



## Provider ESF End of Contract Report Template

The provider should use the sections below and submit the completed end of contract report to your ESF Compliance and Performance Adviser. A draft should be completed before the contract end date i.e. 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and a final version submitted within 2 months of the contract end date.

### 1. CONTRACT INFORMATION

Name of Organisation: Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Specification Title: INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS  
 Project Name: Careers Local  
 Contract Number: ESF-2224  
 Original MCV:  
 Latest approved MCV:

### 2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONTRACT

- a) How did this contract perform overall? Please detail original and final contract and final achieved volumes against each deliverable contracted.

Deliverable	Original contract	Final Contract	Achieved
ST01 Learner Plan (ILR)	1,000	1,160	1201
SD01 Enterprise Grant payment	£1,574,250.00	£1,801,522.83	£1,319,233.20 (£1,344,268.92 before adjustment explained below)
SD02 Enterprise Grant management fee	£157,425.00	£180,152.17	£131,923.29 (£134,426.86 before adjustment explained below)

- b) Please comment on

- The differences/rationale between the original targets and the latest targets agreed

The original targets were extended by 16% following an agreement to extend the project timeline from July 2018 to March 2019. This extension was agreed because of the nature of the Grant and the types of activity which took time to plan and complete within the demands of the school year. The total amount of grants applied for and approved (therefore allocated funds) was £1.675m, but in a number of cases this allocated funding was not fully utilised by the applicant. Because of the nature of the grant, the process and the types of activities, any underspend was not identified until towards the end of the contract, when evidence was not received or applicants did not respond to communications. Some of this underspend has had to be claimed back from schools, where the total spend was less than the amount paid in advance (70% of the total bid). By the financial end of the project (31<sup>st</sup> May 2019) action has been taken to reclaim these amounts but they have not yet been received. The full amount reclaimable is £25035.76 in grant payments. As these have already been



claimed through the ESFA supplementary data claim after being paid out to applicants, a total of £27,539.33 (£25,035.76 plus £2503.57 for the management fee) has been deducted from the final claim.

- Retention, completion and progression rates

There was a very low rate of drop out from activities, once started. All schools had a “reserve” list of participants should someone not start the activity to ensure full value for money.

Sectors, original sectors to be supported and those successfully engaged and reasons

The contract did not focus on sectors, but engaged local employers in delivery and in supporting the schools to develop their employability strategy

- What went well/what could have been improved or required changes during contract lifetime?

- The events run for schools to link with potential providers were not well-attended
  - Other funding to deliver similar provision required less intensive evidence so some schools opted for this
  - Some schools were reluctant to provide personal details of participants and had concerns over GDPR and the fact that they were identifying participants as at risk of being NEET
  - The flexible approach to available activities enabled schools to tailor provision
- c) How was the contract delivered? Were any other organisations involved and how? What was the rationale for engaging subcontractors/partners as appropriate, how did this affect project delivery positively and negatively, as appropriate? Please detail.
- The contract was delivered by staff employed by Nottinghamshire County Council. Partners from other upper tier local authorities in the D2N2 area were consulted during the original tender response and throughout the contract to ensure appropriate levels of indicative funding allocations, and to help identify any areas where response was limited or there was specific need. The allocations worked as a guideline, but ultimately applicants “self-selected” and so the element of targeting and competition was invalidated.
  - A process for applying for the Grant was established, including guidelines, the criteria, exclusions, identification of participants, total amount of grant
  - To support applicants in identifying appropriate provision, a Provider Framework was established through the Nottinghamshire County Council procurement process. This provided a quality assured suite of providers with a menu of provision to select from. Applicants could also apply to deliver provision in-house, if they could demonstrate the relevance and appropriate learning outcomes, or through alternative providers, with evidence of 1) the content and how this would support the development of employability skills, and 2) a robust procurement process. Many of the applicant organisations valued the opportunity to choose from a pre-approved set of providers and activities, whilst some appreciated the option to be more creative. There were some capacity issues in some of the Framework provision, particularly the use of employer mentors in some geographical areas. Towards the end of the contract, when applicants were more familiar with what could and could not be delivered and what worked well, the Provider Framework contracts were not renewed, although applicants could still access the provision from the provider if they wished to.
  - Colleagues from partner organisations (D2N2 upper tier and district local authorities) have been recruited to undertake the appraisal of applications, ensuring where possible that knowledge of the educational needs and provision of each local area can inform the appraisal process. This process worked well in terms of consistency and quality assurance but created a delay in the timescales for approval of a grant application, especially where further information and clarification from the applicant was required.
- d) Please state how soft outcomes achieved by participants were measured, i.e. motivation, confidence etc? Please give details of the measures and the results.



As the contract was focussed on the development of employability skills for young people who lacked these skills and/or were disengaged from the world of training/education/work, the outcomes of the delivery were soft outcomes. Each activity included a self-assessment of the starting point for the participants, and an evaluation of their journey and the improvements gained in terms of confidence, knowledge of what employers look for, awareness of the types of jobs available etc. Participants' progress in achieving soft outcomes was measured through their evaluation of the activity using an informal before and after assessment of their feelings and confidence.

