

DRAFT



Department
for Work &
Pensions

European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020



European Union
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and Investment Funds

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SECTION 1.1: STRATEGY

Introduction

1. The European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programme is part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme for England in 2014-2020. It will deliver the Growth Programme's priorities to increase labour market participation, promote social inclusion, and develop the skills of the potential and existing workforce. The programme will incorporate Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) money for areas with very high rates of youth unemployment.
2. The ESF and YEI funds for England are significant but are modest in the context of public expenditure on employment, social inclusion and skills. The ambitions for what the ESF and YEI funding can achieve must therefore be realistic. The funding must be concentrated on a number of issues which will enable it to tackle barriers and achieve real benefits for individuals, enterprises and local communities.
3. The strategy section of the Operational Programme sets out how the ESF and YEI investment across England as a whole will contribute to the European Union's strategy for growth. It takes account of the relevant Europe 2020 objectives, 2013 Country Specific Recommendations to the UK, the Commission Position Paper (CPP) for the UK 2014-2020 and priorities identified in the UK National Reform Programme.
4. The strategy sets out the intervention logic for the ESF in England, building on the analysis in the UK Partnership Agreement. It identifies the needs and challenges that the ESF will address, and the thematic objectives and investment priorities that will be used. The investment priorities are set out in more detail in section 2. The intervention logic is summarised at annex B.
5. The wide variations in GDP and productivity across England, and the myriad and complex reasons for these variations, has prompted the Government to take a new approach to local growth policy in England, shifting power away from central. Government believes in local solutions for local growth, designed by those who best know their local areas.
6. At the heart of this new approach are Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), which are private sector-led partnerships between local authorities and local businesses which set the local strategy for achieving economic growth. There are 39 LEPs covering England. They are formed around functional economic areas (figure 1).
7. The Government invited LEPs and partners to develop European Structural and Investment Funds strategies that set out their strategic priorities within a national framework developed by Government to address the key issues facing England.
8. Disparities across different areas in England are often illustrated using Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) level data. However, LEP-level data is not available for several key indicators. In these cases, the geographical unit selected is the best to illustrate the point made in the narrative.
9. The ESF and YEI aim to address the needs of individuals. In most cases these do not vary significantly by geographical area or category of region, and the broad activities to address them will be similar from place to place. The strategy therefore generally applies

to all three categories of region. However where there are issues specific to a category of region these are highlighted, particularly in the only less developed region: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. For the transition and more developed regions, there are often greater variations within each category than between each category. For example, the highest rates of unemployment are in areas that include major cities whether or not they are within transition or more developed regions; and it is possible to find pockets of deprivation in rural areas in otherwise relatively affluent areas.

Europe 2020 strategy

10. The programme will contribute primarily to the inclusive growth dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy which covers the thematic objectives for employment, social inclusion and skills.

11. The Europe 2020 objectives relevant to the ESF are:

- Employment: 75 percent of the population aged 20-64 should be in employment.
- Social inclusion: 20 million less people across the EU should be at risk of poverty.
- Education: The share of early leavers from education and training should be under 10%; and at least 40% of 30-34 year-olds should complete third level education.

12. The Country Specific Recommendations relevant to the ESF are:

- Building on the Youth Contract, step up measures to address youth unemployment, for example through a Youth Guarantee. Increase the quality and duration of apprenticeships, simplify the system of qualifications and strengthen the engagement of employers, particularly in the provision of advanced and intermediate technical skills. Reduce the number of young people aged 18-24 who have very poor basic skills, including through effectively implementing the Traineeships programme.
- Enhance efforts to support low-income households and reduce child poverty by ensuring that the Universal Credit and other welfare reforms deliver a fair tax-benefit system with clearer work incentives and support services. Accelerate the implementation of planned measures to reduce the costs of childcare and improve its quality and availability.

Labour Market

Economic context

13. England represents about 85% of the UK's output and workforce. The UK economy is recovering from the biggest financial crisis in generations, which led to one of the deepest recessions of any major economy. Signs of recovery are now starting to emerge with positive growth in 2013. Forecasters also expect this growth to continue and strengthen. The Office for Budgetary Responsibility economic and fiscal outlook is forecasting steady year on year increases in growth. Its expectation is that growth will rise to 2.6% of GDP by 2017.

14. As the recovery strengthens, it's important that growth is inclusive – benefitting all areas of England, and all sections of society. ESF will be used to ensure that this happens.

Employment, unemployment and inactivity rates

15. During the recession the level of employment remained resilient and there are now a record 25.8 million people employed in England, the highest figure since 1992. Although the rate of employment fell in England during the recession, at 73.2% it is now close to the pre-recession peak of 73.5%. The economy is now growing, the employment rate is increasing and unemployment is falling.

16. The Europe 2020 objective is 'to raise to 75% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, including through greater participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers and better integration of legal migrants'. Using the 20-64 age range as in the Europe 2020 objective, the UK employment rate was 74.9% in 2013 and the England employment rate was 74.7%. So the rate in England is only fractionally below the Europe 2020 target, and higher than the European Union average of 68.3%.

17. The rise in employment has been accompanied by falls in unemployment. The unemployment rate for those aged 16 and over in England is 6.8% (January to March 2014). This is the same as the rate for the UK as a whole and lower than the EU average of 10.5%.¹ It has declined by 1.0 percentage point in the past year. The comparable figure before the last recession was 5.2% in the three months to March 2008. The number of people unemployed in England is 1,868,000, a decrease of 260,000 over the past year.

18. Long-term unemployment is also falling. There are currently 271,960 people who have been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for over a year, less than a third of the total number of claimants.

19. Currently 21.6% of people aged between 16 and 64 in England are not active in the labour market, just below the 21.9% rate in the UK as a whole (January to March 2014).² The inactivity rate has been relatively stable over time. In the past year it has fallen 0.5 percentage points, and the number of economically inactive has decreased by 129,000. There are many reasons why an individual may need to be inactive in the labour market, and not all are problematic. The main reasons include looking after family and home, full-time education, long-term sickness and retirement. Increasing the number of people actively seeking work is likely to help to boost the employment rate.

20. The fall in unemployment is happening alongside welfare reform where some claimants are being moved off 'inactive' benefits (where there is no requirement to seek work) and moved onto 'active' benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance (where claimants are obliged to seek employment).

21. Employment is lower among groups who are at a disadvantage in the labour market including young people, disabled people, people from some ethnic minorities and older people. These are considered in the sections on young people and equal opportunities.

22. Lack of qualifications and skills is a major barrier to work for many people. Since the economic downturn in 2008, the employment rate has decreased the most for those with qualifications at level 2 or below. Individuals with no qualifications have an employment rate of around 40%. Those with an additional disadvantage fare worst: only

¹ ONS, *Labour Market Statistics*, May 2014

² ONS, *Labour Market Statistics*, May 2014,

26% of disabled people who do not have a level 2 qualification are employed compared to 57.4% of disabled people with a qualification at level 2 or higher.

Territorial variations

23. Improving labour market participation is an issue in all parts of England. However in some areas the issues are more significant than in others (figure 2). LEP areas with rates below the national employment rate are northern or midlands LEP areas with the exception of London and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Those with the lowest rates are also mainly urban (Tees Valley 66.7%, Greater Birmingham and Solihull 66.4%, Black Country 65.2%, North Eastern 66.5%, Liverpool City Region 66.8%, Greater Manchester 67.4%).³

24. The highest rates of unemployment (9% or more) are in urban northern LEP areas (Tees Valley LEP 10.8%, Humber LEP 9.7%, Sheffield City Region 9.1, Liverpool City Region 9.6%, Greater Manchester LEP 9% and North Eastern LEP 9.8%) and some midlands LEP areas (Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP 10.2%, Black Country LEP 11.2%).⁴ The remainder of the areas with above average unemployment rates are again mostly northern LEPs, with the exception of London LEP.

