

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

**Labour Market Partnership**

**Working Together**



# EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS REGISTER FOR EMPLOYERS SEPTEMBER 2025



Department for  
**Communities**  
[www.communities-nl.gov.uk](http://www.communities-nl.gov.uk)

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Communities**



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

## 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 employers with a complete understanding of the existing support landscape, available to them and their employees who 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)**



## SECTION 1

# DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES - SUPPORT FOR WORKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYERS.

### 1.1 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 (Department for Communities) 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 gaining 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.

Contact the Work Experience Programme team within the Department for Communities on email: **[WorkExperience@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:WorkExperience@communities-ni.gov.uk)**.

## 1.2 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: [wps@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:wps@communities-ni.gov.uk) or tel: **028 9037 6305**.

Alternatively, individuals can be referred to this service through their local Jobs and Benefits Office.

## 1.3 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 9151 3312**, email: [newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:newtownards.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Bangor tel: **0300 200 7822**, email: [bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:bangor.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Holywood Rd tel: **0300 200 4250**, email: [holywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk](mailto:holywoodroad.jobsandbenefits@dfcni.gov.uk)

Alternatively, contact:

NOW Group, tel: **028 9043 6400** or email: [admin@nowgroup.org](mailto:admin@nowgroup.org)

Disability Action, tel: **028 9029 7880** or email: [normabolton@disabilityaction.org](mailto:normabolton@disabilityaction.org)

Ulster Supported Employment Ltd [USEL] tel: **028 9035 6600** 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: [amh.org.uk](http://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.



## SECTION 2

### DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY SUPPORT INITIATIVES DELIVERED BY FE/HE COLLEGES.

#### 2.1 APPRENTICESHIPS NI.

Employers who wish to employ an apprentice can do so by following the seven steps outlined below:

1. Choose an apprenticeship framework level or qualification which meets business needs.
2. Choose and contact an approved training provider.
3. Advertise apprenticeship opportunity. The apprenticeship portal 'Connect to Success,' is a free online system enabling employers to advertise apprenticeships roles. Roles can also be advertised for free through JobApplyNI **jobapplyni.com**.
4. Additional employer support and advice relating to recruitment can be found at the Employer Services Department for Communities – tel: **028 9037 6183**, or email: **dfcemployerservices@communities-ni.gov.uk**.
5. Recruit apprentice.
6. Agree on an apprenticeship training plan between employer, apprentice, and the training provider. This is managed by the chosen training provider.
7. Apprenticeship begins.

Further info can be found at **[www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/apprenticeships-explained-employers](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/apprenticeships-explained-employers)**

#### 2.2 WORKPLUS.

##### Apprenticeships.

These apprenticeships work on two concurrent levels:

- Employers approach Workplus if they are willing to offer apprenticeships.
- Individuals approach Workplus if they are 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 the employer and course. This is an efficient way to fill skills gaps by directly working with local companies.

Applications can be completed online at **[www.workplus.app](http://www.workplus.app)**

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

## SECTION 3

### ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL SUPPORT INITIATIVES.

#### 3.1 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 2025/2026, which is aimed at addressing local industry skills and employment needs, plan to offer the following academies from early Autumn 2025:

- Transport Academy.
- Classroom Assistant Employability Academy.
- Admin Academy.
- Academy for People with Disabilities.
- Catering Academy.
- Health and Social Care Academy.
- Greentech Academy.

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, visit Labour Market Partnership | AND Business

Ards and North Down LMP can be contacted on tel: **0300 013 3333**, extension **40958/40960** or email: [Imp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Imp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)



### 3.2 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, their team of industry experts will provide tailored support and guidance to help you achieve your business goals.

