



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

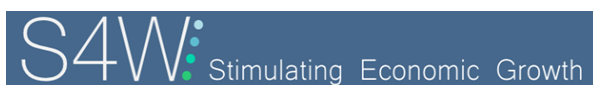


European Union
European
Social Fund

Nottinghamshire County Council

**Final Evaluation of the D2N2 Careers Local Enterprise Grant
programme 2016 - 2019**

Evaluation Report April 2019



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Appendix A – Contributors

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The D2N2 Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme was managed by an Economic Development Officer from Nottinghamshire County Council's Growth and Economic Development Team and employed a Grant Development and Monitoring Officer and a Business Support Officer between January 2017 and its financial completion date at the end of May 2019. Nottinghamshire County Council were supported in the delivery of the programme by the other Upper Tier Authorities (Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and Nottingham City Council) in the appraisal of applications.
- 1.2 The project was part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as a co-financed call under the D2N2 European Structural and Investment Funds programme. An invitation to tender was issued by the ESFA in July 2016, which was duly won by a Nottinghamshire County Council led consortium.
- 1.3 The Careers Local Enterprise Grants were made available to schools, academies, colleges, virtual schools and educational establishments across Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to develop projects over and above their statutory offer to support 15-19 year olds who were at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).
- 1.4 The Careers Local Grant Programme has committed a total of £1,674,530 of grant funding as at the end of April 2019 and over five application rounds, applications were received for 179 separate awards of which 173 (96.6%) were successful. 129 individual institutions across the D2N2 have received one or two of these 173 awards, with 38.7% of establishments returning for a second grant. Across the D2N2 area, 41 education establishments benefited in each of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, 24 within Derby City and 23 in Nottingham City.
- 1.5 In the earlier stages of the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme, a framework of experienced providers of employability services was provided for educational establishments to work with to engage and support those at risk of NEET and to work with employers. Most, but not all projects utilised services or products on offer through the provider framework.
- 1.6 The Programme has significantly exceeded its extended target to engage 1,160 learners, with the final figure still to be formally calculated. In terms of reported outcomes, the programme should significantly exceed its target to engage participants with a health challenge or disability (an 11% target compared to an actual of 27%).
- 1.7 All of these achievements have been delivered in the context of the available management fee being inadequate to resource a full team with the capacity to manage the significant workloads, particularly given many applicants were not familiar with grant application processes and ESF requirements.

- 1.8 Educational institutions were overwhelming grateful for the funding, but expressed concerns about the level of communication and complex processes involved in securing and administering the funds. Generally, concerns about support making applications, gaining clarity on and developing approaches to monitoring and (in some cases) considering suitable activities were greater in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire than in Derby and Derbyshire. This appears in part to reflect the availability of Enterprise Co-ordinator support at times during the programme's course.
- 1.9 Learner benefits can be seen on a continuum, from a slightly enhanced and more engaging offer within an already Good or Outstanding Ofsted rated programme, to an opportunity they would not otherwise have had.
- 1.10 Young people benefited from the practical skills and advice, but also the relationships they formed and the opportunity to talk to people from outside of their school environment.
- 1.11 Schools with a limited or developing careers offer reported benefits in new knowledge, relationships and (for some in special education) having to find new ways of teaching. However, most Enterprise Co-ordinators interviewed felt the establishments with an existing strong offer were best placed to capitalise on the programme because they understood their gaps in provision.

2 Introduction and Programme Background

- 2.1 Nottinghamshire County Council on behalf of their partners and funders have commissioned an evaluation of the D2N2 Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme. The evaluation has been undertaken by S4W Ltd and Richmond Baxter Ltd between February and May 2019.
- 2.2 The D2N2 Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme was managed by an Economic Development Officer from Nottinghamshire County Council's Growth and Economic Development Team and employed a Grant Development and Monitoring Officer Manager and a Business Support Officer between January 2017 and its financial completion date at the end of May 2019. Nottinghamshire County Council were supported in the delivery of the programme by the other Upper Tier Authorities (Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and Nottingham City Council) in the appraisal of applications.
- 2.3 In completing the evaluation process, this report provides:
- An overview of the project, the delivery approach and its objectives
 - The degree to which the project has met its contractual obligations to the Skills Funding Agency (the co-financing agency)
 - An evaluation of the processes applied to the project management, marketing and communications, project delivery and monitoring
 - An assessment of the impacts, added value and value for money of the programme
 - A review of the legacy and impacts on the wider policy area of reducing NEET in the D2N2 area
 - A review of how the programme has supported the delivery of ESF Cross Cutting Themes
 - Recommended actions for any future funded activity in this area

Project Overview

- 2.4 The project was part funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) as a co-financed call under the D2N2 European Structural and Investment Funds programme. An invitation to tender was issued by the SFA (which subsequently became the Education and Skills Agency, or ESFA) in July 2016, which was duly won by a Nottinghamshire County Council led consortium.
- 2.5 The Careers Local Enterprise Grants were made available to schools, academies, colleges, virtual schools and educational establishments across Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to develop projects over and above their statutory offer to support 15-19 year olds who were at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The Careers Local programme has dovetailed with several policy changes and government programmes whereby schools and education providers took on greater responsibility for providing careers advice and guidance to their students/pupils.

- 2.6 Educational establishments could apply for a grant of up to £10,000 to wholly fund a project to support young people at risk of NEET to enhance their employability and skills, understand their careers options and to improve their chances of participating in further education or wider training. Where demand or need was proven, the limit could be increased to £20,000 with the approval of D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. The grant was targeted only at those at risk of NEET and was not for wider use amongst classes or wider year groups.
- 2.7 In the delivery of the grant funded project, it was expected educational establishments would work closely with employers and the network of D2N2 Enterprise Co-ordinators, who would support establishments to co-ordinate bids, support delivery and advise institutions on appropriate and effective activity under the programme. There was also a role of the Enterprise Co-ordinator to broker links with the private sector to engage employers (especially those in the Enterprise Advisor Network¹) in the delivery of each establishment's project and to support the young people.
- 2.8 Examples of activity that could be funded under the scheme included:
- implement the D2N2 Employability Framework and fund an integrated employability offer to educational institutions including increased information through careers guidance to young people about key sectors and career pathways
 - establish, extend and deepen engagement with local businesses
 - increase young people's understanding of local careers opportunities by extending, increasing and linking with existing Careers Service provision
 - foster enterprise and entrepreneurial behaviour
 - deliver local competitions and events.
- 2.9 In the earlier stages of the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme, a framework of experienced providers of employability services was provided for educational establishments to work with to engage and support those at risk of NEET and to work with employers. Most, but not all projects utilised services or products on offer through the provider framework.
- 2.10 Providers on the framework were:
- Babington Group
 - Derbyshire Education Business Partnership
 - Derbyshire Youthinc
 - Enterprise for Education
 - Forum Talent Potential
 - Futures
 - Ideas 4 Careers
 - Learn by Design

¹ A network of business people who act as volunteer Enterprise Advisors, forming a network of large and small employers who work with school leaders, to develop their employability plans to better engage with employers.

Programme Funding

- 2.11 The Nottinghamshire County Council led consortium secured a total of £1,731,676m of ESF/ESFA investment for a two-year project to end in July 2018. Of the total budget, £1.574m was available in grants with £157,425, (10% of the allocated grants budget) used for programme administration - in line with both ESF requirements and the Invitation to Tender.
- 2.12 Within the Nottinghamshire County Council tender submission, notional allocations were made across the four Local authority areas based on evidenced based need and in consultation with the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. The allocations are identified in table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1 Initial Allocation by Upper Tier Local Authority area

Local Authority area	Allocation	%
Derby City	£220,485	14.0%
Derbyshire	£510,281	32.4%
Nottingham City	£332,736	21.1%
Nottinghamshire	£510,749	32.4%

- 2.13 After starting the delivery phase in January 2017, Nottinghamshire County Council submitted a Project Change Request in September 2018 and the project delivery was subsequently extended to 31st March 2019, with a final financial reimbursement from the ESFA of June 2019 to allow more time for the effective defrayal of the budget. As part of the extension, the programme was also awarded an additional £250,000 of funds, with 10% of this award made available to support the programme management £1,981,676m, of which approximately £1.6 was available for grants.
- 2.14 Initially educational institutions were restricted to one project over the programme's two-year lifespan, but after the programme extension this restriction was lifted, and establishments were permitted to apply for a second grant. In exceptional circumstances and based on evidenced need, the Careers Local Enterprise Grant could offer up to £20,000, and this was only the case in 37 grant awards (although most only received a relatively small amount above the £10,000 threshold).
- 2.15 In terms of the final projected budget, there may be some expenditure that has not been defrayed in full by some of the participating schools and educational establishments so the final overall budget may ultimately be lower than the amounts quoted in the evaluation (although at the point of the evaluation being undertaken, Nottinghamshire County Council do not foresee this being a significant amount). This will be tied up by the financial completion date of September 2019.

