

This special edition of the national European Social Fund (ESF) Newsletter contains the most recent ESF news items from our old website. Older ESF news items are available on [The National Archives](#) website

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Local Authority Led Pilots testing elements of Local Support Services for Universal Credit – results of bidding process

In [November/December 2013](#) DWP invited bids for ESF funded projects to support proposed Local Support Services (LSS) activity. The closing date for this exercise was 31 December 2013. The pilot projects will provide learning that will contribute to the development of the LSS and act as exemplars for other Local Authorities (LAs) wishing to access ESF to expand their LSS support in the future.

The Managing Authority is pleased to announce there were five successful bids. Each of the projects has started and all will finish by May 2015.

Melton Borough Council will utilise an existing building as a skills centre for supporting those seeking work to become more work ready. The **Me and My Learning Centre** project will be piloted based upon the principle of a 'one stop shop', supporting the vulnerable residents of Melton Mowbray to access training, skills and courses within a facility that accommodates their needs. The overarching aim is to provide a coordinated approach to skills frameworks and to work with providers, services, businesses and clients to make the process seamless and easy, bearing in mind that often the most vulnerable need support to access services, enabling them to maximise their chances of becoming digitally, financially and socially independent.

Birmingham City Council in conjunction with Gateway to Birmingham Advice Services (GBAS), West Midlands Fire Service, Citysave and DWP Employment Outreach are to create a **Service Directory and Referral System (SDRS)** that can be used as an accessible reference source for residents and agencies offering support to unemployed people in Birmingham.

The SDRS will enable clients to access the support they need when they need it. It will provide information on how to access a variety of work and training opportunities, including how to gain digital skills which will empower people to overcome barriers and build their work readiness.

A standard assessment, referral and outcome process will be developed and used by partners to support and monitor client's progress on their journey back into work. This project aims to improve the employability and confidence of those currently not in work to move them onto the next step of their employment journey. Clients will receive a personalised Digital Log Book which will build their digital skills, increase their confidence in using online tools to access job opportunities and support services as well as information and training.

'Understanding the Language of Work' has been developed by **London Borough of Lewisham** to support residents into employment where language is a key barrier to work. The project aims to support residents impacted by welfare reform whose English is not a first language. This is a key issue in the borough, where 18% of residents are unable to speak English 'well' or 'at all'. Building on learning from the Family Budgets programme and Universal Credit pilot, the project builds in language tuition with work-targeted support from a 'pathfinder' and community work placements. Language tuition will take place over an 11 week term, after which the pathfinder will maintain contact with the participants for an additional five months to ensure they continue to use their language skills and are actively seeking employment. Work placements will be provided through partnering with local community organisations, providing participants with first-hand experience in applying for work, attending interviews and, crucially, working in an English language environment.

Through these three key interventions the project aims to provide residents with the confidence and skills for work and to build a supportive, English language community. The project is targeted and personalised – working with 48 residents over the course of the year in small groups of 12, it will provide for the long-term unemployed who are not currently eligible for SFA funding (on income support) and are subject to benefit cap and/or in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payment. It aims to achieve successful work placements for 60% participants, with sustainable, paid employment for 30%.

The West Lindsey District Council project will focus on community digital inclusion, so that residents who don't have computers at home or don't currently have the skills to use computers can still enjoy the advantages of online services. The project will create digital hubs by making the Council's redundant IT equipment available in community centres and village halls, and will recruit and train volunteers who can help residents to use the computers. This project will improve the employability of residents by encouraging an increase in IT skills and online applications for work. In addition to the mentoring service provided by the volunteers in the drop-in sessions in community venues, local charity Community Lincs will provide IT training courses in the digital hubs. People who volunteer with the project, called Digital Champions, will benefit from improved confidence and employability, involvement with their local community, and access to funded training such as an accredited Peer Mentoring course. In the future, six positions of paid part-time work will be available through the project, should volunteers wish to apply for them. The project will also bring advice sessions on budgeting and other support to community venues.