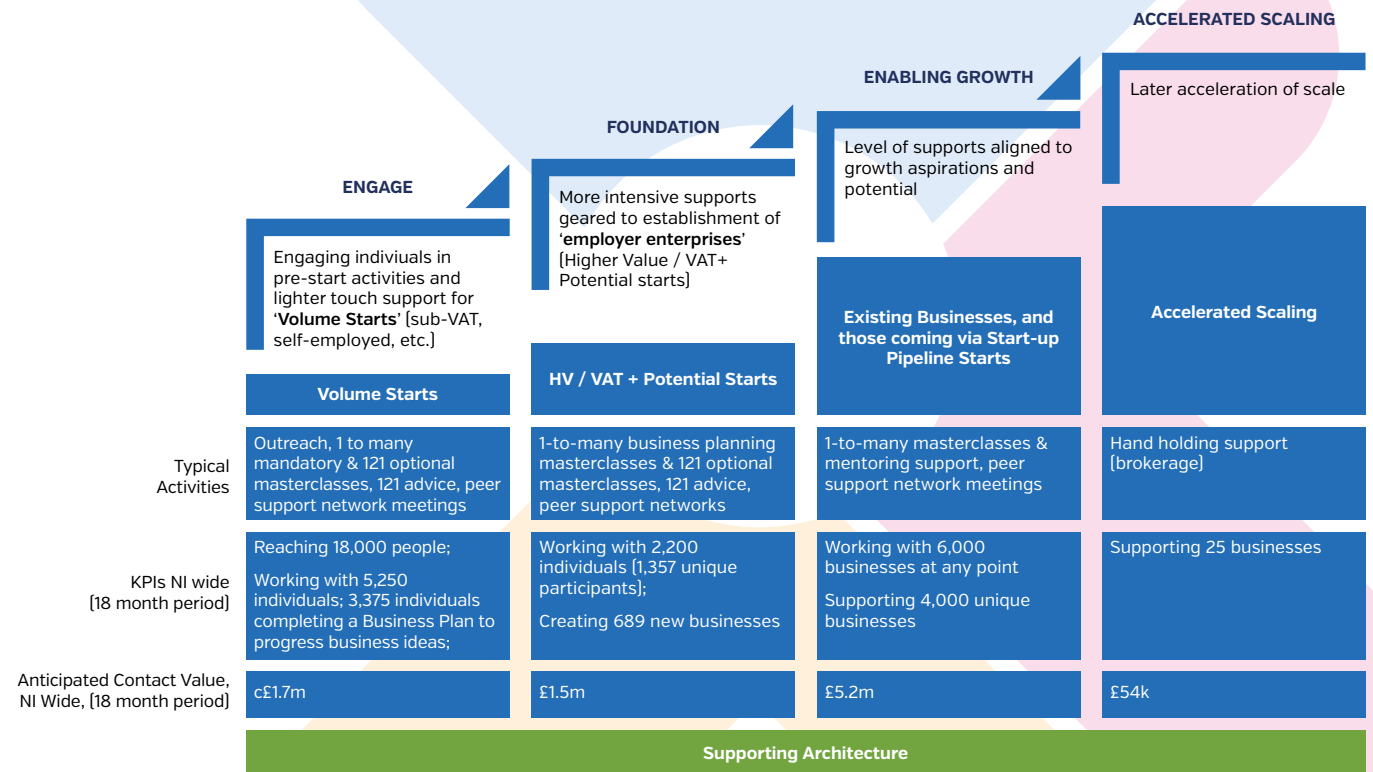
**Start** – Have an idea but don't know if it could be a business?

**Grow** – Business is performing but don't know how to take it to the 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 four pillars/elements.
- Under Engage there is Idea Development.
- Engage & Foundation develop 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.
- Referral and Signposting to other support services.

Next step is to register on Go Succeed - NI Business Support ([go-succeed.com](https://go-succeed.com)) or [www.andbusiness.co.uk](https://www.andbusiness.co.uk). Once you have 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](https://go-succeed.com))

## SECTION 4

### SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDED PROJECTS.

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

Approximately £56 million investment has been allocated towards helping the economically inactive within Northern Ireland back into the labour market across 18 projects; 11 of which operate within the ANDBC (Ards and North Down Borough Council) area.

#### 4.1 EXPLORING SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE SKILLS TOGETHER.

Enterprise Northern Ireland, The King'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 allow 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 topics 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 9181 9787** or email: **info@ardsbusiness.com** and North Down Development Organisation, tel: **028 9127 1525** or email: **mail@nddo.co.uk** in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area.

Participants can also register online by following this link: **<https://www.enterpriseni.com/pages/pre-start>**

## SECTION 5

### ENTERPRISE NORTHERN IRELAND INITIATIVES, LOCAL ENTERPRISE AGENCIES AND TRAINING ORGANISATIONS.

#### 5.1 ENTERPRISE NI.

Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI) is the representative organisation for the region's 27 Local Enterprise Agencies (LEA), two of which are based in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area. The organisation aims to support the LEA network to provide aspiring entrepreneurs and existing micro and small businesses with access to workspace, development programmes, access to finance, and the informed support they need to start, sustain, and grow their businesses.

ENI lobbies on behalf of self-employed, micro, and small businesses and aim to ensure the Northern Ireland Executive, Economy Committee, MLAs, Local Councils, Development Agencies, and other stakeholders are fully briefed concerning enterprise and entrepreneurship in Northern Ireland.

Please visit the Council's website [link below] for information on Council Initiatives and Programmes re: starting up a business.

AND Business | Ards and North Down Borough Council's Economic Development Department [www.andbusiness.co.uk](http://www.andbusiness.co.uk)

#### 5.2 LOCAL ENTERPRISE AGENCIES (LEAS).

There are two LEAs within the Ards and North Down Area. These are North Down Development Organisation (NDDO) based in Bangor and Ards Business Hub based in Newtownards. Their primary aim is developing and retaining enterprise in the local area and assisting in the creation of jobs through working in partnership with other economic development organisations where possible. To promote and encourage new business, the organisation continues to provide not only workspace, but a range of value-added business support services and training for future entrepreneurs.

Local Enterprise Agencies offer:

- Commercial Property space.
- Pre-Start, start-up, and business growth advice.
- Training and mentoring in addition to ongoing support for locally based entrepreneurs.

Contact details: Ards Business Hub, tel: **028 9181 9787** or email: [info@ardsbusiness.com](mailto:info@ardsbusiness.com) and North Down Development Organisation, tel: **028 9127 1525** or email: [mail@nddo.co.uk](mailto:mail@nddo.co.uk)

### 5.3 NORTHERN IRELAND EXPLORE ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICE.

NDDO, in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Network, delivers the Northern Ireland (NI) Explore Enterprise Support Service, which is an initiative delivered by Enterprise Northern Ireland; providing self-employment or employment support to economically inactive individuals across Northern Ireland. This is a free service that provides an insight into starting a business or allows individuals to take the first steps to gaining employment.

