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**West Dunbartonshire Council – Working4U Employability Grant programme**

**Key Information, Guidance and Sources of Useful Data.**

**September 2023**

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# Introduction

The West Dunbartonshire Employability Grant Programme aims to support unemployed people to move towards and into work. It is an approach which recognises that to help local people to develop the skills and confidence employers are looking for we all need to work together at a local level to provide the best possible services to those who need them most.

The national funding for employability has changed significantly with the Scottish Government and also the UK Government choosing to distribute funding at a more local level and through a local strategic employability partnership. The Strategic Employability Group will decide on the local priorities and areas for action but will also ensure that local employability providers continue to have the opportunity to access funding for services through a co-commissioned process. The key Scottish Government policy framework for this approach is called **No One Left Behind.** The UK Government have launched **UK Shared Prosperity Fund** which succeeds the old EU Structural funds supporting the levelling up opportunity and prosperity vision to overcome geographical inequalities**.** Both approaches will guide the future direction and delivery of employability services in the years to come.

In West Dunbartonshire, the strategic partnership is the **West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group** consisting of strategic employability partner agencies from the West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Structure. The West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group is chaired by West Dunbartonshire Council and has met, as an active partnership, for several years. Its purpose is to support the implementation of local and national employability policy through collective leadership, joint planning and co-commissioning. In doing so the partnership, works closely with the **West Dunbartonshire Creative Design Group** (CDG).

The CDG consists of local employability delivery partners and is chaired by a representative from the Strategic Group with secretariat support provided by West Dunbartonshire Council. The purpose of the CDG is to support the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group to deliver against its identified employability needs in West Dunbartonshire.

Employability delivery partners will make the best use of resources available to deliver effective needs-led employability services that help West Dunbartonshire residents make a successful transition towards employment, into employment and sustained employment.

The West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group has created an Employability Grant Programme to support a co-commissioned approach to employability for future years.

The West Dunbartonshire Employability Grant Programme will:

* Augment the current employability pipeline in West Dunbartonshire by outlining clear aims and guiding principles to applicant organisations for new services.
* Add value to the funding and other resources already available locally and create opportunities for innovation and collaboration.
* Provide a new co-commissioning process for the allocation of funds.
* Support the aims and objectives outlined in the:
  + West Dunbartonshire Strategic Plan: [West Dunbartonshire Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4322598/strategic-plan-2022-27.pdf)
  + Economic Development Strategy: [West Dunbartonshire Economic Development Strategy](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/economic-development-strategy/)
  + Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017 -27: [Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-27](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4313518/west-dunbartonshire-plan-for-place.pdf)
  + No One Left Behind: [No One Left Behind delivery plan](https://www.gov.scot/publications/no-one-left-behind-delivery-plan/)
  + UK Shared Prosperity: [UK-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus)

At this point in time (Sept 2023) there is approximately £300,000 available to allocate through the grant programme.

We anticipate that:

* £150,000 - £200,000 will be made available for stage 3 vocational skills support services – emphasis will be placed on vocational training and qualifications – including practical skills, certification and industry relevant qualifications and associated employer links;
* £75,000- £100,000 will be made available for stage 4 of the employability pipeline including, development of job matching/intensive job search support with emphasis on specific target groups including those in the criminal justice system, parents with a disability, people with long term health conditions (physical and mental), people aged 50+ and economically inactive people.

However the allocation of funding at Stage 3 and Stage 4 may vary in relation to participant needs as the programmes progress.

This document and the associated grant application form outlines the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group intentions, principles and priorities to be met through the new West Dunbartonshire Employability Grant Programme supporting employability and skills provision in 2023 and 2024.

# Grant Outcomes and Principles

**The key outcomes** the West Dunbartonshire Employment Grant Programme will contribute to are:

* Inactive and unemployed residents registered with NOLB/UKSPF Services
* Inactive and unemployed residents gaining vocational qualifications.
* Inactive and unemployed residents entering employment.

**There are 6 NOLB principles** that will underpin the delivery expectations for all provision supported by the West Dunbartonshire Employability Grants Programme.

* Provide flexible and person-centred support.
* Be more straightforward for people to navigate.
* Be better integrated and aligned with other services, particularly with health, justice and housing provision.
* Provide pathways into sustainable and fair work.
* Be driven by evidence, including data and the experience of users.
* Support more people – particularly those facing multiple barriers – to move into the right job, at the right time.

