

Labour Market Partnerships
Working Together



**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN
LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP
Annual Report
April 2024- March 2025**

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LMP Chairperson Foreword



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

It has been a privilege to chair the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership and to witness the real difference it is making for people and employers across our Borough.

The LMP was established to improve skills, employment opportunities and outcomes for all. Over the past year, we have built on strong foundations, working closely with partners to design and deliver practical solutions that respond to local needs. From specialist academies and training programmes, to employer engagement events and careers support for young people, the LMP has helped jobseekers gain confidence, develop new skills and secure meaningful work, while also supporting local businesses to strengthen and grow their workforce. I continue to be astounded by the number of people who have been supported into work as a direct result of the LMP.

This progress would not have been possible without the commitment of our partners and the continued support of the Department for Communities, whose funding enables us to deliver real impact at a local level. I would also like to thank the Council's LMP Team for their dedication in coordinating the partnership and driving forward the action plan.

At this year's AGM I stepped down as Chair and was pleased to hand over the role to Frank Given. I wish Frank every success and look forward to supporting him as the LMP continues to grow and deliver even better outcomes for the Borough.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP (LMP)

The Department for Communities (DfC) made funding available for the establishment of new Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs) across all 11 Councils in Northern Ireland. Each Council will be accountable to the Regional LMP, and this role will be undertaken by the Employability NI (ENI) Programme Board. Ards and North Down Borough Council will provide the secretariat on behalf of DfC who will provide the funding for the administration and operational costs of this initiative based on approved Action Plans.

Ards and North Down (AND) established its Labour Market Partnership on 17th August 2021 and has successfully delivered its Action Plans for 2021-2023 and 2023-2024, based on the findings from a Strategic Assessment of the Labour Market in the Ards and North Down Area. The Action Plan for 2024-2025 was developed to continue the success of the previous Action Plan as well as building on local experience, knowledge of providers and expertise, and marry this with opportunities to address key areas of need within the AND Council area.

The following themes were identified as local priorities:

Theme 1 - Economic Inactivity

Theme 2 –Unemployment (all ages)

Theme 3 - Disability

Theme 4 - Skilled Labour Supply

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








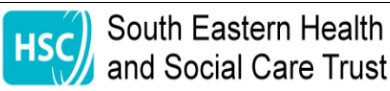


The aim of the LMP is to work in partnership with our statutory, voluntary and community organisations to assess local labour market conditions and develop plans on how best to get people furthest away from employment, into employment via the delivery of its Action Plan.

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

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

Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership Membership

Frances McCormick	County Down Rural Community Network	
Kieran McKenna	South Eastern Regional College	
Victoria Boyd	South Eastern Regional College	
Nichola Lockhart	Ards Business Centre (Enterprise Agency)	
Emma Pearson	North Down Development Agency (Enterprise Agency)	
Matthew Stockton	Bangor Chamber of Commerce	
Sarah Collyer	Kilcooley Women's Centre	
Carla Frazer	Steppingstones	
Ken Scott	Bangor Foodbank	
Dawn Taylor	Department for Communities (Jobs and Benefits Office- Bangor)	
Katherine Carlisle	Department for Communities (Jobs and	

	Benefits Office- Newtownards)	
Cathy O'Neill	Department for Economy (Careers Services)	 Department for the Economy
Ruth Harper	Workplus	
Frank Given	Close Focus Ltd	 Close Focus Limited RESEARCH ADVISE EDUCATE
Tracy McAvoy	Invest NI	 Invest Northern Ireland
Davina Gordon	Naissance Marketing	 Naissance MARKETING
Paddy Crothers	NOW Group	
Niamh Rainey	NOW Group	
Susanne McCorry	South Eastern Trust	 HSC South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Selwyn Johnston	Action Mental Health	
Hilary West-Hurst	Education Authority	
Council Staff Members		
Clare McGill		Head of Economic Development
Nicola Dorrian		Head of Community and Culture, Community and Wellbeing
Patricia Mackey (Chair)		Community Planning Manager

Council Secretariat	
Karine McGuckin	Economic Development Manager
Nicola Webster-Pickett	Labour Market Partnership Manager
Sasha Mawhinney	LMP Administrative Officer

Action Plan Report and Overview of projects/successes

This Annual Report refers to the third Action Plan of the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (AND LMP) and covers the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

During the reporting period, Ards and North Down LMP implemented its Action Plan under the following three strategic priorities.