25. Within LEP areas, employment rates tend to be lowest in inner city areas, former industrial areas and some coastal towns. The employment rate in 2011 was higher in rural areas (74.6%) than in urban areas (69.2%), but has fallen for both in recent years. It was highest in less sparse rural villages and hamlets (75.0%) and lowest in less sparse urban areas (69.2%). Concentrations of relatively low employment are found across less developed, transition and more developed regions and are not confined to one of these categories.

26. Across England, there are significant territorial variations in rates of economic inactivity (figure 3). The lowest levels are mainly located in the southern LEPs. The higher levels of inactivity are mainly in areas which have seen a significant decline in heavy industries.

National policies and programmes

27. The employment rate will be increased primarily through job creation as a result of the Government's work to facilitate economic growth. Low levels of taxation and a carefully balanced approach to labour market regulation mean that firms have incentives to create new jobs alongside new business opportunities. In addition, employers can offer flexible working arrangements to workers, which help with recruitment, retention and productivity.

28. In order to help unemployed people take up the employment opportunities resulting from growth, the Government is reforming the welfare system to ensure that work pays and every jobseeker gets the support they need to find a job. The National Reform Programme⁵ describes the measures that the Government has put in place to help unemployed people move quickly into work and to address longer-term detachment from the labour market. Key measures include:

³ ONS, *Annual Population Survey*, October 2012-September 2013, Employment rate for people aged 16-64

⁴ ONS, *Annual Population Survey*, October 2012 - September 2013, Unemployment rate for those aged 16 and over

⁵ HM Government, 2013, *UK National Reform Programme*

- Welfare reforms mean jobseekers are better off in work than on benefits.
- Jobseekers who are ready to work are receiving help with job search; careers advice; boosting literacy, numeracy and language skills; other skills training; work experience; training in setting up a business.
- Through the Work Programme, those at risk of long-term unemployment are given personalised support to find and stay in work.
- Claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance and those in the work related activity group of Employment Support Allowance are eligible for fully funded training.

29. The Government has responded to the Country Specific Recommendation about the affordability of childcare by announcing plans to help families meet the costs of childcare and to increase the amount of affordable provision in 'More Affordable Childcare', its response to the Childcare Commission.⁶

30. An additional £200 million will be available within Universal Credit to fund childcare support for parents working fewer than 16 hours a week for the first time. From 2016 the Government also intends to offer a further £400 million to increase the rate of childcare support to 85% for all working families, up from 70% in the current working tax credit.

31. The Government also announced a new Tax-free Childcare offer from Autumn 2015 for working families not receiving tax credits or Universal Credit, to help parents who want to work but cannot currently make work pay.

32. In addition, the Department for Education is extending funded early education (already available to 3 and 4 year-olds), to two-year-olds from lower income families over the next two years. This means that from 2014, 260,000 two-year-olds from lower income families will have access to an early learning place.

33. The Government's response to the Childcare Commission also sets out proposals to improve the regulation of childcare, to make providers more responsive to parents' needs and give parents the right information so they can make informed choices about childcare.

Use of the ESF

34. As the recovery strengthens, it is likely that those already closest to the labour market will find it easier to find work, but there is a risk that the most disadvantaged will be left behind and find it increasingly difficult to compete effectively for work. ESF therefore needs to be used to ensure that these disadvantaged groups are provided with the right level of support, tailored to the needs of individuals and businesses in local labour markets.

35. Some groups are already well catered for through national programmes – e.g. all long-term (12 months plus) Jobseeker's Allowance claimants are provided with help through the Work Programme. But those with the most entrenched problems, even if they have access to these programmes, can find it difficult to get the most from them. For these people ESF will be used to provide additional support, which is aligned and builds on national programmes, so that they are better able to benefit.

⁶ HM Government, 2013, *More Affordable Childcare*

36. Those on inactive benefits have access to help but take-up tends to be low. For these groups, ESF will be used to tackle the barriers they face and provide them with the support and advice they need to move closer to the labour market. For some, this support would then lead on to them being able to take advantage of national programmes. In all of these cases, it will be important to pay attention to transitions between unemployment and work to improve retention.

37. There is also a risk that, as the economy recovers, unemployed people will lack the skills which employers need and skills shortages will emerge. ESF will therefore help unemployed people acquire the skills they need to compete for new jobs created by economic growth.

38. ESF will also be used for preventative measures to work with those at risk of redundancy to ensure that they can move into work with another employer (or set up in self-employment) rather than becoming unemployed.

39. The main activities will include:

- additional and innovative approaches to pre-employment training;
- additional support for long-term unemployed people, including those who have left the Work Programme, and including new approaches to work experience and training;
- improving the employability and transferable skills of unemployed, inactive and disadvantaged people;
- training workless people and those facing redundancy who need to upgrade their skills or learn new skills (including basic skills and English for speakers of other languages);
- responding flexibly to employer demand in local labour markets where LEPs and their partners identify specific needs;
- as part of wider packages of support, using self-employment as a route out of worklessness;
- support activities to encourage the unemployed to start and grow businesses (including social enterprises).

40. Activities to help more unemployed and inactive people into work will be supported through the access to employment investment priority under thematic objective 8 (employment). This may include activities focused on specific disadvantaged groups. Activities to help the most disadvantaged groups who are a long distance from the labour market and have significant barriers to address will be supported through the active inclusion investment priority under thematic objective 9 (social inclusion). These activities will contribute to achieving the Europe 2020 employment objective.

41. Since the availability of childcare can affect whether or not someone is able to participate in ESF provision, it will be a contractual requirement for providers to make a contribution to childcare costs in cases where it is a barrier (this will not apply to NOMS provision, since most participants are likely to be in custody). The provision of childcare support will be monitored and evaluated.

Young People

42. Youth unemployment has been identified as a priority issue by the European Council and there is a 2013 Country Specific Recommendation to the UK on youth unemployment.

43. The vast majority of young people continue in education or training when they leave school, and make a successful transition to either Further or higher education or employment. But there are still too many who either 'drop out' or struggle to make the transition to the labour market at age 18-19. As a result, the proportion of young people NEET rises sharply at age 18-19. At age 16 3.2% are NEET, at age 17 4.9%, at age 18 14.2% and at age 19-24 17.2%.⁷

44. In the UK there are currently 975,000 16-24 year olds classed as NEET - the lowest level for over 8 years. The proportion of those aged 16-17 who are NEET is 3.6% which is the lowest since comparable records began. The proportion of 18-24 year olds who are NEET is currently 16.1% - the lowest since 2008.

45. In England, 85.2% of 17 year olds participate in education or training (86.6% female, 83.8% male). By ethnic group the lowest participation rates among 16-17 year olds are among white and mixed race people. The following local authorities have participation rates below 80% at age 17: Birmingham, Blackpool, Bristol, Derby, Oxfordshire, Redcar and Cleveland, Salford and Stoke-on-Trent. These are in both more developed and transition areas. The rate in Cornwall is 88.1%.⁸

46. There is a particular need to tackle youth unemployment in NUTS2 areas⁹ which had youth unemployment rates above 25% in 2012 and NUTS3 areas¹⁰ which had a youth unemployment rate of 30% or above in 2012, and therefore qualify for the Youth Employment Initiative, in the following LEP areas: Birmingham and Solihull, Black Country, Coventry and Warwickshire, Liverpool City Region, London, North Eastern and Tees Valley, Nottingham, Leicester, Kingston-upon-Hull and Thurrock (figure 4). This is an issue in both more developed and transition regions. The rate in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is 13.1%.