In addition all provision supported through the grants programme should also comply with the following **additional principles** that the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group feel are critical in providing the best support to people to enable progress towards sustainable outcomes:

* Services should be configured around the needs of the clients rather than delivery partners.
* ‘Travel to work’ should be considered with participants to help overcome barriers (both physical and perceived) and support access to opportunities out-with their local area and across West Dunbartonshire and the wider Glasgow City Region.
* Applicants should be prepared to become an active partner, making use of the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group resources such as training and development activity, events and be prepared to participate as appropriate in the West Dunbartonshire: Creative Design Group; Community Of Practice (Frontline Workers Forum); and Data Toolkit. In particular, applicants should be prepared to utilise a new Continuous Improvement Toolkit for employability services currently in development by the Scottish Government, links to which will be provided to successful applicants.
* Applicants should also be prepared to make use of the Working4U pages within the West Dunbartonshire Council website and associated social media platforms to advertise activities and promote regular good news stories. This will include posting all provision funded through the grants programme on our Strategic Skills Pipeline portal, [westdun.wixsite.com/sspipeline](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/working4u/work/strategic-skills-pipeline/)  more information and training on this will be made available with grant award documentation.
* Ensure lived experience shapes service design and delivery as outlined in the Scottish approach to service design.
* Ensure that the design of services have considered the needs of those with protected characteristics.
* Provide additionality to existing provision available in West Dunbartonshire with connectivity, where permissible, to established provision and building progression routes into Further/Higher Education, Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships and other appropriate provision, as well as supporting access to employment.
* Provision must not put at risk participants current eligibility for benefits or lead to a reduction in overall income.

## Priority Groups

This grant programme is made up of several different forms of funding, the majority of which are focussed on specific priority groups. The Scottish Governments No-One Left Behind and UK Shared Prosperity approach supports those who are socially excluded and as a result most disengaged from the labour market

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Armed Forces Veteran * Asylum Seeker * At Risk of Becoming NEET (Not in employment, education or training) * Care Experienced * Criminal Convictions * From Employment Deprived Areas * Homeless or Affected by Housing Exclusion * Living in a Jobless Household * Living in a Jobless Household with Dependent Children * Living in a Single Adult Household with Dependent Children * Long Term Physical Illness * Low Income Employed * Low Skilled * Mental Health Issues (young people and adult) * Migrants people with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma) * Unemployed * Economically inactive | * No or Limited Work Experience * Primary Carer of a child/children (under 18) or adult * Primary Carer of older person * Refugee * Substance related conditions * Underemployed * Disabled and/or deaf person (includes those experiencing mental health issues and those who have an impairment or long-term health condition) * Person aged over 50 years * Living in a household with children in poverty * Lone Parents * Families from Minority Ethnic Communities * Families with a Disabled Child * Disabled Parent * Families with 3 or more Children * Families where the Youngest Child is under 1 * Young parents under the Age of 25. |

Applicant should be clear about the target groups they are supporting and specific about the nature of that support (why it’s relevant to the specific target group).

## Priority Areas

Unemployment affects people across all areas of West Dunbartonshire however there are communities more impacted than others. Whilst the grant programme will support provision open to the priority groups above regardless of where they stay, there is also a need for provision targeting our most deprived communities (SIMD 2020).

The West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group Data Group has developed a comprehensive set of data around people, health, skills and the local labour market known as the West Dunbartonshire Challenges and Themes document.

Applicants should consider how they would address the relevant challenges when developing their proposals. The West Dunbartonshire Challenges and Themes document is part of the suite of documents that we have made available to support you in completing your application.

## Addressing Key Challenges and Gaps

The employability services and provision being applied for should be:

* appropriate for the age and stage of the target participant group
* proportionate to the numbers of unemployed
* where possible/appropriate delivered locally in facilities that are accessible to all
* needed locally and not duplicate existing provision
* in line with current and future labour markets, skills requirements, and job vacancies

Section 7. Provides data sources that applicants should use to inform their proposals.

## Safeguarding

Training providers must prioritise safeguarding considerations to ensure the well-being and protection of participants. They should establish comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures that address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of these priority groups. This includes conducting thorough background checks on staff members involved in the program, implementing appropriate risk assessments, and delivering comprehensive training on safeguarding and child protection to all staff. It is crucial to create a safe and supportive environment, fostering open communication channels for reporting concerns or incidents. Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to identify and address any safeguarding issues promptly. Collaboration with external agencies and stakeholders is also vital to provide holistic support and protection to all participants. By integrating robust safeguarding practices into their bidding proposals, training providers demonstrate their commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of young people and adults throughout the grant programme.