The NI Explore Enterprise Support Service offers mentoring and training at a pace tailored to the individual's needs and they can work towards achieving a Level 2 qualification. The programme supports participants through a range of activities including:

- One-to-one tailored mentoring and guidance.
- Workshops and Level 2 training.
- Support from the wider ecosystem.

For more information, tel: **028 9127 1525** or email: **mail@nddo.co.uk**

#### **NDDO and the Go Succeed Programme.**

NDDO Limited is a delivery agent on the Go Succeed programme, which is a new go-to source of expert advice lead by Northern Ireland's 11 local councils. NDDO is part of the network of Local Enterprise Agencies, who are a strategic partner for all delivery in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area. The Go Succeed programme supports local entrepreneurs at pre-start, start up, growth and scaling business development support. Providing advice, mentoring and access to funding.

Go Succeed represents a significant investment in local entrepreneurs and businesses, funded by the UK Government and powered by the UK Levelling Up Fund. For further details, contact tel: **028 9127 1525** or email: **mail@nddo.co.uk**

## 5.4 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 (Further Education) and HE (Higher Education) students [see details below]. They also offer a range of entrepreneurship online learning resources on their website, through their YE (Young Enterprise) 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](http://yeni.co.uk)] contact **028 9032 7003**, or email: [info@yeni.co.uk](mailto:info@yeni.co.uk)

### 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, Tel: **028 9032 7003**, email: [info@yeni.co.uk](mailto:info@yeni.co.uk)



## SECTION 6

### INVEST NI AND INTERTRADE IRELAND INITIATIVES.

#### 6.1 INVEST NI.

Invest NI outline that its skills development portfolio will help a business identify training needs and improve:

- Employee skills.
- Motivation.
- Willingness from staff to provide feedback.

To become an Invest NI customer and benefit from the various initiatives, a business must meet the following criteria:

- Turnover greater than £250,000.
- Achieve at least 25% of sales outside of Northern Ireland.
- Demonstrate growth potential.

To contact the Invest NI Business Support Team, tel: **0800 181 4422**  
or complete the enquiry page at this link: **[www.investni.com/support-for-business/training-support](http://www.investni.com/support-for-business/training-support)**

Growth potential requires businesses to demonstrate one of the criteria below:

- Employment growth of 20% current employment or an increase of 20 jobs within three years.
- External sales growth of 20% or £500,000 within three years.
- Increase in GVA [Gross Value Added] per employee by 20% within three years.

Invest NI's Business Support Team can be contacted to discuss any of the initiatives below by tel: **0800 181 4422**, lines open Monday to Friday 9am to 4:30pm, or by submitting online enquiry forms at:

Support for business | Invest Northern Ireland (**[investni.com](http://investni.com)**)

### **6.1.1 ASSURED SKILLS PROGRAMME.**

The Assured Skills Programme is fully funded by the Department for the Economy to upskill individuals and help them compete for guaranteed job vacancies in new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies and expanding businesses. New inward investors or existing employers considering expansion, who are Invest Northern Ireland clients, may be eligible for Assured Skills.

Businesses interested in the programme, who are Invest NI customers, must 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 if so, they can contact the Assured Skills team accordingly on their client's behalf.

Contact tel: **028 9041 6972** or email: **assuredskills@economy-ni.gov.uk**

### **6.1.2 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.**

Invest NI's Skills Development portfolio helps identify training needs and improve employee skills, motivation, and willingness of staff to provide feedback.

Training is delivered through workshops, which are free to attend, open to all businesses and are held at various locations across Northern Ireland. There are two distinct types of the half-day workshop as follows:

#### **Training Needs Analysis Workshop.**

These workshops offer advice on identifying the training needs of an organisation and the skills an employer needs to teach their staff to strengthen their business. A series of online video tutorials are available, split into five chapters that are delivered by an Invest NI Skills Adviser providing insight into the tools and techniques used by learning and development professionals to analyse training needs.

#### **Training Needs to Training Plan Workshops.**

These workshops offer advice on how to develop, cost, and manage an effective training plan. They allow a business to gain an understanding of the steps required to go from carrying out a training needs analysis exercise to the formulation of how to develop, cost and manage an effective training plan. Each interactive session covers writing training objectives, costing training interventions and effective training plan management.

Workshops are delivered both in person and online using a webinar format. To participate, businesses must register online by filling out a registration form found at **[www.investni.com/support-for-business/training-support](http://www.investni.com/support-for-business/training-support)**.

### **6.1.3 SKILLS ADVISER SUPPORT.**

Experienced Invest NI Skills Advisers can provide one-to-one support for companies to assist them in identifying training needs and to help them develop a plan to address these needs. This service is only available to Invest NI customers and is free. To speak with an adviser, contact tel: **0800 181 4422**.

### **6.1.4 SKILLS ADVANCEMENT GRANT.**

The Skills Advancement Grant is available to smaller companies who are already customers of Invest NI. Support of 50% of costs is available for external training, travel, and accommodation costs up to a maximum of a £15,000 grant. The grant is available for 18 months only with no option to extend the offer. It does not cover mandatory training and VAT is excluded. The minimum training expenditure supported is £2,000 and multiple Skills Advancement Grants cannot operate simultaneously for the same company or in conjunction with Skills for Growth projects. For further information, contact tel: **0800 181 4422**.