Programme Management

- 2.16 Nottinghamshire County Council managed the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme, supported by the other D2N2 upper tier Local Authorities. The Authorities met or undertook conference calls when needed and as part of every application round to support the decision making and to undertake and cross-reference appraisals.
- 2.17 The management of the programme was undertaken by a Growth and Economic Development Officer (not funded through Careers Local) and a small delivery team was employed, initially comprising of a full-time Grant Development and Monitoring Officer (recruited at the start of the programme) and a part-funded D2N2 Careers Local and Enterprise Adviser for a year based at the Local Enterprise Partnership. Part of this latter role was intended to operate as the link between the Careers Local programme, the Enterprise Co-ordinators and the LEP. This post is currently vacant.
- 2.18 A part-time Business Support Officer post was created in April 2018. Additional business support was not originally part of the staffing plan. However, due to the evidence requirements of the project and the amount of support schools required to apply and deliver the provision, additional resources were engaged. Upon the postholder leaving in early March 2019, further staff were recruited from end of March until mid-May 2019.
- 2.19 Application for a Careers Local Enterprise Grant was through a two-stage process, firstly through developing a Careers, Enterprise and Employability Action Plan – which involved working with a key strategic local employer and ensuring that the action plan aligned to the D2N2 Employability Framework. The second stage was through the submission of a single, in-depth application form.
- 2.20 Within the tender submission, applications were proposed to be submitted through an ‘open’ application process, but this was changed at the start of the programme to bidding rounds with a start date and submission deadline to better manage programme administration and workloads.
- 2.21 Although initially limited to one application per establishment, the opportunity for a second grant was opened up in round 5. This was conditional on its use for a different structure of project (i.e. the same activity could not be repeated) or to deliver to a different cohort of young people. Some grant applications were on behalf of multiple establishments (especially where there were academy groups within the same group in the D2N2 area), but with notational allocations per individual school/establishment. In Derby City there was a co-ordinated application submitted on behalf of 18 establishments in round 2 and then again on behalf of 14 in round 5 for a second tranche of grants.

- 2.22 Schools and education establishments, usually working with their framework provider, then had to evaluate, monitor and evidence the impact of the project on the young people involved in line with ESF requirements and using Learner Records forms derived from standardised ESF/SFA (and later EFSA) monitoring processes.
- 2.23 It was reported anecdotally that this was the first time the Education and Skills Funding Agency had operated an ESF co-financed small grant fund to tackle the issues of NEET.

Contracted Outputs and Outcomes

- 2.24 Within the invitation to tender, the core target for the programme was to undertake at least 1,000 Learner Assessments and Plans, with a core target of completing an evaluation of the programme before its completion. The programme extension awarded in September 2018, alongside extending the completion date and expanding the budget, also increased the core target to 1,160 Learner Assessments and Plans completed.
- 2.25 In line with the requirements of the national ESF programme for a More Developed region, there is an outcome for participation on the programme from the target groups identified in table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Target Groups for the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme

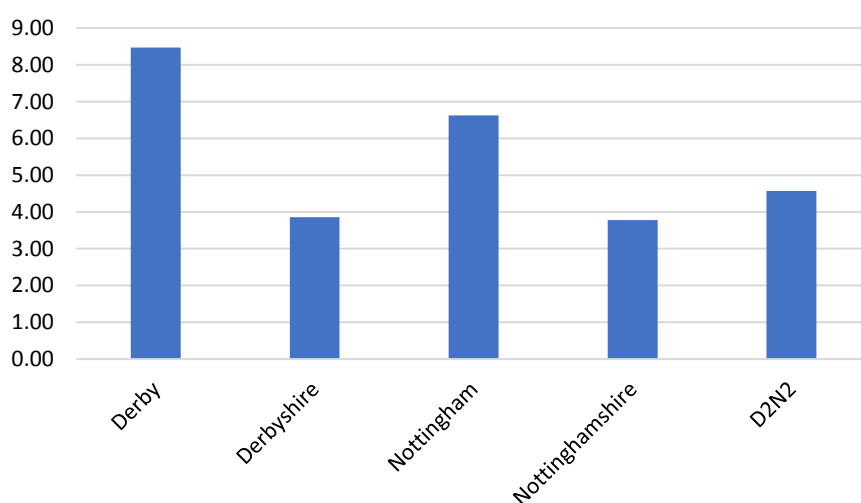
Target Group	More Developed Region
Participants from ethnic minorities	9%
Female participants	45%
Participants with a disability or health problems	11%
Participants who are lone parents	4%
Participants without basic skills	18%

3 Strategic and Delivery Context

NEET Trends

- 3.1 The latest Department for Education data release for the end of 2016 identified a total of 2,140 young people aged 16-17 in the D2N2 Local Authorities whose status was NEET or not known, representing 4.6% of all 16/17 year olds. As identified in chart 3.1 below, there is a significant variation across Local Authority areas and also within neighbourhoods and wards within each area².

Chart 3.1 NEET and Not Known Rates (%) in the D2N2 area 2016



Source: DFE, Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known, end 2016

- 3.2 Whilst the higher NEET rates are in the two urban centres, the rate for Nottingham is very low when compared to other major cities, with Derby relatively high. Of the young people that are NEET or Not Known across the D2N2 area, 55.4% are male (although the rate in Nottingham is higher at 60% males).
- 3.3 Groups of young people who are often at high risk of becoming NEET include young people leaving care, with special education needs or with a disability (SEND), supervised by the youth offending team and young lone parents. In the context of the Careers Local programme, this also included young people who had a Pupil Premium grant.
- 3.4 In 2016, Derby was selected as one of six of the first national Social Mobility Opportunity Areas by the Department for Education. At the time Derby ranked 303rd out of 324 district areas for Social Mobility³. There are now 12 Opportunity Areas across England and Derby remains the only one in the East Midlands.

² Department for Education (2017), Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known, end 2016

³ Department for Education (2017), Opportunity Area 2017-2020: A local delivery plan to help ensure Derby is a great place to grow up and thrive, p11

3.5 Opportunity Areas aim to improve social mobility by raising educational standards from early years, through school and beyond, by providing activities designed to help every child and young person in the area with the chance to reach their full potential. The Derby Opportunity Area runs from 2017 to 2020 and is supported by over £2m of additional funding over the programme period. Careers and reducing NEET are both key priorities for the Opportunity Area and the programme has a strand of activity called 'Raising Aspiration' that has offered grants to schools for careers advice (not specifically target at any risk of NEET cohort).

Delivery Context

3.6 The law requires all young people in England to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday and all Upper Tier Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility with regards to children and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). This responsibility includes

- Securing sufficient, suitable education and training provision for all young people who are over compulsory school age but under 19 or aged 19 to 25 and for whom an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is maintained.
- To make available to all young people aged 13-19 and to those between 20 and 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training
- Collecting information about young people who are NEET and ensure they receive support to re-engage and submitting this data to the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS)

3.7 All the Local Authority partners have experience of delivering services to reduce NEET and support those at risk of NEET. The Education Act 2011 gave schools a duty to provide impartial careers guidance from September 2012 onwards. Much of the funding for the provision of careers advice has moved directly to schools who receive a higher proportion of the Dedicated Schools Grant. In some cases, services are 'bought back' from Local Authorities, but this is generally decreasing.

3.8 In September 2013 Ofsted increased the priority of careers guidance in inspections and during this period the school leaving age also increased. In 2015 the Careers and Enterprise Company was established 'to transform the provision of careers education and advice'. It has focused on connecting business to schools using Enterprise Advisers (in liaison with Local Enterprise Partnerships) to achieve this.