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

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

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

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

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

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
7 meetings of the full LMP Partnership took place with an average of 67% attendance over the year.	2 Subcommittees were formed and 7 meetings across the year were held with an average attendance of 72%
Is anyone better off?	
Over the course of the meetings decisions were taken and actions implemented to ensure the Action Plan's outcomes were achieved.	

2. Develop an evidence based Action Plan for 2024-2025 Action Plan:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
Stakeholder consultations were undertaken, along with a review of all the latest statistics in the Strategic Assessment available for the Borough . An external survey was also sent to businesses.	Review and update of the three-year Strategic Assessment and production of two, one year Action Plans for 2025-2026 and 2026-2027.
Is anyone better off?	
From the findings of the Strategic Assessment the Action Plans for 2025-26 and 2026-2027 were developed, submitted, presented to DfC and approved.	

3. Capacity Building Opportunities for LMP Members:

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

4. Health and Social Care Research Project:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
1 Research report compiled	2 Events were undertaken, a Stakeholder Workshop and an Employer Information Session.
Is anyone better off?	
100% of Employers and Stakeholders reported confidence that the outcome from the research piece would assist in filling vacancies. They also reported the findings as helpful for developing work/ training opportunities.	

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

Theme 1- Economic Inactivity:

1. Work Ready Programme:

Project Aim: Supporting people who are economically inactive and/or who have been out of the workforce to develop work relevant skills, soft skills and confidence to progress on to a relevant academy or similar support and/or enter employment

Work Ready Programme outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
20 participants recruited.	17 out of 20 participants completed the programme
Is anyone better off?	
13 out of 17 participants gained a qualification 8 participants have gained employment. 5 participants have enrolled onto further training academies. Ongoing monitoring of the participants will be done.	

Theme 2 –Unemployment (all ages):

1. Admin/ Business Services Academy:

Project aim: Supporting people to gain work relevant skills specifically related to General Administration roles in the public, private and third sectors and support to enter employment.

Admin/ Business Services Academy outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
8 participants recruited.	6 out of 8 participants completed the programme.
Is anyone better off?	
6 out of 6 participants gained a qualification 4 participants have gained employment. 1 participant is currently volunteering with a view to moving into employment. Ongoing monitoring of the participants will be done.	

2. SIA Academy (Security Industry Authority):

Project Aim: Supporting people to gain the relevant qualification and skills to work within the security sector.

SIA Academy (Security Industry Authority) outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
9 participants recruited.	8 out of 9 participants completed the programme
Is anyone better off?	
7 out of 8 participants gained a qualification Currently 5 participants have received their badges and have moved into employment. Ongoing monitoring of the remaining participants will be done once their badges have been received.	

3. Childcare Academy (Working with Children):

Project Aim: Supporting people to gain the relevant qualifications and skills to work within the childcare sector.

Childcare Academy (Working with Children) outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
9 participants recruited.	9 out of 9 participants completed the programme
Is anyone better off?	
9 out of 9 participants gained a qualification 5 participants have gained employment. (1 self-employed, 2 within the sector and 2 into other sectors).	

4. Childminding Academy:

Project Aim: Supporting people to gain the relevant qualifications and skills to set up a business as a childminder or approved home carer.