47. Lack of skills, particularly basic skills, is a key barrier for many young people who are NEET. Despite some progress in recent years, a significant minority of young people do not have the skills and qualifications they need to compete successfully in the labour market. The unemployment rate of low skilled 15-25 year olds is 37.2%.

National policies and programmes

48. There are a range of national policies in place to help young people who are NEET and to tackle youth unemployment, as set out in the National Reform Programme and the 'Building Engagement, Building Futures' paper.

49. First, the Government has raised the participation age so that all young people in England are now required to continue in education or training for longer. This means that

⁷ DfE, *Statistical First Release 07/2014*, Labour Force Survey October-December 2013

⁸ Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training, June 2013. DfE based on Local Authority client databases (CCIS)

⁹ West Midlands, Merseyside, Inner London, and Tees Valley and Durham

¹⁰ Leicester, Nottingham, Kingston-upon-Hull and Thurrock

pupils who left year 11 in summer 2013 need to continue in education or training for at least a further year until 27 June 2014 and pupils starting year 11 or below in September 2013 will need to continue until at least their 18th birthday. Young people can participate through full-time education, work/volunteering combined with part-time education or training, or by undertaking a Traineeship or Apprenticeship.

50. Second, the Youth Contract was launched in April 2012 to provide new opportunities to unemployed 18 to 24 year olds. It builds on existing support to provide young people with more intensive adviser support and work experience, as well as providing employers with wage incentives and Apprenticeship grants to encourage them to recruit young people.

51. Third, Traineeships were launched in August 2013 to provide a new training opportunity for young people aged 16 to 23 to develop the skills and attributes they need to compete for an Apprenticeship or good job. Traineeships have three elements: a focused period of work preparation training; a high quality work placement with an employer; and English and maths for those without a level 2 in the subjects. Traineeships can last up to six months

52. Finally, The Government is improving careers guidance by challenging employers, schools, colleges, social enterprises, local authorities and others to do more to inspire young people about the world of work.¹¹ A key commitment is to develop the role of the National Careers Service to act as a facilitator to bring schools and employers closer together. This will build on existing relationships with employers, LEPs, local authorities and schools, colleges and training providers.

Use of the ESF

53. Unemployment can have a long-term scarring effect on young people, so this group are a high priority as the recovery strengthens. A range of help is already available, but the ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) will be used to support additional and complementary 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 YEI will be targeted on areas with very high rates of youth unemployment.

54. One of the issues at the moment is that some of the NEET population are disconnected from the mainstream activity which is available. One of the challenges for ESF will be to find and engage young people in this position (e.g. through outreach work) so that they can benefit from what is on offer.

55. In the future, the raising of the participation age will ensure that more young people are engaged in education or training for longer, but in the meantime there is still a need to provide additional support for young unemployed people.

56. Support from the ESF and YEI will be used to: fund additional basic skills provision in areas such as literacy and numeracy, help disadvantaged young people access Traineeships and Apprenticeships, and where relevant provide intermediate and advanced skills at level 3 and above.¹² This will directly address the Country Specific

¹¹ HM Government, 2013, *Careers Guidance Action Plan*

¹² Advanced level skills are usually known as higher level skills in England and are generally at level 3 and above.

Recommendation. In particular the ESF will provide more intensive, specialised support for the most marginalised and disadvantaged young people such as care leavers.

57. The ESF will also be able to enhance local services to help young people make a successful transition from education to working life by improving careers advice and guidance, and strengthening engagement with employers. This will require close coordination with local authorities, and will need to be aligned with existing careers guidance support.

58. The ESF and YEI will support young people aged 15 to 24 through the sustainable integration of young people investment priority under thematic objective 8 (employment). The investment priority on early school leaving will not be used as domestic interventions such as Raising the Participation Age have been put in place to address this issue.

59. The ESF will not support general education in schools. However ESF will be able to provide additional support, through the sustainable integration of young people investment priority, to at risk young people from age 15 to prevent them from becoming NEET. The 2007-2013 ESF programme has shown how ESF can support localised, targeted provision in a way that complements existing provision, helping young people to meet the requirement to participate in education or training until their 18th birthday.

60. Activities to promote partnerships between education providers and businesses in order to improve the labour market relevance of education, address employers' skills needs and increase participation will be supported within investment priority on labour market relevance. These are expected to contribute to reducing early school leaving, as well as reducing the number of young people who are NEET.

Social Exclusion and Poverty

61. In 2012, 24.1% of the UK population were considered to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion according to the EU definition.¹³

62. Figure 5 gives a regional breakdown of the number and percentage of individuals in relative low income before housing costs, three year average 2009/10 – 2011/12. A person is considered to be in relative low income if their household income is less than 60% of the median equivalised household income. The areas with the highest rates of poverty are in Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and West Midlands.

63. Poverty, as measured by income relative to the national average, is often a symptom of deeper, more complex problems. Many of these problems are passed on from one generation to the next. The Government's Social Justice Strategy sets out the scale of the challenge, looking at disadvantage in terms of: worklessness; family problems; low educational attainment; drug and alcohol dependency; debt and crime.¹⁴ These disadvantages often interact and all too often the most severely disadvantaged individuals lack the systematic, wrap-around support they need to overcome their problems in the long-term.¹⁵

64. Analysis from household survey data found that 11% of adults experience, at any one time, three or more of six areas of disadvantage (education, health, employment,

¹³ Eurostat, 2013, *People at risk of poverty or social exclusion*

¹⁴ HM Government, 2013, *Social Justice: Transforming Lives One year on*

¹⁵ HM Government, 2013, *Social Justice: Transforming Lives – One Year On*

income, social support, housing and local environment).¹⁶ This population is constantly changing, with people moving in and out of disadvantage and poverty according to the impact of these economic, social, and environmental factors.

65. Workless households are more likely to be in poverty and be dependent on benefit, and research suggests that growing up in a workless household has a negative effect on children's future labour market outcomes.¹⁷ The number of households in England where no-one works stands at around 2.8 million (figure 6), in which about 1.3 million children are present.¹⁸ Children are around three times as likely to be in poverty if they live in a workless family compared to families where at least one adult is in work.

Ex-offenders

66. One of the groups the Government is concerned about is ex-offenders, since they experience high levels of unemployment. In the one year after being released from prison in 2010/11, 74% of offenders made at least one claim to an out-of-work benefit. Evidence suggests that prison leavers spend longer on benefits than other JSA claimants and have more barriers to employment, and that having a job is a major factor in preventing future offending. Yet many offenders face significant barriers to entering the labour market even when they are committed to changing their lives.

National policies and programmes

67. The Government considers work to be the best route out of poverty. It is committed to tackling poverty and welfare dependency; helping people without jobs to find work and support themselves and their families; and ensuring that the most vulnerable in society are protected.

68. The Government's strategy, 'Social Justice: Transforming Lives', sets out the Government's commitment to giving individuals and families facing multiple disadvantages the support and tools they need to turn their lives around. A new set of principles inform this approach:

- a focus on prevention and early intervention;
- where problems arise, concentrating interventions on recovery and independence, not maintenance;
- promoting work for those who can as the most sustainable route out of poverty, while offering unconditional support to those who are severely disabled and cannot work;
- recognising that the most effective solutions will often be designed and delivered at a local level;
- ensuring that interventions provide a fair deal for the taxpayer.

69. Government published the 'Social Justice Outcomes Framework' in October 2012. Comprising seven key indicators, it explains what the Government wants to achieve and sets the benchmark against which progress can be judged. In April 2013, it published 'Social Justice: Transforming Lives – One Year On'. This progress report looks at how

¹⁶ Analysis using BHPS 2007 data cited in HM Government, 2010, *State of the nation report: poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency in the UK*.