### 3. ESF PUBLICITY

How did you publicise ESF and ensure all beneficiaries knew ESF was funding the contract? How was the project marketed to referral routes, participants and companies where appropriate? Describe the marketing campaigns/methods utilised, both successful and unsuccessful  
All marketing and administration materials include the ESF and ESFA logos and a statement declaring the source of the funding. Strict publicity guidelines were made available to all organisations involved in the delivery. All beneficiaries were required to complete an individual learner record which states that the activities are funded by ESF funding.

The project was marketed through a variety of routes throughout the contract:

- Two large Meet the provider events were held at the beginning of the contract, one in the south of the D2N2 area, one in the north of the D2N2 area. The events were designed to promote the availability of Careers Local grant funding and offer educational institutions a chance to meet the organisations on the approved list of providers to discuss the available provision.
- Much of the promotion of the availability of the Grant, and support to schools to identify appropriate provision and make the application was provided through the Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Coordinators (ECs). A number of ECs have worked across the area and have a direct relationship with the schools in their patch. An additional post, part funded through Careers Local, was established to promote the Grants more widely and support any potential applicants outside of the EC network.
- Direct contact with schools where there was no existing relationship with an EC.
- The full grant information has been promoted through the Nottinghamshire County Council Website. The D2N2 LEP website also promotes the availability of the Grant and has a link to the Nottinghamshire County Council website. All communications and promotional materials refer back to these websites as the main source of information about the Grants.
- A range of meetings and events were attended throughout the contract to promote the availability and the main features of the grants, including Head Teachers conference, National Careers Service Local Event, individual school CEIAG events, Employer Engagement School Event
- Press releases promoting the Grant were created throughout the contract, building on key milestones such as the launch of application windows, case studies, winning the ADEPT award, the increase in the funding etc.
- Promotion through partner local authorities, building on other provision and targeting educational support services.

### 4. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

Programme Indicators	Number of participants	Percentage achieved	Contractual target percentage
Total Participants	1201	103%	100%
No Basic Skills	Not recorded	-	18%



Disability/LD	356	29.6%	11%
Aged 50+	N/A	-	-
Ethnic Groups	275	23%	9%
Female	500	41.6%	45%
Lone parent	Not recorded	-	4%
14-19 NEETs (where applicable)	N/A	-	-

- a) How did you support and promote equal opportunities? To what extent has the activity supported your own organisation's Equal Opportunities Policies and Action Plans?

The grant application form required applicants to describe how they would identify the young people who would benefit from the proposed activities and ensure equality of access, and how access to activities would be provided such that protected groups such as participants with SEN were not disadvantaged. Nottinghamshire County Council has robust Equal Opportunities Policies and Action Plans which have been adhered to throughout the contract

- b) How did the provision affect men and women; ethnic minorities; disabled people; and any other excluded groups?

The provision was targeted at young people (15-19) at risk of becoming NEET. By its very nature the target group included a large proportion of participants from excluded groups. The criteria used to identify young people at risk of being NEET included those with disabilities or health care plans, eligible for free school meals and/or pupil premium, attendance or disciplinary issues, disengaged, under achieving, whose first language was not English, in LA care and with SEND.

Participants were identified by schools using the above criteria combined with those who were most at need of, and most likely to benefit from, additional support and provision.

- c) If there was delivery for people with disabilities, how was support provided so they could take part fully on the provision? E.g. access to premises, transport to training sites, specialist provision (staffing and facilities) etc.

Provision was designed according to the needs of the participants. Most provision took part on school premises where the participants were comfortable, and any access needs were accounted for. Any off-site provision was selected and tailored to suit the needs of the participants. Provision was also tailored to need with additional staff or school staff providing support to sessions and activities involving pupils with learning disabilities.

## 5. SUSTAINABILITY

Which improvements have you made on environmental sustainability since the start of your contract? I.e. this should relate to the protection of the environment; careful use of natural resources etc. How has the project contributed to your organisational sustainability action plan/s?

The project did not have an impact on environmental sustainability or the protection of the environment. All Grant applicants were asked to consider how they could sustain the employability and enterprise provision beyond the contract and many have developed strategies to do so

## 6. LEP Engagement & Initiatives



- a) How did the provision fit in with LEP initiatives/needs? Please describe how far you involved the LEP and/or local partnerships in running or developing the provision, and how flexible the provision was in responding to local needs.

The provision was delivered in cooperation with other LEP initiatives, in particular the Careers and Enterprise Company Enterprise Coordinators, the Enterprise Adviser (employers) network, and the D2N2 Employability Framework. Careers Local has played an important role in promoting and supporting schools to map and plan their employability provision and work towards achieving the Gatsby benchmarks. Other Local authority partners were involved in designing and developing the provision, and in monitoring its effectiveness in their area. The provision has been delivered flexibly within the requirements of the LEP and the ESFA, and the delivery has been responsive to local needs, for example: payment of Grant funds up front instead of on proof of defrayal; local design of ILR form to match to relevant information for the age and status of the participants; reallocation of indicative funds to LA areas in response to demand; redesign of application form to make it easier for schools to apply and give the relevant information for appraisers to make their decision; gaining agreement for applicants to be able to apply for a second grant to further embed provision and build on good practice.