## Benefit Conditionality

We want to safeguard the benefits and entitlements of residents taking part in activity supported through this grant programme. We will expect applicants to show an understanding of the individual needs of course attendees, giving consideration to possible welfare benefit impacts and ensuring there is no risk to entitlements by the take up of any employability initiatives.

Providers should ensure they have had a recent dialogue with DWP to clarify/remove any potential welfare benefit impacts the proposed programme may have.

# What Type of Provision are we looking for?

Applicants should focus on the priority groups and priority areas outlined below and the needs of employers. West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group is keen that potential grant applicant partners use their expertise, local knowledge and links with other partners to develop creative and innovative proposals that they have confidence there is demand for and that meet gaps in service delivery. The grant programme will allow providers to come forward with their own ideas and suggestions for new services and provisions based on evidence of need.

## Specification

This grant programme will support provisionfor unemployed West Dunbartonshire residents, particularly those furthest from the labour market and/or for whom the current employability service provision does not fully meet their needs.

Applicants should note that we are dividing the grant application process into two distinct categories. These are:

**Stage 3**: Applicants should focus on the provision of support for vocational skills and qualifications. These will be sector specific skills accompanied by a nationally recognised qualification including practical skills, certification and industry relevant qualifications and associated employer links. There should be specific emphasis on the following target groups - those in the criminal justice system, parents with a disability, people with long term health conditions (physical and mental), people aged 50+ and economically inactive people.

**Stage 4**: This should focus on job matching; intensive jobsearch support; the development of transferable skills and presentation of skills. There should be specific emphasis on the following target groups - those in the criminal justice system, parents with a disability, people with long term health conditions (physical and mental), people aged 50+ and economically inactive people.

Providers are encouraged to use their own knowledge and outline their approach being clear about the delivery Stage while providing details of the appropriate qualifications and outcomes they will achieve.

# Application Process and Decision Making

## Delivery Timescales and Key Milestones

The first round of the West Dunbartonshire Employability Grant programme will provide funding for delivery of services **from Sept 2023 – March 2024.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Milestone** | **Date** |
| Grant opens for applications | Monday 11th September |
| Information session for potential applicants | 15th September 11am |
| Application deadline | 29th September |
| Assessment panel | 2nd – 6th October |
| Application outcomes notified | Week beginning 9th of October |
| Award letter issued | Week beginning 9th October |
| Delivery Starts | From October |
| Delivery end | 31st March 2024 |

It is anticipated that there could be a need for additional funding rounds as further funding is allocated to the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group. This may include smaller and more specific grant funds and full information will be shared if and when this is the case.

## Who is Eligible to Apply?

Third, public, private and further/higher education sector organisations are all eligible to apply. If you are applying as a partnership, the lead partner should apply, and detail partners involved. The lead partner would be responsible for the overall management and delivery of the project including budget management and monitoring and reporting requirements.

## What Makes a Good Application?

* Observe the **maximum word limit of 500 words** for each question.
* Please do not attach appendices or documents, as these will be deleted.
* Please consider the scoring criteria below when writing your application.
* Please write succinctly and in plain English**.** Use short sentences and avoid acronyms and jargon. There is no need to use formal language. Key to a good application is being as specific as you can and assuming the reader knows nothing about your organisation, track record and project even if you have received local funding before to do similar work.
* Ideally you will provide a clear picture for the reader of what you intend to deliver, how you will do this, and what difference it will make to participants as well as how it contributes to the grant programme strategic outcomes detailed in section 2 above.
* Applicants should be clear about which stage of the employability pipeline they are targeting and the anticipated outcomes.
* Please consider the 6 NOLB principles, the UKSPF vision and our additional local principles also outlined in section 2 when designing your project and when describing/evidencing this in the application.
* Please provide a strong rationale to show both the need for the services and that there will be a demand from local people to take part in the provision. Identifying, recruiting and sustaining engagement of the number of participants stated is the responsibility of the organisation receiving a grant albeit that local agencies such as the DWP, Working4U and Skills Development Scotland staff may refer clients.
* Please complete all sections of the application form.

## Where is the Grant Application Form?

It is anticipated that this information document and the application form will be published on <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/nolb> on Monday 11th September 2023.

Completed applications must be submitted to: [WDC\_NOLB\_Grants@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:WDC_NOLB_Grants@west-dunbarton.gov.uk) by Noon, 29th of September 2023.

## Got a Question?

You should be able to find the answers to most of the questions you may have about this Grant Award Programme within the published documentation.