Childminding Academy outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
9 participants recruited.	8 out of 9 participants completed the programme
Is anyone better off?	
8 participants gained a qualification 3 are now Registered Childminders 4 are Approved Home Carers 1 has moved into other employment	

Theme 3 – Disability:

1. Academy for People with Disabilities:

Project aim: Supporting individuals with a disability or neurodiverse condition to gain work relevant skills and wrap around support to progress into employment.

Academy for people with Disabilities outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
34 Participants (target was 30) enrolled across 3 academies: 1. Customer Service 2. Employability 3. Catering and Hospitality	27 out of the 34 participants completed the Academies 22 Local employers engaged with
Is anyone better off?	
100% of participants who completed the Academy gained a qualification 100% reported satisfaction with the Academy 100% have increased confidence because of the Academy 13 participants gained employment	

Theme 4 – Skilled Labour Supply:

1. Transport Academy:

Project aim: To provide opportunities to obtain or upskill to obtain a HGV License or PSV Coach Licence and engage with local employers to ascertain potential job vacancies as HGV drivers or Coach drivers. This academy also provides opportunities to obtain standard driving licences to enable movement into employment.

Transport Academy outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
44 participants were recruited onto the Academy	100% of participants who completed the academy gained a qualification
Is anyone better off?	
30 participants have currently completed the academy. 27 participants gained new employment from the HGV element. 2 participants have passed and gained employment from the driving licence element 3 participants from the driving licence element have not yet passed but have gained employment Participants doing the driving licence element of the Transport Academy and will be monitored after completing.	

2. Employer Led Upskilling Programme:

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

Employer Led Upskilling Programme outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
47 employers engaged with 105 employees enrolled on the programme	93 employees completed the programme 100% of participants reported satisfaction with the programme.
Is anyone better off?	
87 participants gained a qualification as a result of participation on the programme 34 participants reported increased hours or higher paid employment as a result of participation on the programme Ongoing monitoring will provide number of participants moving into higher paid employment or working additional hours.	

3. LMP Collaboration:

Project aim: Working collaboratively with other LMPs to support participants into programmes and academies that AND LMP don't facilitate.

LMP Collaboration outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
3 participants enrolled onto academies with Belfast City Council.	2 completed the programmes.
Is anyone better off?	
2 participants gained new employment.	

4. Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy:

Project Aim: To upskill current Classroom Assistants to gain the relevant qualification needed to be able to transition from temporary to permanent employment as well as increase hours and/or salary scale.

Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academies outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
24 participants recruited.	23 out of 24 participants have completed the academy.
Is anyone better off?	
23 out of 24 have gained their CACHE Level 3 Supporting Teaching and Learning qualification. 22 out of 23 participants have moved from temporary to permanent employment.	

5. Classroom Assistant Employability Academy:

Project Aim: To provide work relevant qualifications and skills for available work opportunities specifically related to the role of a Classroom Assistant and support to enter employment.

Classroom Assistant Employability Academies outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
22 participants recruited.	22 out of 22 participants completed the academy
Is anyone better off?	
22 out of 22 have gained qualifications (Safeguarding and Paediatric First Aid) 14 participants have gained employment	

6. Childminding Upskilling Academy:

Project Aim: To upskill current childminders to enable them to gain the OCNNI Level 3 Working with Children and Young People with Special Needs. This enables current childminders with available spaces to offer these spaces to children with special needs.

Childminding Upskilling Academy outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
7 participants recruited.	6 out of 7 participants have completed the academy
Is anyone better off?	
6 participants have gained the qualification	

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

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

1. Training and Employment Events:

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

One event took place in Aurora Aquatic and Leisure complex on the 6th November 2024.

The second event took place in Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Complex on the 20th March 2025.



Promoting the jobs fair are Jack Hamilton from Mash Direct, with the Mayor of Ards and North Down Alistair Cathcart, and Stephen McPhillips from the Galgorm Group.

Hundreds of jobs on offer at local fair

AROUND 300 jobs will be on offer at an employment and training fair, taking place next week in Bangor.