- b) Do you have any comments to make/issues to report on the referral mechanisms (into and from the contract) and on the links to other ESF or mainstream provision?

Referral decisions were made by the individual Educational Institutions based on their knowledge and assessment of young people attending. The contract does not easily link with other ESF provision, but some good links were made with employers and education providers for progression onto further learning or apprenticeships.

## 7. VALUE FOR MONEY

The contract has supported provision which has provided value beyond the actual participants, and will enable provision to be continued:

- Funding used for staff development will enable staff to support and deliver for future year groups
- Lessons learned, processes and resources developed during provision delivered in-house
- Staff taking part in activities delivered by providers have gained skills and knowledge for future support and embedding employability within the curriculum

## 8. LESSONS LEARNED

- a) What were the main lessons learned from running this contract that would inform any future contracts of a similar nature, including recommendations where possible.

The contract required Grants to be awarded to Educational Institutions (EIs), who would then engage providers to deliver employability interventions for a specific cohort of participants. The EIs were required to provide evidence of the activities undertaken, proof of payment, proof of staff additional hours, details of each participant including their personal and home circumstances, and individual evaluation of the learning and experience. The amount of management and administration was a burden and barrier to many EIs, and as the Managing Agent Nottinghamshire County Council was required to use far more resources than was originally envisaged to fulfil this requirement. The level of evidence and administration was also high in comparison to other similar provision (for example provided through the CEC) which had a negative effect on applications and use of funding. Recommendations for future contracts are:



- Providers to be responsible for providing all evidence of participation and outcomes
  - Initially the Grant was planned to be paid to reimburse applicants for their costs on receipt of evidence of payment. However, this process appeared to be a barrier to some potential applicants who might not have the resources to pay for provision before they receive the funding. A change to this process was initiated to pay 70% of the approved Grant upon receipt of the signed Grant Agreement, with the final 30% to be paid upon receipt of all evidence.
  - More flexibility to enable applicants to deliver the most appropriate provision for their pupils, and across a wider age range.
- b) What measures could be further applied to enhance the provision?
- c) Are the original objectives still feasible, i.e. would the contract be worth repeating? Outline positive and negative experiences and lessons learnt that would inform contracts of similar nature

The original objectives (to provide interventions to increase the employability of young people at risk of NEET) are still feasible and very valuable but would need to be delivered in a different way, with providers working more directly with schools to design and deliver provision and more flexibility in the evidence requirements.

- d) Gap analysis – has the delivery of this contract identified gaps in provision within the LEP delivery area that ESF has been unable to support? Do you have any comment/feedback on how these could be addressed?

Grant recipients (schools) have identified that provision targeted at young people at risk of being NEET should be available at a younger age than the targeted age range of 15-19, to influence aspirations and careers knowledge from an earlier age.

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- a) What impact was anticipated from this type of intervention/delivery? To what extent has the contract made an overall impact on the individuals and areas targeted?

The anticipated impact was always the development of soft skills and as such is difficult to measure. The impact on the young people taking part can be measured to some extent by their progression over the next few years, and from anecdotal evidence from school staff on improvements in confidence and behaviour, and their own ability to engage future young people.

- b) How has this contract impacted and benefited your organisation?

Greater understanding of the links between education and business and the need to have more employer involvement in supporting school staff to understand the local labour market and job opportunities

- c) Were there any additional benefits, outcomes or synergies that occurred?

Schools are more aware of the value of employability focused provision, and the need to embed this into curriculum delivery, and the importance of employer links and involvement in curriculum development.

## 10. EXTERNAL EVALUATION

In addition to completing this form, have you carried out an external/independent evaluation?



Yes  No   
If yes, please attach it.

An external evaluation has been undertaken and the final report is attached

**11. DISSEMINATION**

What plans do you have to disseminate the findings of this contract?

Once the external evaluation is completed, the findings will be shared with local authority partners and the D2N2 LEP. If requested, a copy of the external evaluation report will be provided to other organisations seeking to deliver similar provision.

**12. PROGRESSION / EXIT STRATEGY**

Once ESF funding ceases to exist, how do you envisage sustaining the contract?

The Grants awarded to individual schools and other Educational Institutions required them to consider how the provision funded through the contract could be sustained. Some of the provision which was delivered by external providers involved school staff sitting in to develop their own knowledge and skills. Some schools chose to use the Grant to deliver their own provision in-house, which has provided a long-term investment in staff capability to provide employability provision.

**13. Any other comments/feedback in relation to this project**

Educational institutions have highly valued the additional provision they have been able to access through the project

**14. SIGNATURE**

To be signed by Provider:

Name: Hilary Porter Position: Economic Development Officer

Signed:  Date: 11/06/19

**When completed, this form should be returned to your ESF Management and Delivery Adviser.**