### **6.1.5 SKILLS FOR GROWTH FOR SMES (SMALL/MEDIUM ENTERPRISES), LARGE ENTERPRISES, AND/OR FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTORS (FDI).**

The Skills for Growth scheme supports:

- Trainee wages.
- Internal and external trainers.
- Travel and accommodation costs with the aim of enabling company growth.

Grant support is variable up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs. Mandatory training, induction training and repeat training are not eligible, and VAT is excluded. This support is available for a period of up to 24 months for SMEs and up to 60 months for large businesses and FDIs, although extensions can be sought on a case-by-case basis. Trainee wage costs cannot exceed the costs of all other eligible costs. For further information, contact tel: **0800 181 4422**.

### **6.1.6 LEADER PROGRAMME.**

The Leader programme is specifically designed to enable leaders to grow their businesses through the development of strong leadership competencies. The programme offers the opportunity to assess a business' performance, identify opportunities, overcome challenges, and build capability. The programme is aimed at the overall leader of a SME, the Managing Director, CEO (Chief Executive Officer), or owner-manager who can demonstrate:

- A clear strategic need and willingness to change.
- Commitment and time available.
- Turnover ideally greater than £1 million.
- A history of profitable trading.
- An existing robust business model.

The Leader programme provides advice, support and learning in a dynamic business environment through peer networking events, specialist business mentoring and one-to-one leadership coaching and is open to companies that are currently customers of Invest NI. For further information, contact tel: **0800 181 4422**.

### **6.1.7 LEADERSHIP TEAM PROGRAMME.**

The Invest NI Leadership Team Programme is focused on transforming the skills, behaviours, and relationships of a business' leadership team to achieve business growth and become more adaptive and resilient. The programme is provided in partnership with Invest NI, Dublin City University Business School, and Wilson Sloan Consulting. To be eligible for the programme, the business must be an Invest NI client and:

- Be a SME (up to 249 staff).
- Have turnover above £1 million.
- Can commit time and resources to the programme.
- Have the ambition to grow their business globally.

INI (Invest NI) outlines that top teams involved in the programme will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of how to develop and implement strategies that drive sustainability and international growth.
- Become a stronger and more effective top team, ready to develop and implement a strategy for growth.
- Be able to use a wide range of practical tools and techniques to ensure every aspect of the business is aligned with its strategy.

## SECTION 7

### SECTOR-SPECIFIC TRAINING COUNCILS AND OTHER SUPPORTS.

There are several sources of sector-specific advice on skills development for employees working in a particular industry. Individual Sector Training Councils, training organisations and their offerings are outlined as follows:

#### 7.1 CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND TRAINING BOARD (CITB) NI.

The Construction Industry and Training Board (CITB) offers a range of training support relating to the construction sector, to increase productivity and improve health and safety standards.

##### Training Course Directory.

CITB's website has a Training Directory accessed at [www.citbni.org.uk/Training/Approved-Courses.aspx](http://www.citbni.org.uk/Training/Approved-Courses.aspx) which allows users to search for a training course suitable for them. The resource enables users to search for a training course by:

- Training Provider.
- Course Title.
- Location.
- Type of qualification.
- Specific subject area (subject areas are not limited to construction and include areas that are relevant to construction businesses including finance, human resources, IT, health and safety and marketing).

##### Mobile Training Unit.

The Mobile Training Unit provides a convenient and cost-effective way of meeting training requirements with minimum disruption to site work by bringing a range of short-duration health and safety and operative training onsite in a lorry. The fully accessible vehicle is fitted with an induction loop and has an expanding floor space and an interactive multimedia system to facilitate training in a traditional classroom environment whilst onsite.

Employers registered with CITB can book the Mobile Training Unit free of charge if they meet CITB's terms and conditions. A cost of £900 per day will be applied to those who are registered but do not pay a levy. Training hours are limited to a maximum of five and a half hours per day. To become a registered employer, book the unit and/or receive more information contact CITB on tel: **028 9082 5466** or email: [mtubookings@citbni.org.uk](mailto:mtubookings@citbni.org.uk) or visit the website: [www.citbni.org.uk/CITB/files/ef/efaf79a6-4fba-4370-ae28-3be08afe326b.pdf](http://www.citbni.org.uk/CITB/files/ef/efaf79a6-4fba-4370-ae28-3be08afe326b.pdf)

## Training Grants Scheme.

CITB NI offers direct grants to their registered employers to support employees in a wide range of training and qualifications. Available support assists in training new recruits, developing established staff, creating apprenticeships and industrial placements for students, and looking for improvements in other areas of their business. The grant support also covers short-duration training courses including first aid, business courses and site safety courses, whether they are accredited or not. Grant support may also support longer courses such as degrees, NVQs, HNCs, HNDs and Master's Degrees.

To apply for a grant; an employer must contact CITB's Grant Team by tel: **028 9082 5466** to create an account and set up a username and password or email: **grants@citbni.org.uk**. Grant claims must be received by CITB NI within three months of commencement of training or upon registration into a course or apprenticeship scheme. Otherwise, the grant will be declined. The grant training scheme covers a proportion of the total training course, at varying amounts of grant support up to £2,000 depending on the type of training.