¹⁷ National Audit Office, 2007, *Helping people from workless households into work*

¹⁸ ONS, 2014 *Working and workless households, 4th Quarter 2004 to 2013*

social justice principles have already started to influence service delivery at national and local level, in government and across the private and voluntary sectors.

70. The new Universal Credit system, progressively being rolled out nationally from October 2013, plays a key role in ensuring that being in work pays by changing the work incentives in the benefit system.

71. The Government remains committed to eradicating child poverty and published a consultation on its latest Child Poverty Strategy on 27 February. Universal Credit will help to reduce child poverty through making work pay and providing an effective route out of poverty.

72. The Government is working with local authorities to help troubled families that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. This involves: getting children back into school; reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour; putting adults on a path back to work.

73. The government's approach to support ex-offenders with their rehabilitation includes:

- improved training that involves employers and education providers working closely with senior prison managers to tailor their training to the needs of the labour market;
- IT-based individualised learning and employment services for prisoners that can also be available after their release;
- a greater number of employer-led training workshops;
- immediate access to the Work Programme on release.

Use of the ESF

74. Rather than simply treating the symptoms, ESF will help to address the root causes of poverty that are barriers to work, and so help more people move closer or into employment. ESF will support additional and more intensive actions that contribute to the national Social Justice Strategy, and complement the Work Programme, the effective implementation of Universal Credit and services delivered by local authorities.

75. ESF will finance integrated packages of support that address gaps in provision to disadvantaged groups and reach those who are not currently receiving support. This support will be tailored to the needs of local areas and will include: early intervention before problems become entrenched; thorough needs assessment so that effective tailored support can be offered; and outreach activities.

76. The ESF will be able to tackle a range of issues including: caring responsibilities; debt; digital exclusion; drug and alcohol dependency; poor basic skills; as well as life skills; lack of motivation and confidence; family, parenting and relationship problems; health and well-being problems; homelessness; learning difficulties and disabilities; offending; and access to transport, a key issue in rural areas; and where needed support for childcare. All activity requires close coordination between local services and must align and enhance with other local provision and interventions.

77. Through these measures, the ESF will contribute to the response to the 2013 Country Specific Recommendation to enhance efforts to support low-income households

and reduce child poverty. ESF will be used for activity that complements reforms such as the introduction of Universal Credit by enhancing services for those with complex barriers. Specific activities will include:

- tackling barriers faced by people in workless households and troubled families or with multiple disadvantages, so that they can move towards, enter and make progress at work;
- targeting inactive people who have the potential to enter the labour market but who may need considerable support to enter work;
- targeting people who face barriers such as homelessness, debt, drug or alcohol problems, and mental health issues;
- targeting disadvantaged communities and deprived areas in line with local needs;
- tackling discrimination and barriers faced by ethnic minorities and disabled people;
- integrating ex-offenders into the labour market;
- supporting the development and growth of social enterprises;
- tackling barriers faced by disadvantaged people in rural communities who lack access to services;
- supporting community-based action including Community Grants and community led local development.

78. Building on the success of the 2007-2013 programme, ESF will continue to support additional activities through the National Offender Management Service to prepare offenders to access mainstream employment, training and education opportunities. It is expected that there will be an increased focus on prison delivery, to ensure it is complementary to existing support. Community delivery will also continue, with a focus on specialist provision for particular priority groups, including young people and women and offenders with disabilities. There will be a focus on offenders with multiple barriers.

Civil Society

79. Civil Society organisations (voluntary, community and social enterprise) have a strong track record in reaching, engaging and supporting the most vulnerable through multi-sectoral partnerships to ensure achievement of positive outcomes for the socially excluded in terms of employability and 'distance travelled'. They will play an important role in the delivery of ESF provision for vulnerable groups, developed and delivered within local communities themselves and through grass-root approaches.

80. Social enterprises and charities can also be important stimulators of jobs and growth and help address market failures, and ESF can play a role in supporting their development. These organisations are able to operate in areas where private and public organisations do not or cannot operate and are making a growing contribution to the rural and urban economies. The investment priority on active inclusion will support the development of social enterprises and their capacity to tackle social exclusion and help disadvantaged people into work.

Skills

81. Productivity is a key driver of growth. As set out in the Partnership Agreement, historically, UK productivity has lagged behind that of other advanced economies, in particular the US, Germany and France. UK productivity performance has been particularly poor since the financial crisis. UK GDP has fallen 3.3% since the financial crisis while

employment has been remarkably resilient (hours worked have risen by 0.4%). As a consequence, UK productivity has fallen dramatically and has shown little sign of recovery.

82. Productivity is strongly linked with skills where the UK underperforms on the international stage, particularly in relation to intermediate skills (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary). Comparisons of educational attainment (figure 7) show that the UK has a relatively well-skilled population compared to Italy and France, but does less well compared to the USA and Canada.

83. England's performance on literacy and numeracy skills has been historically weak and although recent improvements in literacy are welcome, there is a long way to go to match the best in the world. The 2013 OECD PIACC survey of adult skills showed England ranked 11th in literacy and 17th in numeracy out of 24 countries and is declining. In contrast to other countries it is the skills of the youngest adults that are particularly bad; for 16-24 year olds England ranks 22nd in literacy and 21st in numeracy.¹⁹

84. In 2012, 9.5% of 16-64 year olds in England had no qualifications.²⁰ As set out in the labour market section, lack of skills is a key barrier to entering, and then progressing at, work. For those who are already in the labour market there is also a need to focus on up-skilling and re-skilling the workforce as well as supporting those made redundant or who are at risk of redundancy particularly in sectors where there is little local growth.

85. England is seen as particularly weak in intermediate technical skills that are increasingly important as jobs become more highly skilled and technological change accelerates.²¹ Almost three in 10 vacancies are reported to be hard to fill; representing more than one in five of all vacancies (and up from one in six in 2011). Skilled trades show the highest level of skills shortages followed by machine operatives, managerial and professional roles, caring, leisure and other services.²² In a survey, 20% of manufacturers reported skills gaps, while 31% of high tech manufacturers have recruited from outside the UK because of a lack of suitably qualified people within the UK.²³ Even though England has one of the most successful higher education systems in the world, businesses regularly report difficulties in recruiting graduates with suitable skills.²⁴

86. Local labour market intelligence reveals that business and industry are increasingly demanding and recruiting people with high level skills – a trend which is set to continue. Skilled graduates and post graduates are central to economic growth, and the Government has encouraged universities and business to work in partnership to ensure that supply meets demand.

87. Skills levels vary significantly across England (figures 8 & 9). This is partly attributable to higher school achievements in areas covered by southern LEPs (particularly the South East) and also probably a net movement of graduates into London. An inability to retain graduates has been highlighted by many LEPs outside London. Some of the regional variation in the level and type of skills is also likely to reflect differences in sectoral specialisation across LEP areas. People will move to those areas where their skills are most needed, and this is particularly the case for relatively high skilled people. Higher

¹⁹ International Survey of Adult Skills 2012

²⁰ ONS

²¹ BIS, 2010, *Skills for Sustainable Growth*

²² UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2014, *Employer Skills Survey 2013*

²³ UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2010, *National employers skills survey for England 2009*

²⁴ HM Government, 2011, *The Plan for Growth*

proportions of people with low or no qualifications are mainly concentrated in large urban LEP areas and some rural LEP areas.

88. Addressing skills not only helps improve employability and productivity but can also contribute to breaking the deprivation cycle. The English Indices of Deprivation show that there is a high degree of correlation between skills levels and other indicators of deprivation, particularly income, employment, and health. The proportion of children in poverty from families where at least one adult is in work has been on the increase over the last decade.²⁵ The risk of in-work poverty is much higher for children in couple families where one parent works full time compared to those where both parents are in work. In 2011/12, around 30% of children living in families with one full time worker fell below the poverty line (this includes both couple and lone parent families).