- 3.9 Implementation of a new Schools National Funding Formula has been delayed until 2021. Irrespective of the impact of this process, schools are facing funding challenges. Rising need (e.g. language, educational) and cost pressures across the board (e.g. from pensions and pay rises) have been calculated to correspond to an 8% real-terms cut in funding per pupil by 2019-20⁴. The funding available to schools for careers was not ring-fenced or protected from these inflationary pressures.
- 3.10 Pressures are being met by first reducing discretionary activities meaning coverage of wider social topics is dependent on the school's appetite and teacher skills at incorporating these into core lessons. In this context, the Careers Local Enterprise Grant aimed to add capacity to existing careers and employability services and specifically target resources at those that are at risk of becoming NEET.
- 3.11 Government has published its new Careers Strategy: Making the Most of Everyone's Skills and Talents in late 2017, aiming to bring consistency to the standard and impartiality of careers in schools by encouraging the use of the eight Gatsby benchmarks. Subsequent Statutory Guidance in Schools 2018 made it clear that this would also be a requirement of special education and alternative providers.
- 3.12 The eight Gatsby benchmarks include:
1. A stable careers programme
 2. Learning from career and labour market information
 3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
 4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
 5. Encounters with employers and employees
 6. Experiences of workplaces
 7. Encounters with further and higher education
 8. Personal guidance
- 3.13 It is important to note that the Gatsby benchmarks and the requirement to incorporate them into the careers offer were introduced after the Careers Local programme was launched and the programme and Enterprise Co-ordinators have had to try and retro-fit the requirements into the programme where practical.
- 3.14 Going forward the new National Skills Plan will roll out the provision of Technical Level qualifications to underpin the National Industrial Strategy that puts a stronger emphasis on technicians at the heart of the country's economic success.

⁴ National Audit Office (14 December 2016). Department for Education: Financial sustainability of schools.

D2N2 EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy

- 3.15 The D2N2 EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy (EUSIF) was developed at the end of 2013 to set out priorities for the use of EU structural and investment funds within the sub-region. The strategy guides approximately £213.8m of locally allocated EU funds, together with matching funding and additional allocations through the Opt-In processes. Of this total, £106.9m was European Social Fund.
- 3.16 The strategy, drawing on other evidence based documentation, highlighted a range of labour market issues relevant to the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme including variable performance of young people at GCSE level, poor take up of Apprenticeships in some economic sectors, high youth unemployment in some parts of the sub-region and low levels of interest in careers in some key and growing sectors⁵.
- 3.17 The strategy also identified that a lack of available or poor Information Advice and Guidance can lead to poor educational and career choices by some young people, reducing their long-term job opportunities. At the time this had been exacerbated by changes to the careers advisory system.⁶
- 3.18 Thematic Objective 8 of the strategy (Promoting employment/supporting labour mobility) covers a range of activity to develop a dynamic and inclusive labour market. The strategy identifies the need to support young people by building linkages with employers, increasing the number of apprenticeships and tackling those who are NEET.

D2N2 Employability Framework

- 3.19 Published in January 2016, the D2N2 Employability Framework reflected the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership's priorities to support young people to enter the world of work and develop their careers by addressing imbalances between employer demand and the skill supply at the local level. The same priorities are represented across a broad suite of D2N2 economic plans.
- 3.20 The framework centred around the core idea that all young people should have the opportunity to engage with employers, learn about the world of work, develop their employability skills and increase participation in further/higher education and Apprenticeships. There is some cross-over between the Employability Framework and the new Gatsby Benchmarks. The framework underpins key priorities within the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan and all subsequent economic plans.

⁵ The D2N2 DRAFT EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy 2014-2020 (2013) p22

⁶ The D2N2 DRAFT EU Structural and Investment Funds Strategy 2014-2020 (2013) p27

3.21 The ambition for the area is set out in the achievement of ten goals for young people, to be embedded in the delivery of all partners involved in employability and careers across the D2N2 area. These ten goals (see table 3.1 overleaf) provide a focus to ensure all young people can make good decisions and have the opportunities to:

Table 3.1 Target Groups for the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme

Goal	Attributes
<i>Self-motivated</i>	Invest in themselves, recognise their own strengths and values and take responsibility for developing their work readiness, skills and behaviours.
<i>Self-assured.</i>	Have the tools and skills required to present themselves to a future employer
<i>Aspirational.</i>	Have high aspirations for themselves.
<i>Informed</i>	Understand the opportunities available to them locally and beyond and make realistic choices.
<i>Experienced</i>	Have experiences of work that are rewarding and fulfilling.
<i>Achieving</i>	Achieve qualifications valued by employers.
<i>Accountable</i>	Understand that employers want people who will work hard and are accountable for their actions.
<i>Resilient</i>	Understand that employers want young people who can listen and learn from their successes and their mistakes and keep going.
<i>Entrepreneurial</i>	Work creatively to achieve their potential and that of the business
<i>Co-operative</i>	Have effective communication and co-working skills

3.22 One of the core aims of the Careers Local Enterprise Grant is to ensure that all young people can meet the ten goals identified above within the D2N2 Employability Framework, acknowledging that young people who are at risk of becoming NEET may need more support tailored to their needs to help them access the opportunities that are available in the labour market and to obtain wider skills, qualifications and experience.

Education and Skills Funding Agency Invitation to Tender

- 3.23 Released in July 2016, the Invitation to Tender, and the response of Nottinghamshire County Council to the tender provide the key strategic and delivery context behind the programme and set the parameters and methodology for the delivery of the programme.
- 3.24 The investment priority in this specification was “to focus on helping young people, particularly those who are NEET or at risk of NEET, to participate in the labour market and learning in areas through focused Information, Advice and Guidance”.
- 3.25 The strategic aim of the ESFA Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme was to develop a small grants programme that could add value and complement wider measures to increase the number of young people who are in education, employment and training, and to reduce the number who are NEET or at risk of being NEET. The targeted recipients of the scheme were:
- Schools,
 - Specialist schools,
 - Academies,
 - Pupil Referral Units (Alternative Learning Centres),
 - Virtual Schools,
 - Those Elected Home Educated (through registration with the Local Authorities), and
 - Colleges
- 3.26 Grants were to be provided to support the hardest to reach communities and individuals (especially those from deprived communities), to access employment or further learning and training. The SFA wished to develop a flexible and responsive scheme that could adapt to the changing economic and political landscape.
- 3.27 Nottinghamshire County Council in their submission stated they would meet the aims of the Employability Framework and not duplicate the local work of the Careers Enterprise Company and the Careers Inspiration programme being delivered by Futures.

4 Methodology and Evaluation Context

4.1 This report is a late-term evaluation of the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme, reflecting upon just over two years of delivery. The methodology has centred upon evaluating the following key issues:

- How the programme performed against its contracted outputs, specifically the extent of reach to young people at risk of NEET through the allocation of grants dependent on an Enterprise Action Plan
- The level of uptake of the programme across the area, its geographic and demographic reach
- Qualitative perceptions of the programme administration (including governance) and wider support for schools
- Qualitative perceptions on how the grants enabled delivery of outputs (enterprise activities with employers) and outcomes (raising aspirations)
- Qualitative perceptions on the programmes role in achieving sustainable outcomes (and so legacy), value added and the potential to impact on reduction of NEET and business productivity
- Key lessons learned and best practice
- Reflections on the ESF cross-cutting themes

4.2 Our approach encompassed the following stages and sources:

Desktop Review

4.3 A desktop review was undertaken to analyse key programme level documents. These included the ESFA terms and conditions, grant application terms, online material promoting the scheme and the availability of Enterprise Co-ordinators, wider documentation about the programme, case studies of previous projects and update reports submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership.