For further information tel: **028 9082 5466** or email: **info@citbni.org.uk**

## 7.2 THE ELECTRICAL TRAINING TRUST.

The Electrical Training Trust (ETT) is an independent, charitable trust that aims to improve quality and raise standards within the Northern Ireland electrical contracting industry. They seek to improve the productivity, safety and performance of the electrical contracting industry, and to increase the employability of existing and new entrants within the NI sector.

They dedicate their time and resources to support individuals, employers and professionals working within the NI industry to improve their knowledge, enhance their skills and prove their competence. This is done by providing advice, guidance, accredited training, skills assessments, and management of the SparkSafe Electrical Licence to Practise system. The organisation is an approved City & Guilds, LCL Awards and NET AM2 centre. The organisation operates under ISO 9001 quality assurance accreditation.

### Links and Partnerships.

ETT has been in business since 1997. During this time, they have developed extensive, good quality links with employers and other external bodies. These links are used very effectively to help develop products and services that are closely aligned to meet the needs of industry. A wide range of accredited and non-accredited training programmes are run, as well as part-funded workshops and fully-funded seminars that very successfully address local skills and training needs. There are a range of flexible training solutions provided: in-person at our electrical and renewables training centre, online, or we can deliver training off-site to suit the customers' needs.

Many employers and wider industry stakeholders consider ETT a trusted advisor, seeking advice, guidance and support regarding electrical safety and technical skills training, apprentice recruitment as well as health, safety, and wellbeing issues affecting the sector.



### **Experienced Worker Assessment Programme:**

Recognising the challenges of both the skills shortage in industry, and the significant number of underqualified workers, they are now offering the City & Guilds Experienced Worker Assessment (EWA) programme. Many workers in the sector are 'time served', having gained valuable experience and expertise as electricians, but without gaining any recognised or formal qualifications. The EWA programme offers the industry-approved Level 3 qualification and a much-needed route to becoming a qualified electrician, at any age, enhancing an individual's qualifications, employability and career prospects, and earning potential.

Evidence shows that 32% of electrical workers involved in Public Sector work are unqualified or under-qualified. Successful completion of this course will provide clear benefits for the person, their employer, the industry and society as a whole. Further information on the EWA can be found here - [www.ett-ni.org/course-finder/cg-2346-nvq-level-3-experienced-worker-assessment/](http://www.ett-ni.org/course-finder/cg-2346-nvq-level-3-experienced-worker-assessment/)

### **Renewable Technology and NET Zero Transition:**

The role of a qualified electrician is central to the installation of low carbon and renewable technologies. Understanding of scientific theory and electrical principles, as well as demonstrable occupational competence are critical for the safe installation of technologies such as solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, battery storage systems and electric vehicle charging points (EVCP). The core competence of a qualified electrician is the foundation from which to upskill and train in these areas.

The drive for additional electricians is fuelled by a broad range of factors, from the expansion of renewable energy sources, like wind and solar power, to the nationwide push for electrification in heating, transportation, and industry.

ETT's renewables training centre provides excellent facilities and resources for electricians to upskill and help the NI economy reach its renewables and clean tech targets. Working with industry and awarding bodies, they are committed to ensuring that installations are carried out competently and are safe, high-quality and effective. Accredited Level 3 training is available for solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, battery storage systems and electric vehicle charging points (EVCP).

### **'Save Our Sparks' NI Safe Isolation Campaign:**

Safety is paramount in the electrical industry, and the organisation is committed to promoting best practice. The 'Save Our Sparks' campaign is inspired by Michael's Story. Michael Adamson was a 26-year-old experienced electrician who tragically died in a preventable electrical incident in 2005. He cut a cable marked 'NOT IN USE', which was in fact wired into a distribution board and was not safely isolated. This fundamental safety procedure that electricians are taught was not being implemented by the electrical contracting industry.

ETT are committed to working with industry partners and stakeholders to prevent anyone else from having to lose a loved one in an accident that could and should have been prevented. The campaign will not stop sharing this message until such fatalities are a thing of the past. As part of the 'Save Our Sparks' NI Campaign, they are campaigning for funding to ensure every electrical apprentice in Northern Ireland receives a safe isolation kit when they start their apprenticeship. A kit costs approximately £60 - a small cost to save a life.

## How we can help?

ETT welcome opportunities for collaboration and engagement in achieving our mutual objectives. If you, or anyone within Ards and North Down Council area requires advice, guidance, or support in relation to the electrical installation sector, the SparkSafe Licence to Practise Initiative, electrical apprenticeships or the experienced worker assessment programme, or for any other purpose, or for further information tel: **028 2565 0750** or email: **charlotte@ett-ni.org**