Oxford City Council will be building on their successful LA Led pilot to deliver a project which takes the testing of Localised Support Services in Oxford to the next level. The scope of the project is focussed on benefit recipients in the Private Rented Sector. With fewer landlords in Oxford willing to let to tenants in receipt of Local Housing Allowance, there is much to be gained from working with this group to help them become independent. The project will use the same model as the LA led pilot, with Council staff acting as caseworkers, and support being provided by a range of local partners. The project will focus on getting people into work, with attention to improving financial capability and digital access to support this.

The project aims to provide skills which will allow people to access known job vacancies locally. It plans to engage more closely with Community Associations in local regeneration areas so they can continue to support people after the project has ended.

ESF 2014-2020 Operational Programme consultation document published

We have published a consultation on the European Social Fund 2014-2020 Operational Programme in England. The draft programme document, summarising the government's proposals, is available on GOV.UK:

[European Social Fund Operational Programme for England 2014-2020: Public Consultation](#)

The closing date for responses to the consultation questions is 5.00pm on 9 May 2014. Once the consultation has concluded, we will review responses and submit a revised Operational Programme to the European Commission. We will publish a formal response following the consultation on the GOV.UK website.

Fifteen Cornwall wins international award



Photo: Simon Burt Photography

Fifteen Cornwall, the restaurant and social enterprise which offers disadvantaged young people the chance to transform their lives by becoming chefs, has won a top award at the Europe wide RegioStars 2014. The critically acclaimed restaurant, at Watergate Bay, beat off four other short-listed finalists in the 'Inclusive growth: Creating jobs for the young generation' category. The winner was announced on Monday 31 March at a ceremony in Brussels.

News of this prestigious award is being widely reported, including news reports in Cornwall's [Western Morning News](#) (external website), Cornish Guardian and Newquay Voice, the [Business Cornwall](#) website, and broadcasts on Heart FM Cornwall and BBC Radio Cornwall.

The annual RegioStars awards, run by the European Commission, aim to identify good practices in regional development and to highlight original and innovative projects which could be attractive and inspiring to other regions.

Run by the charity Cornwall Food Foundation the Fifteen Cornwall restaurant – which has been supported by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and uses Jamie Oliver's international brand - was originally set up using European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) investment. It continues to receive ESF Convergence for its Apprentice Programme which is also supported by mainstream funding from Jobcentre Plus and the Skills Funding Agency and 100% of the restaurant's profits.

The apprenticeship programme has an annual intake of around 20 trainees who work in the restaurant's kitchen for a year and gain the skills needed to make it as professional chefs. Before starting their twelve months of training at the restaurant, trainees spend three months in full-time training at Cornwall College and also gain work experience at other restaurants. After completing their apprenticeships, further work placements are organised at some of the country's top restaurants, often leading to long-term jobs.

Since May 2006, the project has enrolled more than 140 apprentices with 80% of those who have already graduated still employed full-time in the restaurant industry and a further 10% in alternative employment. The Fifteen Cornwall Apprenticeship Programme is about to start training its 9th cohort of future chefs.



In a [video message](#) (external website) played to those present at the awards event, Jamie Oliver said:

"It's brilliant news that we've won a RegioStars award for creating jobs for young people. One big massive 'thank you' goes to the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. Without you guys Fifteen Cornwall would never have happened, so a deep heart-felt 'thank you'."

Carolyn Webster, District Business Manager, Jobcentre Plus Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, said:

"It has been a privilege to walk alongside Fifteen Cornwall from the outset and to gain recognition through the prestigious RegioStars awards is a fantastic achievement. The real stars are of course the young people who step up to the challenges and opportunities that Fifteen Cornwall presents. Their personal and professional journeys never fail to inspire."

The Apprenticeship Programme offers a bespoke welfare and wellbeing package which runs alongside the chef training programme helping the young people overcome issues they may face. These may be something which affects them outside of the kitchen or classroom, and could be related to mental health, drugs and alcohol or possibly even money or housing.