If after checking through the published documentation, you need to ask a question then please email your query to: [WDC\_NOLB\_Grants@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:WDC_NOLB_Grants@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Please note that the deadline for submitting questions is noon on Friday 22nd of September 2023. We will publish a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ on our web site.**

## Where Does the Funding for the Grants Programme Come From?

Funds that may contribute to the West Dunbartonshire Employment Grant programme are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Grant Sources** |
| **2023/2024** | * UKSPF People and Skills, ring fenced all age employability support with a focus on the economically inactive * No One Left Behind, ring-fenced for all age employability support. * Child Poverty ring fenced to support the families identified as being most at risk of poverty. * UKSPF Multiply, ring-fenced for improving adult (those aged 19+) numeracy skills. |

At this point in time £300,000 is available.

Providers will need to ensure that project participants are eligible for support when participating on this Grant Award Programme, for example participants must be West Dunbartonshire residents, be able to prove their right to live and work in the UK and they cannot be on a Fairstart programme.

## Eligible Spend

Only direct delivery (revenue) costs will be considered as eligible grant expenditure.

## Decision Making

An Assessment Panel will manage the assessment and scoring procedures following the Council’s grant processes. Membership of the Assessment Panel will be drawn from strategic partner organisations represented on the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group including:

* DWP
* Skills Development Scotland
* Golden Jubilee National Hospital
* DYW West
* Scottish Qualifications Authority
* West Dunbartonshire Council for Voluntary Services
* Various Council Departments

Each application will be scored using the scoring criteria below by at least two separate individuals from the Assessment Panel who then meet to agree a moderated score with comments. The moderated score will then be presented to the full Assessment Panel for further comments on strategic fit and moderation if required.

## Scoring Criteria

| **Section** | | **Question and Weighting** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Applicant Information |  | 0% |
| 2 | Application Overview | 2.1 | 6% |
| 3 | Project Proposal | 3.2  3.3  3.4  3.5  3.6  3.7  3.8 | 9%  9%  9%  8%  9%  8%  8% |
| 4 | Project Impact | 4.1 | 9% |
| 5 | Cost | 5.1 | 25% |
| 6 | Strategic Skills Pipeline Online Portal Template |  | 0% |

Each section will be assessed on the basis of:

| **Score** | **Assessment Criteria** |
| --- | --- |
| 5 | Excellent Quality that surpasses the requirements of the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group. Indicates an excellent application with detailed evidence and no weaknesses. |
| 4 | Good Quality that meets the requirements of the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group with good evidence throughout and few weaknesses. |
| 3 | Reasonable Quality that meets the requirements of the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group. The response is generally good, but lacks sufficient detail in places, which highlights a number of weaknesses. |
| 2 | Poor Quality, which poses reservations for the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group. Lacks convincing detail of the supporting evidence and/or has substantial weaknesses. |
| 1 | Unacceptable Quality, which poses serious reservations for the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group. Limited or no detail of the proposed approach and/or has substantial weaknesses. |
| 0 | No submission/submission not relevant. |

## Notification of Successful Applications

Application outcomes including grant award letters will be issued from October 2023. Full details of the payment process and terms and conditions of grant, including monitoring and reporting requirements will be included.

The Provider shall provide employability services in the volumes, outputs of services and financial profiles set out in each award of grant, which **may be different from the application submitted.** Any other changes to the programme will require approval in advance.

# Grant Payment Process

Public Sector Funding dictates that grant payments require to be accounted for in the financial year of delivery. As such, all expenditure must be complete by March 2024.

A maximum of 25% of project costs may be paid up front: a payment schedule will be discussed with the applicant and will be reflected in the award of grant letter.

For Stage 3 delivery costs for staffing, assessment materials, registration with awarding bodies must be included in the overall costing submitted.

Further grant payments can be drawn down based on the project expenditure and performance criteria detailed in the Service Specification.

Payments will be processed through West Dunbartonshire Council’s normal accounting system and payment to applicants will be by BACS.

Regular contract monitoring meetings will be conducted by Working4U to ensure that: the project has been implemented as described; financial records associated with the project are in order; publicity arrangements; equality and sustainability policies have been complied with.

Where the applicant is unable to demonstrate sufficient progress towards achieving agreed outputs and targets, future funding may be withheld or reduced. Further details will be outlined in the terms and conditions.

**Stage 3 Provision:**

Please include relevant sector based qualifications in line with employer needs and meeting aspirations of service users. Costings should be inclusive of assessor/trainer costs, training materials including e-portfolios, registration with awarding/industry bodies etc.