### 7.3 TRANSPORT TRAINING SERVICES.

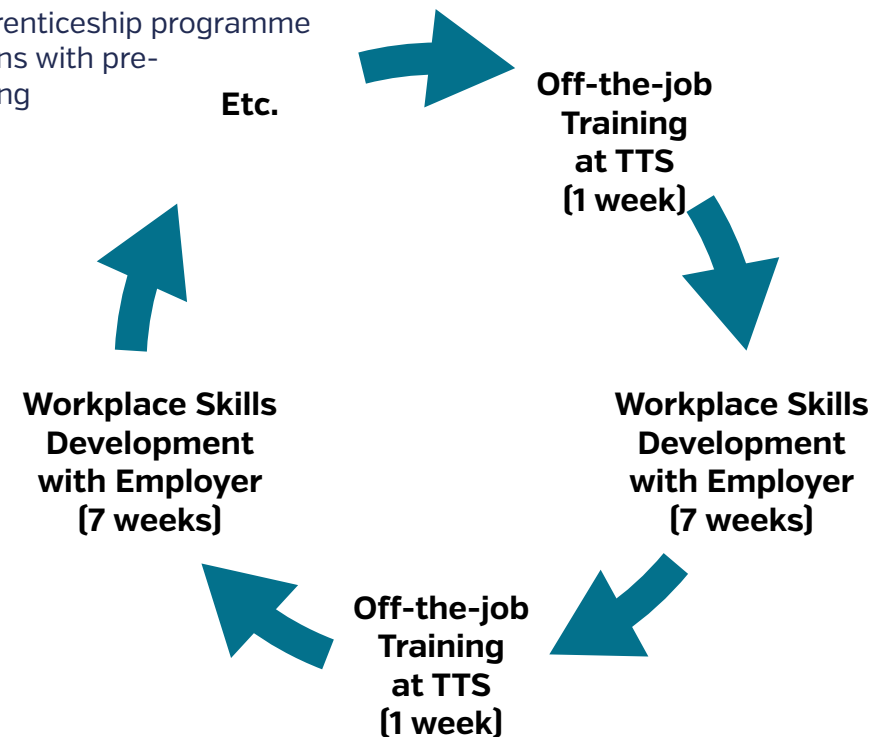
The Transport Training Services (TTS) is a social enterprise focusing on apprenticeships and career development training specifically for the retail motor trade in Northern Ireland. They deliver a range of accredited courses and bespoke training to develop talent for the motor industry profession, as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

#### 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 Advisor.
- Auto-Electrics and Mobile Electrics Maintenance and Repair.
- Parts Advisor.
- Vehicle Sales Executive.
- Team Leading and Management.

Those interested can apply for apprenticeships on the Transport Training Services website [transporttraining.org/apprentice-form/](https://transporttraining.org/apprentice-form/)  
Contact tel: **028 9082 5653** 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.



### Training Courses.

Current training course offerings are detailed on the website available at: Automotive, Transport & Logistics Training | Belfast | Northern Ireland ([transporttraining.org](https://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 - [downforklifttraining.co.uk/contact-us](https://downforklifttraining.co.uk/contact-us)

Those interested in any of the above training courses can contact TTS at tel: **028 9082 5653** or email: [mail@transporttraining.org](mailto:mail@transporttraining.org)

#### **7.4 FXL IRELAND EXECUTIVE SOLUTIONS.**

FXL Ireland is an Executive Leadership Coaching business. They design and execute in-house facilitated workshops, executive and team coaching, and organisational simulations specifically tailored to each client (embodied learning). Each programme intervention is unique and experienced through a dynamic, interactive style, supported with bespoke designed materials. It is available to any business at their business premises, online or preferred location.

For more information, contact John Kelly, tel: **07718 806 109** or email: [john@fxlireland.com](mailto:john@fxlireland.com)

#### **7.5 MJM TRAINING.**

MJM is a privately-operated training organisation who primarily offer courses related to the transport and storage industry including RTITB-accredited courses for operating forklifts etc, road haulage and transport training. In addition, health and safety courses and first aid training is offered. Several accredited and non-accredited courses are delivered in-house, with most of their training courses taking a classroom-based face-to-face format (except for drivers' CPC courses, which can be held online, or face-to-face). First aid training can be provided on customer premises or at MJM Training Centre.

For machinery training and classroom-based courses, trainees must be at least 16 years of age and hold a National Insurance number. For lorry and bus training and tests, candidates must hold the provisional entitlement to the relevant vehicle type on their license and complete the relevant theory tests with their local test centre. For driver CPC courses, trainees must hold a full lorry/bus licence.

For more information, tel: **028 8556 7183** or email: [jarlath@mjmtraining.com](mailto:jarlath@mjmtraining.com)

## 7.6 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.

They also provide First Aid supplies and AEDs.

For more information, contact, tel: **07784 338 606** or email: **[safetytrainingni@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:safetytrainingni@hotmail.co.uk)**

## 7.7 RETAIL NI.

Retail NI is Northern Ireland's only locally-based retail and wholesale business organisation which provides professional advice and gives a voice to the independent sector at the NI Assembly and Westminster. Assistance provided to businesses includes:

- Retail NI Advice Line: providing help on rates, planning, employment, law, and many other issues that impact upon your business.
- Dedicated Business Liaison Support.
- Free subscription to our News Magazine.
- Supplier members are entitled to free advertising in Retail NI News which has a readership of over 3000.
- Networking events with leading political leaders and policy makers.
- Ensuring your voice is heard at Local Councils, Stormont, Westminster, and European Parliament.
- Support local suppliers in developing new routes to market.
- Fortnightly Member Update Emails.
- Sponsorship opportunities.

For further information, tel: **028 9022 0004** or email: **[info@retailni.com](mailto:info@retailni.com)** or visit Ards and North Down business support | **[nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)**

## 7.8 CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS FEDERATION.

The Construction Employers Federation Limited (CEF) is the sole certified representative body for the construction industry in Northern Ireland. CEF is the Voice of the NI Industry on the UK Construction Leadership Council, BuildUK and the NI Procurement Board.