National policies and programmes

89. One of the four overarching ambitions in the Government's 'Plan for Growth' is to 'create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe'. The ultimate objective of national support is to secure a high quality, rigorous and diverse range of provision that responds to the needs of individuals and businesses.

90. The further education skills system is being reformed. The priorities remain a broad range of current government initiatives including: Traineeships to improve young people's chances in gaining employment; a core offer of Apprenticeships to all young adults and English; and maths for those that need it up to GCSE grade C or better standard (level 2). English and maths is embedded in all major programmes and within study programmes for 16-19 year olds. Business-backed local skills training schemes and an additional focus by Jobcentre Plus, including making changes to the benefit system rules, has helped to increase the number of benefit claimants in England who start training by almost 40%.

91. To identify means of addressing the literacy and numeracy skills issues the Government is delivering a pilot – due to start in December 2014 – in which new 18-21 year old JSA claimants without level 2 qualifications in English and maths will be mandated to learning for up to 6 months. The aim will be to improve claimants' skills in English and maths by at least one level and thereby enhance their future employability. National rollout will be dependent on the findings of the pilot evaluation, which will be based on a randomised control trial.

92. The skills offer must meet the needs of employers and this will include clear vocational routes, valued as highly as academic routes, to higher education study. The vocational route for young people should provide an equally valued ladder of aspiration to that of a purely academic route. Government policies are also encouraging innovation in the use of available educational technologies to promote online learning alternatives to traditional delivery routes and blended learning.

93. The Government is committed to improving the quality of careers information, advice and guidance, and has introduced a statutory duty on schools and equivalent

²⁵ DWP/ONS, 2013, *Households Below Average Income: An analysis of the income distribution 1994/95 – 2011/12*

requirements on colleges to help deliver this. The National Careers Service offers a high quality face-to-face service to unemployed adults and those with greatest need, as well as telephone and web services for all ages. The focus will continue to be on motivation, raising aspirations and successful customer outcomes.

94. The Government wants to get more people from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education. A new framework is being established with increased responsibility placed on universities to widen participation.

95. Business and industry value the high level skills, subject specific knowledge and innovative approaches that individuals with a postgraduate qualification bring to the workplace. Some employers recognise its value by requiring it as a standard qualifying criterion and are themselves investing in financing postgraduate education as being integral to workforce development and employee retention. Seven out of 10 employers seek out Masters students.²⁶

Use of the ESF

96. The ESF will be used to tackle the need to improve skills, particularly intermediate skills, in order to improve productivity and drive growth. It will also help people with low or no qualifications so that they can progress in work, increase their income and move out of relative poverty.

97. ESF can be used to support skills at any level, but it is important that the ESF complements and does not duplicate existing policies and provision. It should not displace the investment that employers and individuals make in training and will focus on areas where the market is not delivering the skills needs of the area. The ESF will not subsidise training that would otherwise be funded by business.

98. Full qualifications at level 3 and above are generally provided for in mainstream policy by grants and loans for individuals. Exemptions to this will only be considered where a local specific need and/or market failure has been demonstrated and where these fall within the ESF priority objectives. Any case submitted for consideration will be considered on its individual merits but exemptions are expected to be limited.

99. Through local labour market intelligence, LEPs have the best knowledge of local growth potential, skills needs and skills gaps where the market is failing to meet local need. The Government has encouraged them to find innovative ways of providing additionality to national programmes to help meet local skills needs. It also wants them to go further and use their specialised knowledge and networks to develop new activities to address local skills gaps, disadvantage and employers' needs.

100. Almost all LEP areas highlight the need to enhance access to key lifelong learning and skills programmes (including informal learning), and to increase the labour market relevance of education and training. There is a particular focus on the following across the great majority of LEP areas:

- support for activities to start and grow a business and support for local SMEs' skills needs (especially management and leadership) particularly in new and growth sectors, and to encourage diversification in rural and coastal areas;
- support for improving the skills levels, and therefore employability, of people with

²⁶ CIHE, 2010, *Talent Fishing: What businesses want from postgraduates*

- low or no qualifications, particularly young people NEET;
- support for disabled people who often have no or low qualifications to improve their skill level and employability;
- skills training for people facing in work poverty to help them progress in work and increase their pay and working hours or obtain better quality higher paid jobs and move out of poverty;
- skills support for those made redundant or unemployed;
- expanding and enhancing Apprenticeships and Traineeships to meet local needs;
- support for intermediate, technical and advanced level skills for specific local industries and sectors, especially in STEM (Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics), new and emerging technologies and in support of other thematic objectives such as low carbon;
- promoting and developing better links between business and educators, including developing post graduate opportunities;
- enhancing information, advice and guidance services and inspiring and encouraging learning.

101. Where there is a local need, the ESF will be able to improve or enhance adult careers advice provision in a way that complements National Careers Service provision.

102. ESF will be used to increase the STEM skills base, and to target groups, including women, who are under-represented. This will include promoting links between employers and educators to expand and enhance skills provision and to improve information, advice and guidance to inspire and engage learners and promote STEM careers.

103. The ESF will be able to support links between higher education and businesses, both to meet local business needs and to improve the employability of students. Although England already exceeds the Europe 2020 objective for at least 40% of 30-34 year olds to complete tertiary or equivalent education, with an estimated rate of 46.8% in 2012, some groups are under-represented. The ESF will be able to support local initiatives to widen participation in higher education for these groups (not through funding the course itself but for example through providing short tasters).

104. Activities to improve the skills of individuals will be supported within the access to lifelong learning investment priority under thematic objective 10. Activities to improve partnership working between business and providers will be supported within the labour market relevance investment priority under thematic objective 10.

105. ESF will respect the national frameworks for Apprenticeships and Traineeships, and policies on grants and loans in further and higher education for tuition for skills activities. Funding for lifelong learning in SMEs will focus on activities to support sectors within thematic objectives where there are current or anticipated skills gaps in that area or where the market does not provide for that learning. The ESF will be used to expand or enhance provision within these frameworks and policies in ways that must be tailored to address local needs. For example, the ESF may be used to complement, enhance or build on existing and planned provision through wrap-around activity, such as mentoring individuals and outreach activity to increase the participation of particular groups. Activities should reflect closely patterns of disadvantage and local employer skills needs in local areas.

Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities

106. This section sets out key issues for the programme to address to promote gender equality and equal opportunities. Information about how gender equality and equal opportunities will be mainstreamed in the delivery of the programme is in the section on cross cutting principles.

Gender

107. Whilst there is still an employment rate gap between men and women, it is close to a record low and has narrowed over time – a trend driven by rising female employment. The current gap is 10.1% for the UK with a record female employment rate of 67.7%²⁷.

108. The rise in employment rate is not driven by a rise in part-time working. In recent years the number of female full-time employees has been rising (though numbers fell in the recession period), whilst numbers working part-time have been flat. Currently 58% of women in employment are working full-time which has stayed largely unchanged in the past decade. A higher proportion of women work part-time (42%) than men (11%) in England.²⁸ However this does not necessarily imply that these jobs are of lower quality as overall in the UK over 80% of people work part-time because it suits them.²⁹

109. The remaining gap in employment rate is explained not by unemployment (the unemployment rate for men is 8.3% and for women is 7.5%) but by levels of inactivity. Men currently have a lower inactivity rate than women at 16.2% compared to 27.6%. Women have, however, seen greater falls in their inactivity rate - falling by 1.7 percentage points over the last three years in comparison to a 0.9 percentage point fall for men. The recent falls in the inactivity rate are largely attributable to more women entering the labour market, in part due to welfare reform measures such as the equalisation of the state pension age and reforms to the obligations of lone parents claiming income support.