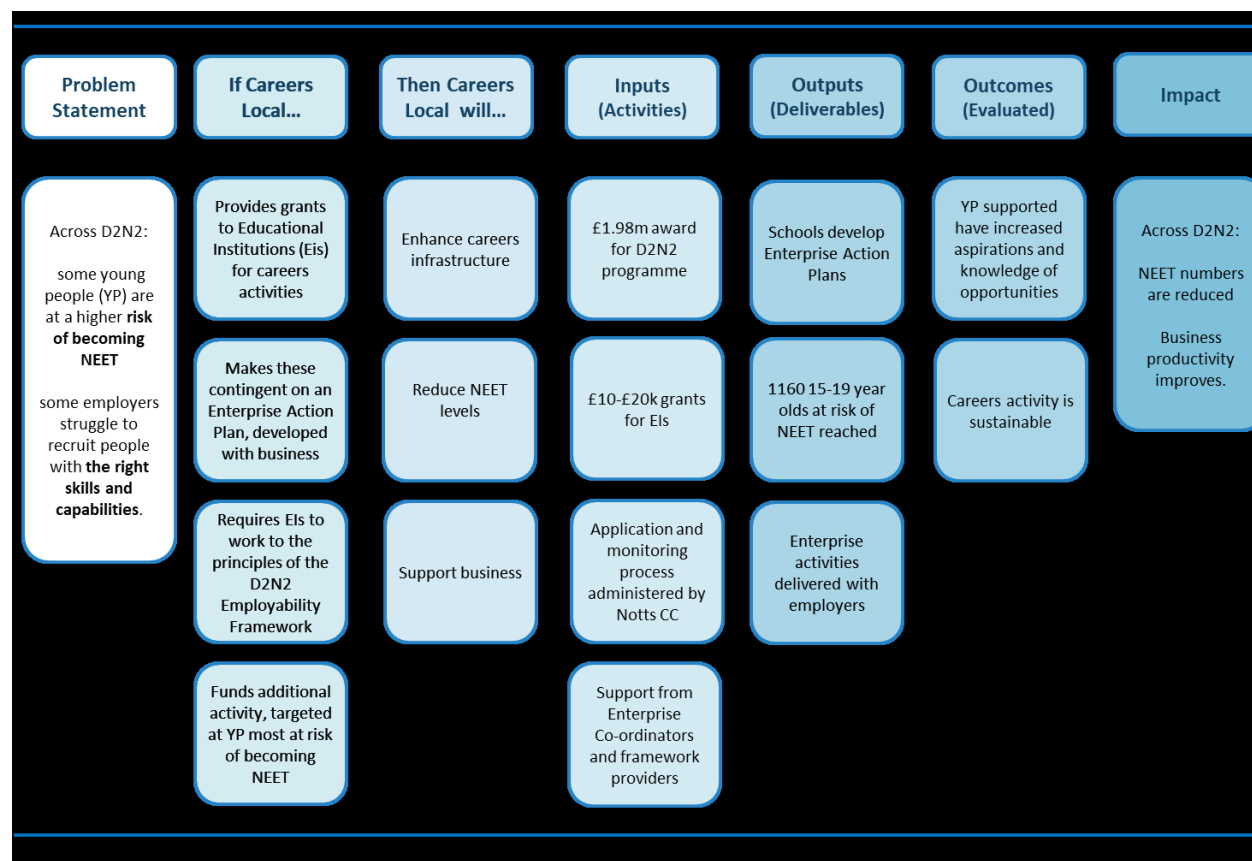
Data analysis

4.4 Monitoring and management information was analysed including performance management data, application and award tracking information by school and authority, and spend data. It was not possible to access the full learner database, due to the live status of the programme, but the latest figures were provided by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Educational Establishment Consultation

- 4.5 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a cross-section of staff that applied for the grants. To inform the question choice a theory of change was developed (see table 4.1, below) to understand how the interventions of the programme could lead to a range of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Table 4.1 Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme theory of change



- 4.6 As a result questions were developed to test areas where it would not be possible to ascertain the results using performance data alone, or where further information was required to understand the programme's attribution. Questions covered experience of the application process, the nature of activity, the involvement of employers, the impact on young people, the likely sustainability of benefits and any value added.
- 4.7 A long-list of interviewees was drawn up to provide coverage of the different types of educational establishments (recognising the historically differing levels of responsibility for careers and differing pupil needs) and coverage of lower tier Local Authorities. The list was also designed to give coverage of the five phases of the grant awards, to test for any improvements or changes over the programme's life span. The evaluation was successful in achieving a cross-section representing all grant stages and all educational establishments.

- 4.8 Requests for interviews were sent to schools within each district. There was a high response rate. Interviewees directly represented 23 schools and educational establishments, with schools represented from all Upper Tier Authorities. The high representation of Nottingham schools (see Appendix A) in part reflects the research design requirements to include special and alternative education providers. When analysed by Lower Tier boundaries 10 districts were directly represented including Amber Valley, Bolsover, Chesterfield, and North East Derbyshire in Derbyshire, and Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Rushcliffe in Nottinghamshire. Of the seven districts not directly represented, three (Erewash, High Peak and South Derbyshire) were listed as having four successful school applicants in the database provided to the research team. This may in part explain the low take up. At least two were covered by interviewed schools' academy chains. Wider interviewees (such as with the Enterprise Co-ordinators) mean the views of many more schools have also been considered.

Stakeholder Consultation

- 4.9 Discussions were held with the Grant Development and Monitoring Officer at Nottinghamshire County Council. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selection of Enterprise Co-ordinators, Framework Providers and the D2N2 governance team.

Learner Feedback

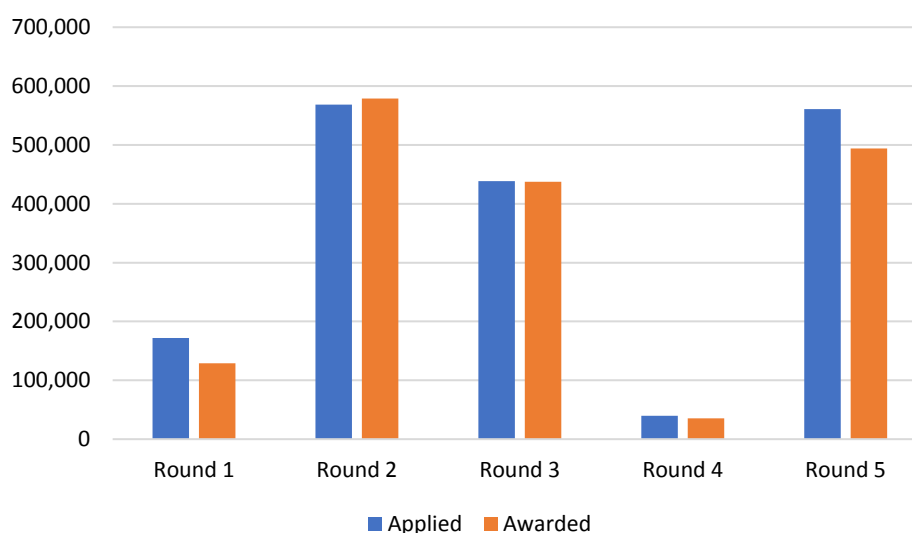
- 4.10 Due to the length of the programme, many of the learners had left school or college by the time the evaluation commenced. In addition, the evaluation coincided with revision periods and school holidays. To ensure the views of young people were incorporated, a sample of the original learner returns were reviewed to (1) corroborate the interview findings and (2) gain further insight into how the programme worked for young people and whether they felt it had an impact on their own views of their futures.
- 4.11 To undertake this work, both members of the consultancy team undertook Nottinghamshire County Council's GDPR training.

5 Performance Review

Financial Performance

- 5.1 The Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme has now been operational since January 2017. To date a total of 10 quarterly European Social Fund claims have been submitted, with two remaining to cover the period between April and June 2019 and the final period to September 2019 and the project's financial closure.
- 5.2 The project has currently committed a total of £1,674,530 of grant funding to the end of June 2019 against a final profiled grant expenditure of £1.6m for the duration of the funding agreement. Whilst the project has, notionally, committed all of its investment – many of the beneficiaries are undertaking their final claims and not all of the 'award' will ultimately be defrayed.
- 5.3 The final grant window closed in January 2019 and the programme is now in the final quarter and processing final claims and outstanding payments. The final application window saw a large number of applications, largely from applicants who had previously received a grant in previous rounds. There is no scope to either further extend the project or apply for additional resources and the project closed on the 31st March 2019. There is a final claim to be submitted at the end of May 2019.
- 5.4 Chart 5.1 below shows the amount of grant committed at each application window, highlighting the slow start of the programme with only £128,913 awarded in the first round of applications. The final round was the second most successful in terms of committing the Careers Local budget, taking overall awards to £1,674,530.