Fifteen Cornwall also invests £1million a year back into the local economy through a 70% local sourcing policy and has created 80 jobs in addition to the 86 apprenticeships so far completed.

[Fifteen Cornwall: launching a new life in the kitchen – video](#) (external website)

[Fifteen Cornwall: inspiring young people to change their lives](#) (external website)

Cornish project shines at European Conference

Representatives from Cornwall College have been to Brussels to address a European Social Fund launch conference about the successes of their Young Mums Will Achieve project.

The ESF launch conference, titled 'Strengthening employment and social cohesion', took place in Brussels on 6-7 February, and examined which policies the ESF could and should support under the new investment priorities, as well as new ways to use the ESF. The event aimed to promote an efficient and effective use of the more than €80 billion available to Member States from the ESF in 2014-2020.

Heather Tabb from Cornwall College St Austell delivered a workshop on 'Active Inclusion' at the event, which focused on Young Mums Will Achieve as an example of best practice to others.

Established by Cornwall Council in partnership with Cornwall College and crèche providers Fit 'n' Fun Kids Limited, the highly successful programme offers support to pregnant and teenage mums aged between 14 and 19 years old all over the county. The project, which is co-financed by the Skills Funding Agency, offers guidance and help with essentials like childcare and transport, in order to boost self-esteem, develop Maths and English skills and ultimately encourage young mums to progress onto further education or employment.

Heather said:

"It's been a tremendous achievement for Young Mums Will Achieve to be involved in the ESF Launch Conference and goes some way to highlighting the hard work and commitment of everyone involved in the project."

Andrew Wallis, Cornwall Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said:

"It is fantastic news that the YMWA programme continues to go from strength to strength. Being given the chance to showcase this programme to a pan-European audience will enable the programme to achieve the recognition it so richly deserves."

The conference also looked at how the ESF can best support the achievement of priorities identified in the Country Specific Recommendations and Commission services' Position Papers, thereby helping Member States to meet the Europe 2020 employment and poverty reduction targets.

The recently adopted European Code of Conduct on Partnership was also discussed. This important innovation will help to further maximise the impact of the ESF by strengthening the role of partners such as regional, local, urban and other public authorities, trade unions, employers or non-governmental organisations during the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects.



Event: Social Inclusion and Big Lottery Fund in ESF 2014-2020

The European Funding Network is holding an event in London on Friday 28 March to update the voluntary and community sector on developments with the Big Lottery Fund's role for social inclusion provision in the 2014-20 ESF programme, and to identify ways that members can support Big Lottery Fund in their planning.

Registration is still open for the event, which takes place from 10 am to 2 pm at Roots & Shoots, Walnut Tree Walk, London SE11 6DN.

[NCVO & Regional Voices: Social Inclusion and Big Lottery Fund in ESF 2014-2020](#)

ESF award winners attend NIACE royal reception



Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal hosted a NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) reception at Buckingham Palace on Wednesday 5 March 2014. The event introduced previous Adult Learners' Week award winners as ambassadors for adult learning to representatives from a number of organisations across a range of sectors.

Delegates at the event, who all have a commitment to adult learning, training and development, had the opportunity to speak to the Adult Learner Ambassadors about their experiences of learning, and the real life impact that it can have on individuals, families, communities and workplaces. Organisations represented included the BBC, City Lit, the Department of Health, the Edge Foundation, McDonald's, PricewaterhouseCoopers and NOCN (formerly named – National Open College Network).

David Hughes, NIACE Chief Executive said:

"Motivating adults to give learning a try can be difficult. It can be easy to talk about this in terms of statistics, but that doesn't inspire people to participate. Personal stories about how people have transformed their lives always make a powerful human connection that we know often leads to adults taking that first step back into learning."