110. These differences in employment rates are the result of long term and deep-rooted structural changes in the UK economy, and require a structural response. The Government has a comprehensive action plan 'Women and the Economy' (November 2013) to address the barriers faced by women in the labour market and in business. The changes include:

- introducing shared parental leave to give families more choice and control;
- extending the right to request flexible working for all;
- increasing child tax credits for lower income families;
- extending the free entitlement to early education;
- encouraging and supporting more women to start their own business, through mentoring, financial help and cutting red tape.

111. The plan also sets out the following actions:

- improved guidance on careers which will include raising aspirations and challenging stereotypes;
- help for parents to ensure their children make well-informed career and subject choices;

²⁷ ONS, *Labour Market Statistics May 2014*

²⁸ ONS, *Annual Population Survey, October 2012-September 2013, part-time employment rates 16-64*

²⁹ ONS, *Labour Market Statistics January 2014*

- a new drive to promote careers in science, technology and engineering;
- support for those with caring responsibilities to stay in work where they wish or to set up their own small business;
- a new business champion for older workers.

112. Given the need for these wider structural changes, the role of ESF will be limited to some specific, targeted activities:

- Tackling specific barriers which women face because of their gender. For example, actions to help women enter sectors or occupations where they are under-represented, in order to increase their employment rate and career opportunities, and to help employers address their need for skilled labour.
- Supporting women to improve their skills and progress in employment.
- Addressing specific barriers to labour market participation, for example lone parents and people with caring responsibility (although these groups are not exclusively female).
- Ensuring childcare costs are covered by providers where that is a barrier to participation in ESF-funded activity.

113. In setting expectations for the programme we also need to recognise that some of our target groups are predominantly male. Men have higher unemployment and youth unemployment rates, both of which will be a particular focus as England continues out of recession. Some of the most disadvantaged groups (for example ex-offenders) are also predominantly male.

Disability

114. People with disabilities and health conditions face particular discrimination and disadvantage in the labour market. About half of disabled people of working age are not in employment. Of these two in five would like to work. In January-March 2013, there were around 3.9 million people in the UK with a long-term health problem or disability that were in employment; while around 3.1 million were economically inactive and around 0.5 million were unemployed (age 16-64).³⁰

115. Disabled people are more than twice as likely not to hold any formal qualifications than are non-disabled people. Disabled people are also less likely to participate in adult learning than non-disabled people. In the last three months of 2013 about 39.6% of non disabled people aged 16-64 participated in adult learning compared with 30.2% of disabled people.³¹

116. The government disability strategy, 'Fulfilling Potential – Making it Happen' which sets out the Government's approach to enabling disabled people to achieve their aspirations and play a full role in society, was published on 2 July 2013. It emphasises the need for innovative cross-sector partnership working with disabled people and their organisations, to bring about the changes needed in communities to have a real and lasting effect on the day-to-day lives of disabled people.

117. All activities funded by ESF will need to be accessible to disabled people and be responsive to their individual needs. The investment priorities on access to employment

³⁰ ONS, *Annual Population Survey*.

³¹ ONS, *Annual Population Survey*, Quarter 3 2013

and active inclusion will be able to support activities focused on improving the employability of disabled people and those with health conditions. The active inclusion investment priority will help those with the greatest distance to travel and who often experience other disadvantages. The investment priority for the sustainable integration of young people will help those who are NEET or at risk of being NEET and have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Ethnicity

118. Certain ethnic minority groups (notably those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African groups) face greater difficulties in accessing work compared to the majority of the population.

119. The employment rate for people (aged 16-64) of white ethnic origin in England is 73.7%. The employment rate for all ethnic minorities is 59.5%. Among ethnic minorities the lowest employment rate is for people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi ethnic origin at 49.0%, and the highest is for people of Indian ethnic origin at 69.3%. The employment rate for ethnic minority women is 50.7%, and is particularly low for women of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin at 29.6%.

120. The unemployment rate for people (aged over 16) of white ethnic origin in England is 6.6%. The unemployment rate for all ethnic minorities is 13.6%. Among ethnic minorities the highest unemployment rates are for people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi ethnic origin at 17.9% and Black or Black British groups at 17.1%. The rates are particularly high for Black or Black British men at 19.5% and women of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin at 24.2%.

121. The proportion of people of white ethnic origin who are economically inactive is 21% and the proportion of ethnic minorities is 31.1%. Among ethnic minorities the highest rate of economic inactivity is for people of Pakistani or Bangladeshi ethnic origin at 40.2%, with a particularly high rate among women of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin at 60.8%.³²

122. It will be important that people from ethnic minorities are able to access ESF provision in all investment priorities. Interventions must be tailored to the needs of people from different ethnic minority groups in each locality, and where appropriate targeted on specific groups. There is a particular case for interventions targeted at groups with low employment and high inactivity rates in the access to employment and active inclusion investment priorities, particularly women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. This will be particularly important in areas with high concentrations of people from ethnic minorities.

Age

123. The lowest employment rates are faced by young people (who are considered separately). However, older people over 50 face lower than average employment rates and face particular difficulties re-engaging in the labour market if they become unemployed or economically inactive.

124. The employment rate for people aged 50-64 is 67.5%, the unemployment rate is 4.7%, and the proportion who are economically inactive is 29.1%.³³ The employment rate for men aged 50-64 is 73.4% and for women is 61.9%. The unemployment rate for men is

³² ONS, *Annual Population Survey*, January 2013-December 2013

³³ ONS, *Annual Population Survey*, October 2012-September 2013

5.4% and for women is 4%. The proportion of men who are economically inactive is 22.5% and women is 35.5%.

125. Demographic trends and the raising of the pension age are likely to make retaining and re-engaging older people in the workforce more important during the course of the programme. Overall, England's population of 53.1 million in 2011 is set to increase in the next decade just as the population will become older. Projections for 2021 are for up to 20 per cent of England's population to be over the age of 65.

126. This points to the need for activities to re-engage older people who have become unemployed and economically inactive (through activities in the access to employment investment priority) and to retain older people already in the workforce, particularly by adapting and updating their skills (through activities in the access to lifelong learning investment priority).

127. The Women's Business Council has identified that older women face particular challenges in reskilling and retraining as well as balancing work with caring responsibilities. Older women have lower average levels of qualification than any other group and are less likely than younger workers to engage in training.³⁴ They are particularly concentrated in certain sectors: three in five female employees aged 50 and over work in just three sectors – education, health and retail. Although unemployment is relatively low for older women, those who do lose their jobs tend to find it harder to get back in the labour market: 43% of unemployed women aged 50 or over have been unemployed for a year or longer, and re-employment rates for those made redundant are lower for the over 50s.³⁵

128. Activities in the access to employment, active inclusion and access to lifelong learning investment priorities should be responsive to the needs of older women. Specific activities may be delivered to help improve the participation of older women depending on the needs of local areas.

Other Thematic Objectives

129. Although all the ESF will be invested in the employment, social inclusion and skills objectives, it will also contribute to other thematic objectives by increasing the supply of labour to, and the skills of the workforce in, sectors covered by these thematic objectives.

130. Specific ways in which the ESF will contribute to other thematic objectives are set out below.

Thematic objective 1: strengthening research, technological development and innovation)

The ESF could contribute by developing science and technology skills, including by creating centres of excellence in key sectors and stronger links between higher education and business.