Chart 5.1 Allocation of Careers Local Enterprise Grants by each bidding round



Source: Nottinghamshire County Council tracking data (not sourced from the final ESF claim returns)

- 5.5 Nottinghamshire County Council can only reimburse the grant amount to schools and educational establishments based on their actual defrayed expenditure. In some cases, each educational establishment has several claims across the period of each individual project and some projects have only had to make one.
- 5.6 Payments to schools and educational establishments were frequently delayed due to the low level of understanding of stringent monitoring requirements leading to slow submission of evidence of expenditure (especially where the school needed to increase the hours of existing staff and submit timesheets) and Learner Records. As a result, the actual amount of expenditure by beneficiaries has often been lower than the amount they have been allocated.
- 5.7 These combined processes have significant implications for the budget management of the programme as there is a lag between committing the budget (the award of the grant) and the expenditure being made and claimed by the third-party recipient. There is, in reality, only limited opportunity to monitor the expenditure being made by the recipient.
- 5.8 It is likely there will be an underspend on the programme when all of final claims and evidence has been reviewed, but it is not possible at this stage to quantify that amount.

Outputs and Outcomes Performance

- 5.9 Overall the project has performed well, despite some of the constraints identified within the evaluation (covered in subsequent sections). In total, applications were received for 179 separate awards over the five application windows, with a total of 173 (or 96.6%) ultimately being successful. These 173 grants were made to a total of 129 individual institutions across the D2N2 area.
- 5.10 With regards to the geographical spread of grant awards, table 5.1 below shows the original notional allocations by Local Authority area and the number of awards made to schools and educational establishments within the same area. It is important to note that the figures in the third column represent grant awards and not the amount of defrayed expenditure by projects. The table shows Derby City received 9 percentage points more than their proposed allocation. This is largely due to the fact that a co-ordinated bid was submitted on behalf of 17 schools and academies in Derby City and a large proportion of these organisations subsequently returned for a co-ordinated second stage grant.

Table 5.1 Allocation of Careers Local Enterprise Grants by Local Authority area

Local Authority area	Allocation	%	Awards	%
Derby City	£220,485	14.0%	£385,053	23.0%
Derbyshire	£510,281	32.4%	£472,097	28.2%
Nottingham City	£332,736	21.1%	£300,908	18.0%
Nottinghamshire	£510,749	32.4%	£516,471	30.8%

- 5.11 In terms of the breakdown of grants at a District level, other significant recipients of awards included Rushcliffe (6.05% of all allocated resources), Mansfield (5.85%), Chesterfield (5.24%), Bolsover (5.09%) and Ashfield (5.03%). Establishments across all District areas of D2N2 received some investment through the programme.
- 5.12 When the number of schools and educational establishments that received a grant is compared, the allocations are far more evenly spread with 41 Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire institutions receiving a grant at some point over the programme period, 24 institutions from Derby City and 23 from Nottingham City.
- 5.13 The project has easily met its extended target of 1,160 learners engaged with the programme, although a final number is still to be calculated as the Grant Development and Monitoring Officer verifies evidence and collates the final claims from schools and educational establishments. As a forecast estimate, the number of learners engaged is expected to be in the region of 4,000.
- 5.14 As identified in section 2.25, each ESF project within the ‘More Developed’ regions had to target their activity towards delivering outcomes to a number of priority groups. The Careers Local programme, based on monitoring submitted to D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership up to the end of December 2018, has exceeded the number of beneficiaries from an ethnic minority by 3 percentage points. The project has slightly underperformed in terms of the number of female participants and is also below the rate of female NEET young people identified in section 3.2 (44.6%).

Table 5.1 Target Groups for the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme

Target Group	Target	Performance
Participants from ethnic minorities	9%	12%
Female participants	45%	41%
Participants with a disability or health problems	11%	27%
Participants who are lone parents	4%	
Participants without basic skills	18%	

- 5.15 The project has significantly exceeded the target for engaging participants with a disability or health problem by 16 percentage points and there is clearly a positive link to the programme’s engagement with a wide number of specialist and independent schools.
- 5.16 Due to the ages of the participants involved in the Careers Local programme, Nottinghamshire County Council have had great difficulty in getting the education establishments to disclose the information for the measure on Lone Parents or No Basic Skills. The information that was provided has so far been too unreliable to estimate the proportion with these characteristics.

6 Process Evaluation

- 6.1 Although there were variations across the range of beneficiaries interviewed, for most educational establishments the Careers Local Enterprise Grant was their first interaction with European Social Fund. ESF is a relatively complex fund with a significant burden of financial management, eligibility rules and monitoring processes. Throughout the evaluation process (including speaking to the Programme Manager, partners involved in the delivery of the programme, framework providers and the end grant beneficiaries) this complexity emerged as a central tenet of perceptions of the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme and its impact and effectiveness.

Programme Management Functions

- 6.2 The programme management responsibilities of Nottinghamshire County Council included marketing, communications, overseeing application processes, ensuring support and guidance to applicants including during implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation. This related to 179 application and 129 institutions, many of whom had not experienced ESF funding before. On this basis the standard 10% management fee available through the ESF has proved completely inadequate to resource a team with the capacity to manage this workload. Other EU programmes have allowed for higher management and overheads costs such as Community Led Local Development (up to 25%) and LEADER up to 17% of budget costs.
- 6.3 Partners and some Enterprise Co-ordinators shared the view that the management resources were not sufficient to pro-actively manage a programme of this size, and that the demands had been under-estimated. Further, there appear to have been many administration, management and other support costs that have been absorbed in Nottinghamshire County Council and some of the other partners involved to allow the scheme to function and deliver. These include the roles of the school networks and the use of Enterprise Co-ordinators. Despite these challenges, the Programme has exceeded its main targets and broadly delivered in line with contractual requirements, for which those involve warrant some credit.

Additional Support

- 6.4 Enterprise Co-ordinators were intended to be a key source of support and information throughout the stages of the programme. Most Enterprise Co-ordinators were interviewed as part of the evaluation process and the aim of the posts is to develop a strategic relationship between businesses and schools. Each Co-ordinator is tasked with supporting a cluster of about 20 schools, and connect them to an Enterprise Adviser, who is a business volunteer that helps schools with their careers plans and works with schools to assist them to meet their Gatsby standards.

- 6.5 As stated above, this represented leverage of additional resources to work with the programme. However, the overall likelihood of getting Enterprise Co-ordinator support seemed hit or miss, with some establishments not aware of them. There were challenges with recruitment and turnover, so not all schools had consistent access to an Enterprise Co-ordinator when needed. In part this was due to difficulties finding funding to match the Careers and Enterprise Company 50% contribution. Turnover and vacancies were particularly evident within Nottinghamshire and Nottingham.
- 6.6 Over the duration of the Careers Local Enterprise Grant programme the number of Co-ordinators has steadily increased and presently stands at seven posts. There is also evidence to tentatively conclude that support for those in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire strengthened in the last round.
- 6.7 Issues were not solely attributable to funding and recruitment gaps. Interviews with most of the Enterprise Co-ordinators indicated that they were not entirely clear on their role within the programme. However, they recognised that the programme offered a significant opportunity to advance the careers agenda within schools as part of their wider responsibilities and decided themselves the extent of support to be given. There were examples of additional work to support schools where they thought this was necessary, for example creating guidelines for careers action plans.

Marketing

- 6.8 Marketing processes were deemed to be very good by most schools interviewed who demonstrated a good awareness of the opportunity of investment. Many became aware of the grants at a relatively early date in the programme cycle. Generally, local schools and education networks (both formal and informal), the Chamber Schools Forum and direct contact from the Programme Management team were cited as the key forms of information on the scheme. Others said they found out about the grants from the Enterprise Co-ordinators, and word of mouth played an important role in the early stages.
- 6.9 Awareness of the framework of providers was also good and a high quality 'brochure' was developed to highlight the services of each provider, their areas of expertise and how they could work with young people.
- 6.10 The programme has had a dedicated portal on the Nottinghamshire County Council website (<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-community/finance-funding-grants/local-enterprise-grants>) which has acted as a basic repository of information on the scheme, how to apply and some key facts on the programme, its processes and objectives and information on what a grant can be used for and information on bidding rounds.
- 6.11 Whilst guidance was available on the site, there may have been scope over the project period to use the portal as a more interactive tool, provide more qualitative updates on the programme and offer a Frequently Asked Questions function.