The Jobs, Support and Training Fair, organised by Ards and North Down Council and the Labour Market Partnership, is being held on Wednesday, November 6, at the Aurora complex.

The free-to-attend event will provide support and raise awareness of local employment opportunities. Support agencies will be on hand to help with

career guidance and development as well as interview techniques.

Labour Market Partnerships, which create targeted employment action plans for council areas, are funded by the Department for Communities and allow for collaboration at local and regional level to support people towards and into work.

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Alistair Cathcart, said the fair will have around 300 jobs on offer across several industries.

"They range from catering assistants to drivers, forklift

drivers, warehouse operatives, administration, customer service and more," he said.

"The fair provides an unmissable opportunity for those looking to unlock their potential and secure their next career move."

Help with travel costs is available for those in receipt of benefits, and local Jobs and Benefits offices can provide more details.

The event is free to attend and no booking is necessary. For more information, visit www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp.

Press release from the 31st October 2024.

Council partnership stages job fair



The Mayor of Ards and North Down Alastair Cathcart visited a job fair at Ards Blair Mayne Centre organised by the council's Labour Market Partnership in conjunction with the Department for Communities. With the mayor are Aoife Reilly, of The Old Inn, Crawfordsburn and Alison Lowry, of the Department for Communities. B16-27-3-25



Gillian Weir, from La Mon Hotel and Country Club, talking to Nendrum College pupils Andrew Graham, Caleb Ashley, Carson Nelson and Sam Wilson. B17-27-3-25



Michelle Gambiza and Tsi Mika speaking to Louise McFartland, about a career working for Universal Credit. B18-27-3-25



Hope Kerr and Nigel Moore talking to John McCann, CEO of Willowbrook Foods which is a large employer in the Killinchy area, currently supplying a number of iconic High Street brands with fresh produce. B19-27-3-25



Amy Eadie from empower USEL, an organisation funded by the government. B22-27-3-25



Norma Kelly, from Disability Action, with Dean Milne at the job fair. B23-27-3-25



Sasha Mawhinney and Morgan McNeill, from Ards and North Down Council's Labour Market Partnership. B21-27-3-25



Anne Reid, from South Eastern Regional College, showing Nendrum College pupil Kayran Ozdogru courses available at SFRC. B26-27-3-25

Press coverage of the Job Fair in the Spectator on the 27th March 2025.

Training and Employment Events outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
2 events delivered, one in Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex, Bangor. The other in Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Complex	513 people attended the two events. 64 Employers and 25 support organisations attended
Is anyone better off?	
90% of attendees surveyed rated it good/ excellent 93% of Employers reported satisfaction with the event 95% of supporting organisations reported satisfaction with the event 90% of attendees feel more informed of employment and/or training opportunities 40% of Employers reported the event would assist them in filling vacancies 56% of attendees reported the intention to apply for a job following the event 25 Jobs were filled as a result of the events	

2. Disability Employment and Support Day:

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

Press release featured in the Spectator Newspaper on the 6th February 2025.



Preparing for the disability employment and support day are (from left) Roz McIlwaine from Action Mental Health, Valencia Yeo of specialist consultancy firm Specialisterne, Mayor Alistair Cathcart, and Niamh Rainey and Wendy McGee, both from social enterprise organisation, the NOW Group.

A DISABILITY employment and support day will be held in Bangor's Aurora leisure complex on Tuesday, February 18.

The event is being organised by Ards and North Down Council's Labour Market Partnership (LMP), an initiative designed to support employers as well as potential employees and is free to attend.

It will feature exhibitors who can offer programmes and support packages as well as provide advice to employers, as well as those who have a disability or neurodiverse condition, or

their parents, guardians and carers.

Mayor Alistair Cathcart, said the event follows on from the disability employment and support days that were held in Bangor and Comber last year.

"These events help to create new opportunities for more people in our borough and address issues with jobs and training at a local level through locally focussed programmes, providing further support to our local employment market," he said.