**Stage 4 Provision:**

Provision at this stage will include, but will not be limited to:

* Intensive Job searching support
* CV development
* Interview Prep – including personal presentation, group interviews, mock interviews
* Employer Engagement and job matching activity
* Application forms, cover letters
* Work Placements
* Better off calculations

# How we will Monitor and Evaluate the Grants programme

## Performance Management

The key performance indicators for the programme (below) are outlined in the application form and replicate the current UK and Scottish Government outcomes for current grant funds. They also contribute to the grant programme outcomes:

* Inactive and unemployed residents registered with NOLB/UKSPF Services
* Inactive and unemployed residents gaining vocational qualifications.
* Inactive and unemployed residents entering employment.

**Key Performance Indicators –**

* Number of new people registered and action plan completed
* Number of people re-engaged with services and action plan updated
* Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills
* Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision
* Number of people supported to access basic skills
* Number of people familiarised with employers’ expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace
* Number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services as a result of employability support
* Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills
* Number of people engaged in job searching following support
* Number of people supported to participate in education/training
* Number of people achieved a Qualification
* Number of people supported into a work placement
* Number of people commenced Formal Volunteering
* Number of people entered employment or self-employment (including a Modern Apprenticeship)
* Number of people sustaining a job (including a Modern Apprenticeship) at 4 weeks

Applicants should be clear about the key performance indicators they will achieve ensuring they are relevant to the activity. These indicators should be stretch targets that represent good value for money they should also provide a realistic indication of what will be achieved.

Successful projects may have additional outputs and outcomes which they will also monitor and report on.

## Registration and Recording Progress

Personal information will be gathered and recorded by Working4U and the grant recipient for the following purposes:

* To provide quantitative performance data on registrations, progressions and positive outcomes to inform service delivery adjustments and improvements.
* To provide qualitative performance data in the form of case studies.
* To contribute to the national No One Left Behind Shared Measurement Framework and the Glasgow City Region UKSPF Investment Plan outcomes.

For provision at stage 4 grant recipients will be expected to complete or support the completion of Assessment, Registration, Action Plan, and Outcome forms for all participants. Providers will be expected to share with West Dunbartonshire Council some key data on the employability participants’ journey and outcomes. This will be recorded on our Client Information Management System (CMIS), Advice Pro.

## Reporting Requirements

West Dunbartonshire Council will run reports from the MIS at a project and programme level on a quarterly basis, which alongside qualitative evidence supplied by providers including case studies will be reported to the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group.

As well as providing quantitative and qualitative measures, monitoring of projects serves a number of purposes. It helps identify successful elements of projects, but conversely can help to identify areas for concern and suggestions can be discussed as to how these might be overcome. Monitoring is vital in enabling West Dunbartonshire Strategic Employability Group to gain greater insight into individual projects, but also to ensure and verify that the funds have been spent as envisaged and acknowledged correctly.

## Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

It is likely that an evaluation will be carried out which will include evaluations of each of the projects supported through the programme alongside an evaluation of the process and collective impact. Grant recipients will be required to provide information and staff /management time to engage with the persons conducting the evaluation.

In addition, grant recipients will be required to establish their own evaluative processes to drive continuous improvement and monitoring processes will include grant recipients evidencing how they do this and to what effect. This will be discussed both individually at review meetings and collectively at Community of Practice meetings and at monitoring and/or training sessions.

# Key Data Provided to Support Applicants

The remainder of this document provides a range of information and key data to support applicants in the preparation of their applications. The information relates to current employment stats, trends and key data, which could provide supporting information regarding the need for provisions locally in West Dunbartonshire.

Much of the statistical information provided is at a full West Dunbartonshire level and applicants will want to supplement this information with their own knowledge of working with specific target groups, identifying local needs through their own experience of delivering employability services and proposing services which they are confident will be used by, and are useful to the client groups to improve their employability outcomes. The following documents will be of use to prospective grant applicants:

| **Report** | **Source** |
| --- | --- |
| West Dunbartonshire Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022 – 2023 | [West Dunbartonshire Council Local Child Poverty Report 22 - 23](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/miimtl5a/wdc-local-child-poverty-report-2022-2023.pdf) |
| West Dunbartonshire Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024 | [West Dunbartonshire Community Learning and Development Plan 2021 - 2024](https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/cld-plan/) |
| NOMIS West Dunbartonshire Labour Market Profile | [NOMIS - West Dunbartonshire Labour Market Profile](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/contents.aspx) |
| SDS Regional Skills Assessment – West Region: | [SDS Regional Skills Assessment - West Region](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/47104/rsa-report-west-region.pdf) |
| West Dunbartonshire Challenges and Themes: |  |