Communication

- 6.12 There was a mixed view from beneficiaries about communication and the Programme Management team at Nottinghamshire County Council. Some educational establishments were extremely complimentary at the support they had been given through a difficult and uncharted process. Those establishments that had dealt with ESF previously or had staff with previous experience, understood the constraints the small team were operating under. Some considered that the team was effective and responsive when needed.
- 6.13 However, overall communication was reported as being relatively poor, with educational establishments often having to chase information as to their applications, seek advice and speak to a member of the team. This also covered formal communications about process and monitoring changes (including a number of revisions to reporting requirements). However, a high proportion acknowledged that these issues were a result of the significant workloads involved in managing the programme. This was also recognised by framework providers interviewed.
- 6.14 Beneficiary reflections on communications were partly split between whether they were based in Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire. The Enterprise Co-ordinators in Derby and Derbyshire appeared to have been more heavily involved in supporting the application and project management process for schools and education establishments in Derby and Derbyshire and the collaborative bid from 17 schools and academies from Derby City was co-ordinated by the Enterprise Advisors and Local Authority. Comments from schools in Derbyshire on the issues of communication and more generally on programme management were generally more positive than their peers in Nottinghamshire.

Application Process

- 6.15 It was envisaged within the tender response that there would be a rolling round of applications, reflective of the need for flexibility to allow applicants to develop their applications around other management/curriculum issues. Before the start of the programme, application windows were introduced. Over the span of the programme a total of five application rounds were completed, although there were very short gaps between the opening and closing of each application window.
- 6.16 The target was for an appraisal process that would take between 6-8 weeks and the process would be undertaken as a 'peer review' assessment process. Due to the limited capacity to undertake assessment the process took longer, sometimes significantly so. The delays and application rounds often made it difficult for some schools and education establishments to deliver their projects within their proposed timeframes – especially when the involvement of external providers and businesses had to be arranged and working around some young people who had chaotic backgrounds or high needs associated with a health problem or disability. In addition, a number of teachers organising the activities were endeavouring to do so in addition to their existing curriculum demands.

- 6.17 In terms of views on the application processes, again there was a slight but tangible split across the beneficiaries interviewed between some establishments in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Experiences with the application were generally better when a pro-active Enterprise Co-ordinator helped with the process. In some cases the Enterprise Co-ordinator worked tirelessly with schools to ensure they were in a position to submit a proposal. This was also evident in their efforts to support schools make a second application, where these had had a poor experience the first time around.
- 6.18 Some of the negative points raised about the application and monitoring processes were communicated through networks, and this deterred some establishments from applying in earlier rounds. For others who had applied, it deterred them from applying for a second tranche of funding when the opportunity became available. This was further compounded when the second application had to involve an entirely different activity than the first grant an establishment received.
- 6.19 Despite this, 38.7% of establishments returned for a second grant, although this rate was driven by the majority of establishments in Derby City returning for a second co-ordinated application. Alongside those establishments that applied for a second grant, some projects were subsequently extended in line with the extended project end date.
- 6.20 It is unclear whether the additional financial and capacity resources available for careers to schools within the Derby Opportunity Area (mentioned in section 3.4) had helped to facilitate the higher uptake of Careers Local Enterprise Grant in Derby City also. The Derby schools that contributed to the evaluation all cited that the process to secure a small grant from Raising Aspirations (the careers offer of the Opportunity Area) was a far simpler and more streamlined process and the resource could be used to support a wide range of young people.

Eligibility and Project Delivery

- 6.21 At the beginning of the programme a framework of providers was put in place to help support schools access support. There was an expectation that approved providers would be used, and many beneficiaries did so. This requirement was later removed in response to schools wanting greater flexibility, and because of some reported concerns over quality.
- 6.22 Overall, experiences of the *frontline* staff from approved providers were positive, with Derbyshire Education Business Partnership, Ideas4Careers and Careers Inc particularly cited as providing a positive experience. Some questioned the value for money of services offered by Framework Providers and some reported problems with the 'back office' of certain ones considered to have over-promised business presence, being un-responsive or aggressively chasing evidence to ensure payment.

“Ideas 4 Careers worked hard to make it work for us... They were learning with us and did a good job at differentiating between the children.” Special School.

- 6.22 Two framework providers were interviewed as part of the evaluation process and they felt that the framework, in terms of the application process, was overly complex but appreciated the opportunity to develop new relationships with schools and develop new products specifically for a cohort that are more at risk of NEET. One of the framework providers developed a specialist staff training CPD course specially related to options for young people at risk of NEET, whilst others develop their capacity to work with some of the more specialist providers.
- 6.23 The two framework providers also felt the school/educational establishment effectively being the ‘customer’ as the beneficiary of the grant provided the opportunity for a more bespoke offer to be developed and for the beneficiaries to be a more informed partner in developing their careers offer. In reality, however, most schools just used one of their ‘off the shelf’ products and the decision to not allow framework providers to actively sell to schools exacerbated this issue as they could not discuss their offer beforehand. They reported that many schools were unclear as to what was allowable expenditure as part of their grant award.
- 6.24 Some schools did use the grant within a wider scope and used the grant to increase the hours of part-time staff to assist with the delivery and administration of the project, develop careers resources, some utilised the resources to obtain external accreditation (such as Career Mark⁷) and some sent their staff on a range of Continual Professional Development courses.

Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

- 6.25 The monitoring process and completion of Learner Records by educational establishments has been an area of significant bureaucratic burden across the programme, with schools often unsure of how providing information on young people sits with GDPR, changing guidance on criteria for evidence and lack of understanding of the general monitoring processes and evidence requirements by beneficiaries. It has been clear throughout the programme that ESF systems and processes are particularly incompatible with school budgets, administration and management processes.
- 6.26 Many schools and educational establishments interviewed cited the monitoring process as complicated, with goal posts and Key Performance Indicators changing over the timeframes of the project. Discussion with the programme manager suggests there were some changes – especially to the guidance and standard forms, but changes were reported to have been kept to a minimum and were generally informed by feedback from schools. The two framework providers both reported assisting schools with their monitoring processes.

⁷ Career Mark is a Licensed Awarding Body for the Quality in Careers Standard the national careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) award.

6.27 Some schools felt the monitoring and wider bureaucratic processes acted as a potential barrier to schools participating or making the most of the investment. Delays in verifying or agreeing eligible expenditure and evidence (especially of Learner Records and evidence of payments (notably where staff timesheets were involved) made schools nervous of failing to secure payments and sometimes created cash flow issues.

7 Learner Outcomes and Impact

Overview

7.1 All of those interviewed were grateful for the opportunity of a grant to invest in their careers offer and to support their young people who were at risk of becoming NEET. Some of the range of activities undertaken by mainstream providers included:

- Placements / employer visits
- Work related activities (e.g. school newspaper, podcasts)
- Careers fairs
- Careers resources
- Activities and workshops e.g. 'The Apprentice'
- CV writing/career planning
- Interview practice
- Confidence building
- Staff training

"Got a new, well presented CV. Got a professional powerpoint template."
Nottingham Student.

"I am ready to go into an interview prepared and ready." Derbyshire Student.

"My thoughts were fairly confident [on cv writing] but now I know what I'm doing." Derby Student.

7.2 Some of the alternative/special education establishments provided a more specialist set of activities for their young people. These included:

- Travel training
- Team building
- First work experience / making the concept of work roles real
- Interview clothes
- Life skills / spending money / ironing
- Individual coping strategies
- Overcoming practical / financial barriers e.g. registering for CSCS (construction) Card and paying for the test, providing health and safety training including for sports injuries

7.3 Schools were generally able to access suitable options, but there were a number of wider areas that schools and education establishments wished to spend the grant on but that were ultimately deemed ineligible. These included activities such as counselling for young people, resources such as IT equipment and books and covering some existing costs and overheads within the school.

“We wanted a counselling course to address anxiety as a barrier to employment and couldn’t get that. We were told we couldn’t have a library resource, but others had got this.” Nottinghamshire School

“We’ve been able to update the careers library.” Nottinghamshire School

7.4 The level of benefit broadly fell into three categories, dependent on the establishment’s context:

- Firstly, the grant provided added activity, but in the context of schools already having achieved Good or Outstanding Ofsted reviews for their Careers, Employability and Enterprise offer.
- Second, the grant acted as an opportunity for establishments to more systematically improve their offer in this area of the curriculum, understanding the range of options open to young people including apprenticeships, but also in understanding changes to technical education and using labour market data

“.....(we are) a small school. Careers Local gave us the opportunity to have activity normally associated with bigger schools and provided us with capacity that is not normally there”. Derbyshire School

- Finally, for a small group, particularly special and alternative education providers, it gave a more fundamental ‘kick start’ to their careers offer where none had existed, helped them get a careers plan in place, raised the profile of careers in the schools and showed how it could be incorporated into their settings and curriculum.