The LMPs create targeted employment action plans for council areas, are funded by the Department for Communities, and allow for

collaboration at local and regional level to support people towards and into work.

The Bangor event will be open from 1pm until 4pm, with employers encouraged to attend to find out what support packages are available when they employ someone with a disability or neurodiverse condition, and get advice about training for staff, while all other attendees can get advice about employment options, programmes and support packages, as well as benefits and assistance.

For more information, visit andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp.

Disability Employment and Support Day outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
2 Events delivered, one in Comber Leisure Centre (27 th November 2024) and one in Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex (18 th February 2025).	130 people attended the events. 19 Support organisations attended
Is anyone better off?	
97% of attendees rated the event as good/ excellent. 100% of support organisations rated the event as good/excellent 100% of attendees felt more informed about the opportunities and support available in Ards and North Down. 59% of attendees were referred to a LMP programme or other support programmes.	

3. Skills and Employment Support Clinics:

Project aim: Deliver three Support Clinics in areas of deprivation within the borough to sign post individuals to support and academies available to move towards employment.

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
3 Clinics delivered across various location in the borough.	40 people attended across the three events. 17 support organisations attended over the three events.
Is anyone better off?	
100% of attendees surveyed rated it good/ excellent 100% of supporting organisations reported satisfaction with the event 100% of attendees feel more informed of employment and/or training opportunities 54% of attendees were referred to a LMP Programme or other support programmes.	

4. PR Campaign to Promote AND LMP/ Increased Awareness:

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



"I retrained to get my dream job, you can too."

 Classroom Assistant Academy Graduate

 Labour Market Partnership

Find out more:

andbusiness.co.uk/ANDLMP

 or scan the QR code




 #ANDYouCanToo



"I retrained to get my dream job, you can too."

 HGV Academy Graduate

 Labour Market Partnership

Find out more:

andbusiness.co.uk/ANDLMP

 or scan the QR code




 #ANDYouCanToo



"I upskilled to get my dream job, you can too."

 Health and Social Care Graduate

 Labour Market Partnership

Find out more:

andbusiness.co.uk/ANDLMP

 or scan the QR code




 #ANDYouCanToo



Mayor of Ards and North Down, Gillian McCollum, with Jonny Meyer, classroom assistant, Employability Academy, Naomi Kelly, SIA Academy, and Susie Brady, Academy for People with Disabilities.

Employment programme offers support for borough's residents

AN EMPLOYMENT programme managed by Ards and North Down Council has supported 520 of the borough's residents, it has been revealed.

The Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP) has addressed local skills and employment gaps since its establishment in August 2021. Funded by the Department for Communities (DfC), LMPs create targeted employment action plans for council areas, fostering collaboration at both local and regional levels to support individuals towards and into work.

The 520 residents of the borough have been supported through various employability academies, including: Transport Academy; Academy for People with Disabilities; Classroom Assistant Employability Academies; Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy; (Security

Industry Authority (SIA) Academy; Childminding Academy; Childcare Academy; Work Ready Programme; and Business Support Services Academy.

These initiatives have successfully enabled over 253 residents to secure employment, with ongoing recruitment promising even more job outcomes.

In addition to supporting individuals, the Ards and North Down LMP has helped 78 employers since 2021, contributing to the upskilling and training of over 200 employees within the Borough through the Employer-Led Upskilling Programme, which offers grants to employers for staff development.

With confirmed funding for 2025-2026, the Ards and North Down LMP aims to continue offering the various academies. This funding will also support outreach initiatives, including two jobfairs in Newtownards and

Bangor, two disability employment and support days and skills and employment support clinics across the borough.

The LMP has also developed two Employability and Skills Registers, one for employers and one for individuals, detailing available support and resources. These registers are available for download on the LMP website.

Mayor of Ards and North Down, Gillian McCollum, said: "The Labour Market Partnership has been instrumental in bridging the skills gap and providing valuable employment opportunities for our residents. The continued funding ensures that we can build on this success and support even more individuals and businesses in our community."