Thematic objective 2: enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT

³⁴ ONS, *Annual Population Survey*, April 2011-April 2012; OECD, 2013, *Employment Outlook*

³⁵ ONS, *Labour Market Statistics*, May 2013

The ESF could contribute by improving ICT skills, and developing and delivering skills provision relevant to the use and exploitation of digital technology.

Thematic objective 3: enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs

The ESF could contribute through skills programmes aimed at SMEs; leadership and management training; mentoring/coaching initiatives; and advice, guidance and information; and providing placement or internship opportunities. The ESF can contribute to fostering a more entrepreneurial society, by reducing barriers to entrepreneurship and self employment.

Thematic objective 4: supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors

The ESF could contribute by developing skills to deliver innovation and adoption of low carbon technologies; developing more training provision for low carbon transition; and developing new and alternative skills for construction. ESF could also train unemployed and inactive people in skills needed for jobs in a low carbon economy which would enable them to benefit from employment opportunities generated by thematic objective 4.

Thematic objectives 5: promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management

The ESF could contribute by developing skills and pathways to employment, for example, by supporting skills and employment activities that complement new community flood risk management approaches and sustainable land management and drainage as well as any other activities that support adaptation, risk prevention and management in relation to climate change.

Thematic Objective 6: preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

The ESF could contribute by supporting complementary training and employment activities that, for example, support the creation, restoration and management of blue-green infrastructure; activities that support the environment whilst also using it as a 'resource' to help promote social inclusion; the rehabilitation and regeneration of brownfield sites; and complementary skills and training activities that help improve SME business resource efficiency.

Contribution to Country Specific Recommendations

131. The Operational Programme will contribute mainly to the inclusive growth dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy and to the thematic objectives for employment, education and social inclusion. The Country Specific Recommendations on sustainable public finances, the housing market, access to finance and investment infrastructure are not relevant to ESF.

132. The table below summarises how the programme will respond to the 2013 Country Specific Recommendations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013 Country Specific Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of Response of England ESF Programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on the Youth Contract, step up measures to address youth unemployment, for example through a Youth Guarantee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sustainable integration of young people investment priority will support additional measures to tackle youth unemployment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the quality and duration of apprenticeships, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access to lifelong learning investment priority will support activities to expand and enhance Apprenticeships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simplify the system of qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a matter for national policy and will not be addressed by the ESF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and strengthen the engagement of employers, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labour market relevance investment priority 2.2. will strengthen the engagement of employers through activities to ensure that skills provision meets the needs of local employers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • particularly in the provision of advanced and intermediate technical skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The access to lifelong learning investment priority 2.1 will provide training in intermediate and advanced skills to meet employer needs, in line with the Government's policy on grants and loans. The sustainable integration of young people investment priority will also fund skills at these levels for young people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of young people aged 18-24 who have very poor basic skills, including through effectively implementing the Traineeships programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sustainable integration of young people investment priority will tackle basic skills need among young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. They will also complement, enhance and build on Traineeships by offering wrap-around activity and additional support for disadvantaged participants. The access to lifelong learning investment priority will be able to train those in the workforce who lack basic skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance efforts to support low-income households and reduce child poverty by ensuring that the Universal Credit and other welfare reforms deliver a fair tax-benefit system with clearer work incentives and support services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESF funds will not be used directly to implement welfare reforms or the tax-benefit system, but ESF activities, particularly in the active inclusion investment priority will complement reforms such as the introduction of Universal Credit by enhancing services for those with complex barriers. Additional opportunities will be provided for disadvantaged groups with the greatest difficulty in accessing the labour market, with more intensive

	<p>local provision tailored to local needs. These will support progression both into and within work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate the implementation of planned measures to reduce the costs of childcare and improve its quality and availability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government has announced measures to provide help with the costs of childcare and improve its quality and availability. ESF will not be invested in these directly. However ESF will be able to finance supporting measures, such as training for childcare workers in the access to lifelong learning investment priority. All ESF providers in all Investment Priorities will be able to provide support with childcare where this is identified as a barrier to participation and support is not otherwise available.

1.1.2 SELECTION OF OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

133. The table below provides an overview of the justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities.

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	<p>Unemployment yet to fall substantially.</p> <p>Low employment rates in certain geographical areas and among certain groups (e.g. those with low or no qualifications, disabled people, certain ethnic minority groups).</p> <p>UK Partnership Agreement identifies focus on increasing employment</p>

		<p>levels.</p> <p>UK National Reform Programme action on increasing participation in the labour market, including Jobcentre Plus regime and Work Programme.</p>
Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through implementation of the Youth Guarantee	<p>Youth unemployment still too high, with concentrations in particular local areas.</p> <p>2013 Country Specific Recommendation calls on the UK to step up measures to address youth unemployment.</p> <p>UK Partnership Agreement identifies need to focus on young people not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>UK National Reform Programme action to support young people, especially the Youth Contract.</p>
Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and	People with multiple disadvantages face greatest barriers to work.

	improving employability	<p>2013 Country Specific Recommendation on support to low-income households and welfare reforms.</p> <p>UK Partnership Agreement identifies need to increase employment with a focus on those at a disadvantage in the labour market.</p> <p>UK National Reform Programme action on jobless households, welfare reform (e.g. Universal Credit) and tackling barriers to inclusive employment. And complementing the Social Justice strategy.</p>
Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	Community-led local development strategies	<p>UK Partnership Agreement identifies need to mobilise local actors, assets and resources to provide long term, coherent and sustainable interventions in support of growth and that add value to mainstream programme activity – particularly in areas where disparities exist.</p> <p>Supports Social Justice strategy.</p>
Investing in education, training and vocational	Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age	Need to focus on up skilling the population

<p>training for skills and life-long learning</p>	<p>groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</p>	<p>particularly in relation to intermediate skills</p> <p>2013 Country Specific Recommendation on provision of advanced and intermediate technical skills.</p> <p>UK Partnership Agreement identifies need to focus on increasing the productivity of those in work by improving skill levels.</p> <p>UK National Reform Programme action on developing human capital. Skills for growth strategy.</p>
<p>Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning</p>	<p>Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p>	<p>Disconnect between labour force skills and those required by employers.</p> <p>2013 Country Specific Recommendation on strengthening engagement of employers in education.</p> <p>UK National Reform Programme action on developing human capital.</p> <p>Review of business-university collaboration.</p>

1.2 FINANCIAL ALLOCATION

134. The financial allocation to each thematic objective and investment priority reflects the potential of ESF to address development needs identified in the Partnership Agreement and the programme strategy in a way that complements national policies and addresses relevant Country Specific Recommendations, as set out in this strategy section. The split of the allocation between thematic objectives has been based on the needs identified by local partners in their European Structural and Investment Fund strategies, which were developed within a national policy framework. The allocations are in line with the 2007-13 split (approximately 60% on employment and social inclusion measures and 40% on skills).

135. Overall the allocation to thematic objectives is:

- Thematic Objective 8 (employment): €1,008 million ESF. This reflects the important contribution that improving labour market participation will make both to growth and to social inclusion. In addition €160m from the Youth Employment Initiative, alongside an equivalent amount of ESF money, will address the challenge of youth unemployment in areas with highest rates.
- Thematic Objective 9 (social inclusion): €703 million. Of this €136 million will be allocated to National Offender Management Service activity and up to €74 million will be available for Community Led Local Development. The programme is contributing positively to the requirement that 20% of ESF at Member State is allocated to this objective.
- Thematic Objective 10 (skills): €1,305 million. The highest proportion of the ESF is allocated to the skills thematic objective. This reflects the potential of ESF to support additional provision at all skills levels to help individual progression and promote local growth.

136. In addition, 4% of the ESF allocation will be available as Technical Assistance, representing about €132 million.

137. Most of the ESF financial allocation - in all three categories of region – is concentrated on up to five investment priorities.