“We are a small organisation and we have high need which means they need a lot of staff, so it doesn’t leave money to put the bells and whistles on.”
Alternative Provider, Nottingham.

7.5 The benefits can therefore be seen on a continuum, from a slightly enhanced and more engaging offer within an established programme, to an opportunity they would not otherwise have had.

Learner skills and aspirations

7.6 One of the key programme aims was to raise aspirations. Feedback from the establishments indicate that was achieved in broadly two ways. Firstly, there were the benefits from the activities themselves, which provided information and practical support identifying career options and applying for further study or work.

“The activity.....provided self-belief, confidence and engaged the young people in an environment outside of school. It improved the young people’s CVs and increased the number of applicants for apprenticeships”. Derbyshire School

“I learned about skills I need to have to get different jobs. It was interesting to play with the new technology they had there.” Nottingham Student.

- 7.7 For some young people this meant raising aspirations. For others this meant identifying alternative, related options (for example, alternatives to being a professional footballer) without dampening their enthusiasm or aspirations.
- 7.8 Some of the schools interviewed stated they felt it had helped them reduce their NEET rates to almost zero. These comments were not confined to mainstream establishments.

“(we)...had 5 young people on the provision (1 dropped out), 4 have subsequently moved to employment or an apprenticeship. Derbyshire School”. Derbyshire School

“For the students, yes – they are in an advantageous position for applying for college.” Nottinghamshire School

“Every child after participating now has some form of work placement and having the extra capacity meant we could find the right placement for each child and could offer independent careers advice. There should be a positive impact on NEET numbers”. Derbyshire School

- 7.9 Secondly, there were the benefits from the time and relationships forged. There were mixed views on grant stipulations to focus resources on high need groups. A couple of respondents felt it was unhelpful to single children out. However, most stated the opportunity to engage their most disadvantaged students with activity outside of the classroom and to work with experts who were not from the teaching staff (both from businesses and from the providers) was invaluable and many of the young people felt special that somebody was paying an interest in them.

“It was positive that (the young people) could form an attachment with someone who wasn’t part of the school and could talk with authority about the world ‘outside of the school’.” Derbyshire School

“It was oversubscribed. They turned up in the school holidays.” Alternative Provider, Nottingham

Learner engagement with business

- 7.10 A key part of the grant criteria was to support educational establishments to work with employers. This was an element of the programme that was highly valued by many education establishments interviewed. This was evident in the sample of feedback from students when asked about what they learned on workplace visits and careers fairs.

“Knowledge about design and careers we could do.” Derbyshire Student.

“We got to try out some top of the range hi-tech equipment and learned about different career roads we could take.” Nottingham Student.

- 7.11 For a number of schools, the roles of the Framework Providers and the D2N2 Enterprise Co-ordinators were essential in brokering these linkages. Some of these linkages came through the Enterprise Network. However, others reported that they had pre-existing relationships and that Framework Providers added little in this regard – but these were generally schools that had good careers offers already.
- 7.12 Discussions with schools and education establishments were mixed as to whether their projects created ‘business partnerships’ or merely business encounters. Those that had existing relationships were confident of maintaining them, and those that worked closely with their Enterprise Co-ordinators were the most confident of developing longer term links between their careers offers and employers.

Benefits for the schools

- 7.13 When asked about the benefits to the school, many saw the main benefit as better engaged and motivated young people. Beyond that, the benefits generally fell into three categories. The first, particularly for those without a strong or long-established track record of careers provision, was the learning regarding how to deliver careers activities. Some reported that the teachers themselves learned about new industries and careers as well as how to deliver activities.
- 7.14 The second notable benefit was in the processes, relationships and networks formed. This included building external relationships with Enterprise Co-ordinators and businesses needed to keep future provision relevant. Programmes that have offered careers or employability support to schools to date have generally been centrally funded and schools can choose to access a predetermined activity within a broader programme that is ‘delivered to them’. Careers Local effectively made them the customer and, to a limited effect, allowed them to begin to tailor services they wanted to meet the needs of the establishment.
- 7.15 Thirdly, there were wider pedagogical benefits. Whilst not widely reported, two special schools reported having to think differently about what could be taught to their pupils, and how.

“Staff had to think about how to help them learn outside of the class room.”
Special School.

- 7.16 Enterprise Co-ordinators had a slightly different view, considering that those that already had the Careers Mark or were OFSTED Good/Outstanding rated for careers were clearer on the gaps in provisions, knew what would add value and could more effectively appraise the offer of Framework Providers. They considered that this meant they were well-placed to make the most of the programme (and were also generally better placed to deal with the grant administration).
- 7.17 Enterprise Co-ordinator also reported a difference between schools that offered a sixth form. Those schools that have an 11-18 offer are more able and inclined to identify, support and manage their ‘drifters’ than those whose offer ended at 16. There may be a need in future provision to reflect on this issue.

8 Legacy, Value Added and Value for Money

Legacy and sustainability

- 8.1 In terms of legacy of the programme, there was a mixed response from those interviewed. There was evidence of more experienced schools building in legacy at start, including delivering large proportions of their activity without relying heavily on providers. There were also cases of using the grant to fund staff development and a small number reported purchasing formal training and accreditation (such as Career Mark), helping to increase the likelihood of future benefits.
- 8.2 Some educational establishments stated that the programme had helped them learned about gaps in their own provision, had generated ideas about how address these and helped them understand what works. Some schools used the investment to develop new resources in response that can have a legacy. As an example, a group of schools in Bolsover developed a Compass Scorecard tool for employability. An alternative education provider in Nottingham started a school newspaper and podcast to give young people practical experience in an engaging way.
- 8.3 All schools had to develop an Enterprise Action Plan as part of the eligibility criteria. The introduction of the Gatsby quality requirements part way through the grant programme, as part of the new National Careers Strategy, caused some difficulty with Enterprise Co-ordinators having to work out how to match this extra layer of requirements to the existing D2N2/Careers Local framework. However, the longer-term implications seem positive, as in later rounds Enterprise Co-ordinators noted the grant's role in helping to focus on and demonstrate progress against Gatsby quality benchmarks as required by the new. Therefore, the approaches, if not the full suite of activities themselves, were more likely to be embedded and benefit future students.
- 8.4 In schools where the grant had helped raise the profile of careers, there were hopes that this would continue. Some reported learning how to approach careers more effectively, although a number of schools expressed concerns about their own long-term internal resources to do so. In both circumstances, the forming of new external relationships should contribute to sustainability of relevant and up-to-date advice and approaches.
- 8.5 The above responses were by no means 'across the board'. Contrary views included those from establishments concerned that there no ownership of the project by the school and that delivery by an outside agency did not embed the activity or learning within the school or its curriculum offer. Some Enterprise Co-ordinators, too, felt some schools had been 'ideas takers' from their chosen provider and did not necessarily design their provision with longer term in mind or relevant to their circumstances. This was partly corroborated by the framework providers themselves and corresponds with the view from schools that the use of external provision was too costly to repeat, but they did report that they hoped they could emulate some of the elements themselves.

Value added

- 8.6 Most of the establishments interviewed were new to applying for grants. It therefore helped schools to understand the processes involved in bidding. One school reported applying for other funds as a result, but unfortunately it also deterred a number from doing so again.
- 8.7 Many schools cited that whilst the main beneficiaries were young people at risk of NEET, it had been possible to design some of the activities in a way that benefitted whole year groups or the wider school. This was particularly evident where capacity was created to develop 'broad' careers activity (such as careers fairs) or programmes rather than one-off events. Those schools in Derby that were benefitting from the Opportunity Area investment noted this particularly as they often had the resources to replicate or widen activity.
- 8.8 For a high proportion of specialist providers interviewed, it allowed them to demonstrate their educational offer was more rounded and more akin to what you might expect in a mainstream environment. A high proportion of the smaller schools interviewed stated they felt it allowed them to offer the same level and depth of offer as some of the larger schools/academies (although this has not been possible to test).
- 8.9 The programme deliberately sought to link the Careers Local Enterprise Grant to the D2N2 Employability Framework, to address a perceived widening gap between what schools do and what employers actually want. The partners engaged on the programme had ensured strategic links to existing sub-regional governance mechanisms including D2N2 Board, ESIF Committee, Skills Commission and local Skills Boards and the Social Inclusion Advisory Group. The project had complemented other sub-regional activity to reduce NEET. The main exception was that it was believed there may have been some overlap with activity within the Derby Opportunity Area, although the offer of this programme was open to all young people irrespective of whether they were at risk of NEET.