For more information on the Ards and North Down LMP or to register your interest in upcoming academies, please visit www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp.

Initiative boosts jobs and brings in £3m in wages

Julie Waters

j.waters@spectatornewspapers.co.uk

A BODY set up to improve employability across the borough has helped hundreds of local people into work and generated estimated earnings of nearly £3m over the past three years.

Ards and North Down Council's Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is funded by the Department for Communities and is responsible for helping 262 people find employment in the borough.

Nicola Webster-Pickett, LMP manager, recently met with local councillors to give an overview of the outreach events and training academies that can help people into careers such as classroom assistants and HGV drivers, as well as supporting people with disabilities into employment.

Speaking at a recent meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee, the manager explained the partnership's four local priorities for 2025-26 are disability, skilled labour supply, economic inactivity and unemployment.

She said the partnership has funded 155 people through the transport/HGV academy since 2022. A total of 122 people had then moved into employment, with earnings estimated at around £2.3m.

Over the past three years, the partnership has also paid for 107 participants through the academy for people with disabilities; 33 had moved into employment with estimated earnings around

£245,000. There are 30 people currently in placements.

The committee was told that 68 people have been funded through the partnership to attend the classroom assistant employability academy; 30 of these participants have moved into jobs with estimated earnings of £582,000. In 2024, the partnership funded the upskilling of 24 classroom assistants, with 23 having completed the training.

The committee further heard that the partnership has filled 77 other jobs from job fairs, careers convention, the reskilling programme, the enterprise skills programme, the childcare academy, the work ready programme and the Security Industry Authority academy.

It was also explained that 262 jobs have been filled by the partnership since 2022; and in 2023 to 2024, 99% of people who gained employment were still in a job six months later.

Mayor Gillian McCollum praised the partnership, and said the figures deserve to be shouted from the rooftops across the borough.

The Alliance Party councillor said one of her chosen charities for her Mayoral year was Orchardville, which supports people living with autism and learning disabilities. She asked what other groups, that support people with disabilities, does the partnership work with?

The LMP manager explained they have 22 exhibitors that attend the employment support days and they also received referrals when they were doing outreach work.

Councillor Jennifer Gilmour said a number of the partnership's launch events for different programmes were held during her mayoral year and it was great to get an 'invaluable insight' into the people behind the statistics.

The Bangor West councillor said she could see 'the difference it makes in their lives' and 'gives them a step up back into employment or upskill them'. She said that the disability support programmes had helped boost the confidence of

those taking part and helped them look for employment.

Alliance Party alderman Alan McDowell praised the partnership's 'absolutely brilliant' achievements and asked if they would be able to provide skills training for IT and cyber security roles.

The LMP manager said this was one of their actions for next year and they worked in partnership with Springvale Learning, based in Newtownards, who were providing training in this field.

“

The figures deserve to be shouted from the rooftops across the borough.

Mayor Gillian McCollum



Mayor of Ards and North Down Gillian McCollum.



Sign up for employability skills registers

TRAINING academies, employer led upskilling programmes and disability support days are all part of the year ahead for the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership.

The partnership is set to host a number of academies in the year ahead including classroom assistant employability academy, a transport academy and an academy for people with disabilities.

There is also a health and social care academy, an administration/business services academy, a work ready programme, a greentech

academy and the childminding academy is to be confirmed.

The LMP also launched an Employer Led Upskilling Programme in mid September to upskill staff to enable them to work more hours or gain higher paid employment.

Grants of up to £500 per employee are available towards an accredited qualification or certificate in specific job related qualifications such as forklift and first aid training. Grants are available to a maximum of four employees per company.

Disability Employment and Support Days will be held on November 25 at Portavogie Community Centre and Bangor's Aurora Centre, on

February 26, next year.

A Job Fair will be held in the Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre, on March 19, 2026, with a Job Support and Training Fair with a dedicated health and social care area to be confirmed for Bangor Aurora.