"Our Adult Learner Ambassadors inspire others to try learning and are dedicated to improving the lives of others by sharing their own stories. Their tenacity dedication and motivation exemplify the successes that come from embracing learning as part of adult life."



[Frank Harris](#), ESF Outstanding Learner of the Year 2009, and [Penny Keeling](#), ESF Outstanding Learner of the Year 2013 were amongst the learners that were commended for their ongoing

commitment to learning. The Princess Royal presented them with a certificate of achievement in recognition of their successes and role as Ambassadors. Frank says of his learning journey:

"My learning has empowered me and given me the belief that my future is in my hands."

This summer a Festival of Learning will provide thousands of opportunities for adults to have a go at learning, through events across the country, culminating in Adult Learners' Week (14 to 20 June 2014) which is supported by ESF and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Adult Learners' Week highlights the transformative impact that learning has on people's lives, nurturing the self-confidence, employability and civic participation of learners and their families and communities. It also demonstrates the importance of lifelong learning to a happy, healthy and informed community; improving social cohesion, social mobility; and encouraging economic vitality.

Each year Adult Learners' Week also celebrates the transformational impact of learning, through the Adult Learners' Week Awards – this year's winners, including a number that have received ESF support, will be announced soon.

For further information and to take part visit www.alw.org.uk

Coventry partnership helps ex-offenders into work



(from left) Kobina Hall (Coventry Probation), Simon Parker (PPDG), and Odette Chittem (Coventry City Council)

A partnership between Coventry City Council, Coventry Probation Trust and employment and training provider Pertemps People Development Group (PPDG) has seen 35 ex-offenders transform their lives for the better by securing jobs at local companies.

They have been working together as part of New Leaf, a jointly funded project between the National Offender Management Service Co-Financing Organisation (NOMS CFO) and the European Social Fund (ESF), which is delivered by PPDG throughout the West Midlands region. The 3-year project started in January 2012 and will run until December 2014.

The project has been providing forklift truck training at local centres enabling ex-offenders, who have been referred to PPDG, an opportunity to change their lives and secure a job.

Councillor Lynette Kelly, Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, said:

"Over the course of 12 months we have managed to get 35 former offenders back into work with local companies. This is a real achievement. It's true that having a job transforms lives – so this is fantastic news for the people involved. They have shown a real commitment to change their lives and I'm delighted that by working with the local Probation Trust and PPDG we have played a part in ensuring they have a brighter future."

Simon Parker, supply chain manager for NOMS at PPDG in Coventry, said:

"Coventry City Council are proving to be very effective partners delivering New Leaf for PPDG in the city of Coventry. Their long standing partnership arrangements with Coventry Probation and commitment to invest appropriately in their participants has generated some fantastic results for both training and employment outcomes."

PPDG was awarded the 4-year NOMS CFO contract in 2011, working with the Ministry of Justice to help turn around the lives of offenders.

The project works with current and ex-offenders who benefit from an updated CV, links into employment opportunities, improved confidence and motivation support as well as courses such as forklift truck driving. Additional support is provided through a local job club specifically for offenders, interview travel costs and help with childcare. Support for clients from the Black Minority Ethnic community is also offered within this partnership and delivered by Midland Heart Housing who are sub-contracted by the Probation Trust to offer this specialised service.

Helpful Links

[England ESF programme national website](#)

[@DWPESFEngland on Twitter](#)

[Skills Funding Agency Co-financing Organisation \(CFO\)](#)

[Ministry of Justice \(National Offender Management Service CFO\)](#)

[Department for Work and Pensions CFO](#)

[Greater London Authority - European Programmes Management Unit - ESF pages](#)

[Inspiring Work: Cornwall and the South West](#)

[TAEN \(The Age and Employment Network\)](#)

[Europa \(European Commission website\) ESF pages](#)

[The National Council for Voluntary Organisations - NCVO](#)

[Gibraltar ESF secretariat website pages](#)

Get in touch

We want to hear about your ESF news and success stories, and welcome your ideas for features on our website – [just contact us](#)