Value for Money

- 8.10 A full cost benefit analysis was beyond the scope of this evaluation. Regardless, it is unlikely that this would have been possible, given the unknown destinations of the students and the proportion of future benefits attributable to the grant programme (over and above other support). That said, at a very crude level the investment appears modest given the alternative costs. For example, the cost of one grant is not significantly higher than the fiscal cost of a person being unemployed for a year.⁸

⁸ HM Treasury, New Economy, Public Service Transformation Network (2014). *Supporting public service transformation: cost benefit analysis guidance for local partnerships* p.40 2012/13 prices.

- 8.11 A caveat to the above is whether the approach of initially requiring and latterly encouraging the use of Framework Providers offered the best value for money for those more experienced schools. Further the exclusion of certain types of staff training may have been a missed opportunity to accrue future wider public value and embed activity more broadly within schools.
- 8.12 It is difficult to isolate and assess the impact of Careers Local on wider NEET numbers as the time lag in centrally released data from the Department of Education. Most schools interviewed stated they felt it had had or would have an impact on what happened to their young people further down the line and some reported reduction in NEET numbers in earlier cycles of grant award. This cannot be assessed formally until 2017 data for NEET at a Local Authority area is released.

9 Cross Cutting Themes Review

Equality and Equal Opportunities

- 9.1 As covered in previous sections, the programme has been particularly successful in engaging young people at risk of NEET that had a disability or health problem and those from an ethnic minority group.
- 9.2 In terms of participation of BAME young people, the programme had a positive representation from schools in the two major cities which has certainly contributed to diverse range of beneficiaries. A small number of schools interviewed reported putting on specialist provision to provide activities that would inspire and engage young people from BAME backgrounds.
- 9.3 As already reported, specialist establishments were extremely positive about being included in a programme to support their young people with the most challenges to improve their employability. They reported typically missing out on or not hearing about such opportunities. The programme criteria offered sufficient flexibility to allow specialist schools to deliver appropriate programmes to meet the needs of their pupils/students - who in some cases faced considerable challenges to continuing study or entering employment. Examples included independent travel training and visiting employer sites for the first time. However, key learning for a future programme would be to allow sufficient lead in time to allow for their additional planning needs.
- 9.4 There was a gender imbalance on the programme, with only 41% of participants being female compared to a target of 45%. It is difficult to assess the reason behind this as there is a broad range of activities being funded across a range of different schools. Some schools purposefully targeted boys who they felt were at danger of becoming NEET, but equally many schools actively targeted vulnerable girls. It may be that this reflects the higher rate of NEET amongst young men than women across D2N2 (see section 2).

Sustainable Development

- 9.5 Careers Local has only had limited opportunities to stimulate sustainable development within the delivery of its programme. Some of the employers that were engaged were from the low carbon sector, environmental and public transport sectors. Many employers were local to the schools and reduced travelling.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

- 10.1 Overall the Careers Local Grant programme has been successful in working with schools to develop or enhance their careers offer to young people who are at risk of NEET. The offer a relatively substantial grant, without the need to provide matched funding, made the careers offer generally and specifically for those at risk of NEET a much higher priority and provided resources to deliver relatively significant services in this area.
- 10.2 The programme has met its core output of Learners Engaged, although by an as-of-yet unsubstantiated amount, although it is unlikely to have committed all the funds it has been awarded.
- 10.3 Careers Local aimed to provide schools and educational establishments with the resources, within clear parameters, to develop their own careers offers. To a limited extent, it allowed schools to make informed decisions about provision, but generally schools were identified as 'ideas takers' from the framework of providers developed to support delivery on the programme. It has been recognised that those with already well-developed careers offers were the establishments that added the most value and for whom Careers Local may have the greatest legacy.
- 10.4 Smaller schools and specialist schools and establishments were grateful for the opportunity to develop the kind of careers offer normally associated with larger establishments and the Careers Local process and engagement with employers and providers provided new stimulus and ideas for their future offer.
- 10.5 There were significant issues raised about the processes involved in Careers Local, largely due to stringent ESF requirements and the need to collect Learner Records, which had to be passed on to schools. Any future activity that devolves financial responsibility in a similar way to schools may need to avoid European Structural Funds to keep the processes more streamlined and efficient.
- 10.6 Similarly lead times between applications and project delivery need to be considered to ensure there is scope to effectively programme activity effectively into the curriculum and timeframes, alongside the potential to work with wider age groups.
- 10.7 The programme management resources, both to manage 173 grant awards, liaise with schools and work across the Enterprise Co-ordinator network were essentially inadequate to meet the task and the team worked hard and were dedicated to trying to ensure the programme ran as efficiently as could be given constraints.
- 10.8 Engagement with Enterprise Co-ordinators and employers was a significant positive to the programme, making connections that can hopefully bear fruit into the future. Working with employers and providers allowed young people to be taught out of the school environment or in new and engaging ways that clearly had a benefit on both attendance and involvement.

- 10.9 In terms of the impacts of the programme, they were perhaps most keenly felt within the young people that engaged with some of the services offered by the programme – although this element of the programme has been the hardest area to prove impact – both at an establishment level as young people frequently moved on in the following year and at a macro level as up-to-date NEET data does not cover the Careers Local period.
- 10.10 Analysis of some of the evaluation reports has shown the positive light young people held the activity within and all schools interviewed reported positive outcomes for their pupils/students. This was echoed by feedback from some of the framework providers.
- 10.11 As the programme appears unlikely to continue in any form or have a successor, the legacy of the programme will largely be driven by the participating educational establishments and Enterprise Co-ordinators.

Appendix A – Contributors

Schools and Educational Institutions

Anthony Gell School (North East Derbyshire), Katy Lowe

Arnold Hill Academy (Gedling), Caroline Tomlinson

Ash Lea School (Special), (Rushcliffe), Neil Phipp

Carlton Academy (Gedling), Charlotte Blyth

Chellaston Academy (Derby City), Jo Shillingford

Derby Royal School for the Deaf (Derby City), Helen Shepherd

Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School (North East Derbyshire), Kevin Pickles

EMVA (Alternative), (Mansfield), Michaela Pritchard

Farnborough Academy, (Nottingham), Caroline Tomlinson

FUEL (Independent), (Nottingham), Jo Snowden

Hall Park Academy, (Gedling), Charlotte Blyth

Heanor Gate Science College (Amber Valley), Helen Suffolk-Adams

Landau Forte College (Derby City), Helen Suffolk-Adams

Oakfield School and Sports College (Special), (Nottingham), Charlotte Malik

Outwood Academy Portland, (Bassetlaw), Hollie Ford

Rushcliffe School (Rushcliffe), Caroline Tomlinson

Springwell Community College (Chesterfield) Mike Livingstone

Stone Soup Academy (Alternative), (Nottingham), Kerrie Henton

Tibshelf School (Bolsover), Gary Wallis

Toot Hill School and Sixth Form College, (Rushcliffe), Fiona Farmer

Westbury School (SEMH), (Nottingham), Charlotte Malik

Woodlands School (Special), (Nottingham), Charlotte Malik (Partnership Manager)

Unity Academy (Alternative), (Nottingham), Charlotte Malik

Other Interviewees

Sarah Bull, Building Better Opportunities Stakeholder Manager, seconded to Nottingham City Council

Jacqui Kinch, Enterprise Co-ordinator, Derby City

Richard Kirkland, European Structural and Investment Fund Coordinator, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership

Claire Knee, Enterprise Coordinator – Nottingham City, Futures Group and Careers and Enterprise Company

Lianna Law, Careers Local Grant Development and Monitoring Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council

Rachel Quinn, D2N2 Careers, Employability & Inclusion Manager, D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership

John Ryan, Employability Programmes Manager, Derbyshire Education Business Partnership

Michelle Taylor, Managing Director, Ideas4 Careers

Caroline Tomlinson, Enterprise Coordinator – North Nottinghamshire, Futures Group and Careers and Enterprise Company

Gary Wallis, Enterprise Co-ordinator, Careers and Enterprise Company

Gail Widerman, - Placing Futures Ltd and Enterprise Co-ordinator for Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire, Careers and Enterprise Company