### Construction Skills Register.

The Construction Skills Register (CSR) is a register of construction workers who have completed the industry-approved CSR health and safety training course and assessment. CSR aims to raise health and safety standards and reduce accidents in the industry by ensuring that all construction workers undertake health and safety training every four 4 years. Within this function, the following support is available:

- Online Card Checker - [secure.cefni.co.uk/CSRCard/OnlineCSRCardChecker.aspx](https://secure.cefni.co.uk/CSRCard/OnlineCSRCardChecker.aspx)
- Training Providers - [www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes\\_/CSR/Training-Providers.aspx](https://www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes_/CSR/Training-Providers.aspx)
- Card Types - [www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes\\_/CSR/card-types.aspx](https://www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes_/CSR/card-types.aspx)
- Industry Accreditation - [www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/CEFNI/Schemes\\_/CSR/industry-accred.aspx](https://www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/CEFNI/Schemes_/CSR/industry-accred.aspx)
- Lost Cards - [www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes\\_/CSR/lost-cards.aspx](https://www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes_/CSR/lost-cards.aspx)
- Relationship with other card schemes - [www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes\\_/CSR/CSR%20Relationship%20with%20Other%20Card%20Schemes.aspx](https://www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/Schemes_/CSR/CSR%20Relationship%20with%20Other%20Card%20Schemes.aspx)

CEFNI also offer several Essential Health and Safety training courses for managers and senior executives. Current training schedule can be found at [www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/CEFNI/Events-and-Courses.aspx?hkey=f5073921-19d8-41c4-a8d0-cc9f254b7d36](https://www.cefni.co.uk/CEFNI/CEFNI/Events-and-Courses.aspx?hkey=f5073921-19d8-41c4-a8d0-cc9f254b7d36)

For more information, tel: **028 9087 7150** or email: [csr@cefni.co.uk](mailto:csr@cefni.co.uk)



## 7.9 TOURISM NORTHERN IRELAND.

Tourism Northern Ireland's top priority is to support tourism and hospitality businesses to survive and grow business revenues in the short to medium term. Through their Tourism Enterprise Development Programme (TED) 2024-25, businesses can undertake training, masterclasses and webinars around people, sustainability, operations, digital capability, innovation and sales and marketing.

Tourism NI also has a range of business supports, toolkits, practical tips, and advice from panels of experts alongside some great insights from industry practitioners to support businesses, improving business operational performance to drive both immediate performance and long-term success. Information can be obtained by signing up to **tourismni.com**, the Industry Business Hub and joining the mailing list to hear about upcoming events and to sign up to Tourism NI e-learning platform MyTourismNI.

A list of resources and information on best practice recruitment and retention for your business is also available on their campaign website **[www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/opportunities-campaigns/make-it-here/](http://www.tourismni.com/business-guidance/opportunities-campaigns/make-it-here/)**

For further information, contact Tourism NI, tel: **028 9023 1221**.

## 7.10 EQUALITY COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (ECNI)

ECNI offer free and confidential advice and information to people who feel they have been discriminated against. They also provide practical advice to employers and service-providers on managing the equality implications of employing and managing staff and providing services to the public, including information on the reasonable adjustment duty, good practice and taking positive action.

Northern Ireland's equality laws cover discrimination in employment and the workplace, and also the provision of goods, facilities and services. The equality laws provide protection for everyone in Northern Ireland against discrimination on grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or similar philosophical belief/political opinion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

There's lots more information on the website: **[www.equalityni.org/individuals](http://www.equalityni.org/individuals)**

You can also ask for advice or information from there. If you need advice or information about discrimination, call ECNI and ask to speak to a discrimination advice officer, or arrange an appointment to come in.

If you need a reasonable adjustment to enable to use this service, please just ask - e.g. a BSL interpreter or a foreign language interpreter.  
Tel: **028 9050 0600** or email: **[information@equalityni.org](mailto:information@equalityni.org)**

## SECTION 8

# SUPPORT, TRAINING AND EMPLOYABILITY PATHWAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### 8.1 ADAPT NI.

AdaptNI is a CIC not-for profit organisation, 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.
- 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) or visit: [www.adaptni.org.uk/donate-to-adapt-ni](http://www.adaptni.org.uk/donate-to-adapt-ni)

##### 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.

To secure a 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)

## 8.2 MENCAP NI.

Mencap NI has 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. They 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. Mencap 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 DfC across Northern Ireland through the Supported Employment Solutions (SES) partnership. They 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 a 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 943 360**. or 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 652 283**. or email: **[Rachel.Havern@mencap.org.uk](mailto:Rachel.Havern@mencap.org.uk)**

### 8.3 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**. or 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 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oELNMfAvDxw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oELNMfAvDxw)
- Check that you can use the ISL video relay service [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoSvJKZPc9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoSvJKZPc9w)
- Contact: Make the Call Service via the video relay service [connect2.interpreterslive.co.uk/vrs?ilc=DfCNI-DWP](https://connect2.interpreterslive.co.uk/vrs?ilc=DfCNI-DWP)
- 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 benefits calculator: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/benefits-calculator](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/benefits-calculator)

## 8.4 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 a disability or barriers to learning.

Academies are delivered across the trust area and have partnerships with local businesses. These one-week 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 criteria depends on the service but generally individuals who are not in employment, education or training are supported. Other programmes may have more specific requirements and can be found on the website.

