 825653 or email: [mail@transporttraining.org](mailto:mail@transporttraining.org)

## **11.2 Safety Training NI.**

Safety Training NI is a Lantra Awards approved training provider based outside Dungannon, who offer a wide range of training courses, including ATVs, 4x4 off-road Driving, Animal Transport, Rodent Control, Chainsaws, Trailer and Off-Road Trailer Handling, MEWP Forklift Training and Telehandler to Health and Safety courses including First Aid, AED Defib, Manual Handling and NSTS Sprayer Testing.

We also provide First Aid supplies and AEDs.

Contact tel. 07784 338606 or email: [safetytrainingni@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:safetytrainingni@hotmail.co.uk)

Website: [Home \(safetytrainingni.com\)](http://Home(safetytrainingni.com))

### 11.3 Childcare Partnership Training.

Website: <https://ccptraining.hscni.net/>

The above link takes enquirers to an A-Z list of courses, training and resources centred around childcare and family settings.

Further information: see more about CCPs and view training and resources for childcare providers at [Training and resources for childcare providers - FamilySupportNI](#)

South Eastern Childcare Partnership Training Office – tel. 028 95 363022

To apply for courses, you need to register online at the <https://ccptraining.hscni.net/> website.

### 11.4 Northern Ireland Childminding Association (NICMA).

NICMA is a registered charity and membership organisation, whose aim is to promote the provision of high-quality childcare and education within registered, home-based settings for children aged 0 – 14 years. We offer support and guidance through the process of becoming a Registered Childminder or Approved Home Childcarer, including delivery of fully funded training. Our Training Department also offers a variety of opportunities to allow Registered Childminders or Approved Home Childcarers to increase their knowledge and skills, helping them provide the highest quality of care for children in their setting.

For further information, contact NICMA on tel. 028 91 811015, by email on [info@nicma.org](mailto:info@nicma.org) or visit <https://nicma.org/>

### 11.5 Agricultural (CAFRE).

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) is Northern Ireland's specialist Agri-Food and Land-based college. CAFRE provides a variety of study options that lead to careers where school-leavers, 'career changers' and lifelong learners alike, can make a significant impact.

CAFRE, as an integral part of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, has the resources and expertise to prepare students for the world of work.

At CAFRE, students are provided with the most current teaching content and strong employer links, enabling them to learn and adapt to the fast-paced and ever-changing industry. Our goal is to nurture and develop the future leaders of the agri-food and land-based sectors.

The College offers a variety of practical teaching facilities that allow students to apply and showcase their learning. From the Dairy Centre at Greenmount Campus



to the Food Innovation Centre at Loughry Campus, and the Breeding Yard at Enniskillen, CAFRE students receive specialist training for their future careers.

In addition to a quality education, CAFRE also offers students competitively priced residential accommodation. This provides countless opportunities to build connections and develop lifelong friendships while still being close to classes and support staff.

### **Enniskillen Campus**

The campus offers the widest range of equine courses in Ireland. With courses ranging from Level 2 to BSc (Hons) Degree level students develop their expertise in areas such as racing, equitation, breeding and farriery. Courses have been developed to produce graduates with the capability to succeed in a wide range of local and international equine-related careers.

### **Loughry Campus**

The Cookstown campus features food-focused studies, ranging from Level 3 to BSc (Hons). Additionally, a Masters Degree in Business for Agri-Food and Rural Enterprise is also available.

To tackle global food production challenges, students can develop their scientific knowledge and technical skills by utilising food innovation, pilot processing, sensory evaluation, and packaging facilities at Loughry Campus. CAFRE's newly devised degrees focus on science, technology, sustainability, and nutrition to enable students to follow dynamic careers in the innovative food and drinks sector.

### **Greenmount Campus**

Our Antrim campus is the ultimate destination for environmentally conscious students. We offer study routes from Level 2 to BSc. (Hons) including Agriculture, Horticulture, Land-based Engineering, Floristry, and Veterinary Nursing. Our state-of-the-art learning environment and expert staff enable our students to excel, resulting in high levels of achievement and successful graduate employment.

CAFRE graduates are making a real difference within the agri-food and land-based industries. So, for school leavers who are thinking college... discover CAFRE.

Visit [www.cafre.ac.uk](http://www.cafre.ac.uk) for more information on Apprenticeships and work-based study routes

For further information on careers-related support, email [CAFRErecruitment@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:CAFRErecruitment@daera-ni.gov.uk)

**All information correct at time of printing**