The partnership has also set up two employability skills registers, one for businesses and one specifically for individuals looking for support.

The business Employability and Skills Register gives all the details of support programmes and is available to download from:

www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp

Jan- March 2025 PR Campaign - Summary



PR Campaign to Promote AND LMP outcomes:

How much did we do?	How well did we do it?
27 Articles in Council's Ezines Social Media posts on the Council's platforms Press releases for the Training and Employment Events Press releases for the Disability Employment and Support Days Billboard and online PR Campaign	22,435 views from 15,497 unique viewers on the LMP website from April 2024- June 2025 257,086 Post Impressions with 8,991 clicks to the LMP Website from the Jan-March 2025 paid PR Campaign 105,000 post impressions and 3,504 clicks to the LMP Website from the June PR Campaign Press releases were featured in various media
Is anyone better off?	
Over 200 enquiries and expression of interests have been received 100% of LMP members feel the PR Campaign has had a positive impact on raising awareness of the LMP.	

Financial Statement

An audit of AND LMP was completed in February 2025.

A review of the governance arrangements of the Labour Market Partnership and controls to manage expenditure against the LMP Funding Agreement was conducted in February 2025. The report concluded that overall, there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control.

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

The Chief Executive of Ards and North Down Borough Council, who acts as the Chief Financial Officer, has signed off on the Ards and North Down LMP Financial Statement for 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025.

Statement of Income & Expenditure

Ards & North Down Borough Council
 Ards & North Down Labour Market
 Partnership
 Statement of Income & Expenditure
 Year to 31 March 2025

Overall Funding

	Total Funding	Expenditure Charged	Expenditure Accrued	Total Expenditure
Funding	£	£	£	£
Funding from DfC (Administration)	105,472.77	105,472.62	0.00	105,472.62
Funding from DfC (Operational)	311,647.64	144,856.79	166,790.63	311,647.42
Funding from DfE (Childcare)	18,000.00	4,680.00	13,320.00	18,000.00
Contributions from DE (Childminding)	14,400.00	2,635.53	11,420.67	14,056.20
Total Overall Funding	449,520.41	257,644.94	191,531.30	449,176.24

DfC Administration

Payments	£	£	£	£
Salaries	98,871.00	99,535.79	0.00	99,535.79
Staff Mileage	250.00	604.01	0.00	604.01
Staff Expenses	100.00	52.80	0.00	52.80
Miscellaneous Costs	251.77	190.02	0.00	190.02
Audit	6,000.00	5,090.00	0.00	5,090.00
Total DfC Administration	105,472.77	105,472.62	0.00	105,472.62

DfC Operational

Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	25,969.84	9,846.28	16,123.56	25,969.84
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	263,677.80	118,987.01	144,690.57	263,677.58
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	22,000.00	16,023.50	5,976.50	22,000.00
Total DfC Operational	311,647.64	144,856.79	166,790.63	311,647.42

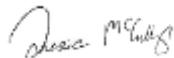
Other Funding (Admin)

Payments - Council Contribution (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Other (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Other Funding (Operational)				
Payments - DfE (Operational)	18,000.00	4,680.00	13,320.00	18,000.00
Payments - DE (Operational)	14,400.00	2,635.53	11,420.67	14,056.20
Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)				0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)				0.00
Total Other (Operational)	32,400.00	7,315.53	24,740.67	32,056.20
	<u>449,520.41</u>	<u>257,644.94</u>	<u>191,531.30</u>	<u>449,176.24</u>

Certificate of Chief Financial Officer

Subject to the central charges shown above properly reflecting actual costs Incurred by the Council on 'behalf of' the Labour Market Partnership. I am satisfied that the expenditure shown has been wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by the Council on the Labour Market Partnership and that the grant receivable is in accordance with the regulations and conditions applicable.



18-Apr-25

Chief Financial Officer

Date