They 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 training include employment, further education or placements. Clients have also returned to education or moved on to other signposted charities to continue their journey.

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

Contact details:

Training Manager – Jane Gilmore.

[jane.gilmore@stepping-stones.org.uk](mailto:jane.gilmore@stepping-stones.org.uk) tel: 07514 663 922 or email: [beinformed@stepping-stones.org.uk](mailto:beinformed@stepping-stones.org.uk)

## **8.5 SPECIALISTERNE NI.**

Specialisterne NI is a social enterprise which contributes to Specialisterne's international goal of one 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 they discuss the programme and what they can offer. If you are interested in signing up, they will collect some details on your availability, and your contact preferences.

Specialisterne NI 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, they 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.

### **One-to-one 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 they 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 have a "hop on hop off" approach.

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: [www.specialisterneni.com/](http://www.specialisterneni.com/)

## 8.6 NOW GROUP.

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

They are passionate about supporting people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs with a future. This is done 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. They also offer a family service for new or expectant parents with a learning difficulty or autism and social groups.

They provide a wide range of OCN NI accredited and non-accredited training courses designed to improve employment opportunities for participants. The accredited training academies are 12-15 weeks long and involve participants undertaking a six week work placement (one day per week for six 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. Their non-accredited training courses are focused around soft-skills and will encourage independence and resilience whilst improving employment opportunities simultaneously.

Through UKSPF they 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.

They 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.

They support people age 16+ who are economically inactive

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

Employment Development Manager -Paddy Crothers, tel: **07394 565 133** or email: **paddy.crothers@nowgroup.org**

Employment Development Manager – Workable Megan McCleave, tel: **07796 172 085** or email: **megan.mccleave@nowgroup.org**

**[www.nowgroup.org/training-jobs](http://www.nowgroup.org/training-jobs)**

## 8.7 ORCHARDVILLE.

### SkillSET

SkillSET, funded by the UK Government, is an employment project which supports economically inactive people who have a disability or health condition to find a job. Orchardville is delivering SkillSET in partnership with SESNI, a consortium of seven well established and experienced disability organisations.

SkillSET @ Orchardville provides an individualised programme of employment support to participants who have a learning disability or autism. A range of services are available to help participants prepare for, find, secure and keep their job. Activities include:-

- Employability training courses covering CV preparation, job searching, interview and communication skills.
- Vocational Skills training in a range of sectors e.g. Retail, Barista, ICT .
- Travel training, online safety and money management courses.
- Work experience and volunteering opportunities with a wide range of employers in your area.
- Support to progress into paid work including on the job training and mentoring.
- There's support every step of the way from the team of employment officers who have links to a wide range of employers that they can connect you to.

Eligibility – SkillSET @ Orchardville can support you if you are 16+, have a learning disability or Autism and need some support with developing your skills to get a job and are economically inactive.

Contact [louise.macrory@orchardville.com](mailto:louise.macrory@orchardville.com) 07860 952 559 or [laura.cummings@orchardville.com](mailto:laura.cummings@orchardville.com) 07711 374 071

[www.orchardville.com/programmes/project-skillset/](http://www.orchardville.com/programmes/project-skillset/)

## 8.8 VERSUS ARTHRITIS

Versus Arthritis is here to make sure that people with arthritis have all the support and information they need to live well with their condition, as well as to ensure the needs of people with arthritis are a priority with policymakers in Northern Ireland. They want everyone with arthritis to have access to the treatments and support they need to live the life they choose with real hope of a cure in the future.

The Self-Management Courses are delivered by the Accredited Peer Trainers who themselves live with a long-term health condition. They know from personal experience the challenges of living with a long-term condition and use many of the skills learnt through our Self-Management Courses to support them to cope better.

Through the courses, you will also have an opportunity to meet with other people who are also living with long-term conditions in a small, supportive group.

Participants will develop their skills and knowledge on:

- Managing fatigue.
- Coping with anxiety and stress.
- Improving sleep and rest.
- Managing anger and frustration.
- Managing change and goal setting.
- Improving lifestyle including activity and healthy eating.

Young People and Families Services and Adult Services

- Peer Support Groups.
- Physical Activity.
- Information Sessions.
- Family Events.
- Workshops for Young People.
- Volunteering.

If you have any NI specific enquiries about our services and support, please contact the Belfast office by tel: **028 9078 2940** or email: **[northernireland@versusarthritis.org](mailto:northernireland@versusarthritis.org)**

**[www.versusarthritis.org/in-your-area/northern-ireland/](http://www.versusarthritis.org/in-your-area/northern-ireland/)**

## **SECTION 9**

### **SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS.**

#### **9.1 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](https://www.womeninbusinessni.com/membership/join-today)  
[www.womeninbusinessni.com/membership/join-today](https://www.womeninbusinessni.com/membership/join-today)

#### **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.

## SECTION 10

### SOUTH EAST REGIONAL COLLEGE (SERC)

#### 10.1 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)

## **10.2 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 that 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)

**With so much support available**

**Could you as an employer offer a work placement to someone with a disability or Neurodiverse condition?**

**Please contact the LMP Team: [LMP@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:LMP@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)**

All information correct at time of printing