138. In more developed regions, 94% will be concentrated on five investment priorities:

- Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people
- Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people
- Active inclusion
- Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems

139. In transition regions, 95% will be concentrated on five investment priorities:

- Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people
- Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people
- Active inclusion
- Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning

- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems

140. In the less developed region, 91% will be concentrated on five investment priorities

- Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people
- Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people
- Active inclusion
- Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation					
Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme					
Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total union support for the operational programme	Thematic objectives / Investment priority / Specific Objective	Common and programme-specific indicators for which a target has been set
1	ESF	1,711,626,420	49.34%	08 Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	[4, CR01, CR02, CR03, CR04, CR05, CR06, CR07, CR08, CR09, CR10, CR11, CR12, 2]
				8i Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	
				1.1 More unemployed or inactive people enter jobs (including self-employment) or engage in job searching, especially those who are at a disadvantage or who need to improve their skills	
				8ii Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee	
				1.2 More young people are in education, employment or training, and fewer young people are NEET or at risk of being NEET.	
				09 Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	
				9i Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	
				1.4 To address the root causes of poverty which create barriers to work so more people move closer or into employment.	
				9vi Community-led local development strategies	
				1.5 To facilitate the participation of people in activity identified by communities, especially in deprived or lagging areas, that supports local growth and meets the needs of those participating, so that they move towards or into employment.	

1	YEI	319,576,848	9.21%	<p>08 Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility</p> <p>8ii Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee</p> <p>1.3 More young people are in education, employment or training, and fewer young people are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.</p>	[4, CR01, CR02, CR03, CR04, CR05, CR06, CR07, CR08, CR09, CR10, CR11, CR12, 2]
2	ESF	1,305,135,911.00	37.63%	<p>10 Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning</p> <p>10iii Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</p> <p>2.2 Skills provision is more responsive to the needs of the local economy and more individuals progress into or within skills provision, through increased employer engagement and participation in the planning, design and delivery of vocational education provision.</p> <p>10iv Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes</p> <p>2.1 More people gain the skills they need to achieve their goals and support local growth.</p>	[17, 15]
3	ESF	132,356,281.00	3.82%	3 Technical Assistance	

SECTION 2: PRIORITY AXES

Priority Axis 1: Inclusive Labour Markets

141. This priority axis aims to increase participation in the labour market and thereby improve social inclusion and mobility. It will support the following investment priorities:

- Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people (1.1). This will help unemployed people, and also inactive people who are relatively close to the labour market, to tackle barriers and enter progress in and sustain employment. It will provide help for those who have made the transition to work but need continued support, or who are in work but at risk due to skills deficiencies or facing redundancy.
- Sustainable integration of young people (1.2). This will focus on helping young people, particularly those not in education, employment or training (NEET) to participate in the labour market and learning in areas not eligible for the Youth Employment Initiative.
- Youth Employment Initiative (1.3). This will focus on helping young people, particularly those not in education, employment or training (NEET) to participate in the labour market and learning in areas eligible for the Youth Employment Initiative.
- Active inclusion (1.4). This will help people who are some distance from the labour market and may face multiple disadvantages to tackle their barriers to work and to move towards or into employment or to sustain employment.
- Community Led Local Development (1.5). This will support action initiated by Local Action Groups.

142. The priority axis brings together ESF investment priorities from thematic objectives 8 (employment) and 9 (social inclusion). This reflects the potential overlaps between the two thematic objectives and the importance of promoting progression. The programme will help to promote pathways to sustainable employment for people who are a long distance from the labour market and experience social exclusion and multiple disadvantages. It is important that the programme has a priority axis that will both tackle the deep seated barriers that these individuals face and move them closer to or into employment. Employment and social inclusion investment are therefore grouped within a single priority axis to improve the effectiveness and impact of the programme on the most disadvantaged people. A single priority axis also recognises that the sources of national co-financing often do not make a distinction between employment and social inclusion activities and so cannot be disaggregated into separate priority axes.

143. Overall at least 20% of the programme's resources will be allocated to investment priorities under the social inclusion thematic objective. Although it does not include investment priorities from thematic objective 10, it will contribute to this objective indirectly through skills activities to tackle barriers to work and inclusion.

144. The priority axis covers all three categories of region because many of the needs of individuals who are out of work or at risk of social exclusion are broadly similar across different areas, and also because some LEP areas cover two categories of region. The categories are defined on the basis of GDP, however in many cases the employment and social exclusion challenges in more developed regions are the same or more significant than those in other categories.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1.1: ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR JOB-SEEKERS AND INACTIVE PEOPLE

Specific Objective

145. More unemployed or inactive people enter jobs (including self-employment) or engage in job searching, especially those who are at a disadvantage or who need to improve their skills.

Results

146. The additional support from this investment priority will help unemployed and inactive people to tackle their barriers to work and move into sustainable employment.

147. The main result that will be achieved is that more participants will be in employment (including self-employment) on leaving. There will be a quantified target set for this result indicator in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

148. This investment priority will also contribute to other results indicators (without quantified targets) such as: inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving; and participants gaining a qualification upon leaving.

149. The longer term impact of the investment priority will be measured through evaluation activity including surveys of a sample of participants. As well as measuring the common longer-term result indicators, they will also look at issues such as in-work progression.

150. There will be an output target set for the number of participants who were unemployed or inactive (not in education and training) on starting provision, in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

Investment Priority 1.1: Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific result indicators]

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets														
Investment priority: 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility														
Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for ESF)														
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Category of region	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CR04	participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	Less developed	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	11			Ratio	2012	9			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR04	participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	Transition	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	17			Ratio	2012	15			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR04	participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	More developed	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	17			Ratio	2012	15			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

151. The Government is committed to increasing employment opportunities for all by providing support mechanisms and benefits systems that incentivise work and reduce worklessness, to ensure that individuals can fulfil their potential within the labour market. It has put in place national policies to help people move from welfare to employment. The policies are designed to ensure that jobseekers get the support they need to find a job and in return jobseekers are expected to do all they can to find work.

152. As the recovery strengthens, it is likely that those already closest to the labour market will find it easier to find work, but there is a risk that the most disadvantaged will be left behind and find it increasingly difficult to compete effectively for work. ESF therefore needs to be used to ensure that these disadvantaged groups are provided with the right level of support, tailored to the needs of individuals and businesses in local labour markets. This will be the primary added value for ESF.

153. This means identifying the barriers individuals face in moving into work (for example: confidence, lack of recent work experience, basic skills, job-related skills, jobseeking skills, or other material barriers like debt or transport difficulties) and working with them to tackle these barriers.

154. Some groups are already well catered for through national programmes – e.g. all long-term (12 months plus) Jobseeker's Allowance claimants are provided with help through the Work Programme. But those with the most entrenched problems, even if they have access to these programmes, can find it difficult to get the most from them. For these people ESF will be used to provide additional support, which is aligned and builds on national programmes, so that they are better able to benefit.

155. Those on inactive benefits have access to help from national programmes but take-up tends to be low. For these groups, ESF will be used to tackle the barriers they face and provide them with the support and advice they need to move closer to the labour market.

156. For some, this support would then lead on to them being able to take advantage of national programmes. In all of these cases, it will be important to pay attention to transitions between unemployment and work to improve retention.

157. There is also a risk that, as the economy recovers, unemployed people will lack the skills which employers need and skills shortages will emerge. ESF will therefore help unemployed people acquire the skills they need to compete for new jobs created by economic growth.

158. ESF will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing support within government programmes, but may be used to support additional activities or target groups, including provision co-designed with local partners. This could range from additional early interventions for people who are newly unemployed, to support for very long-term unemployed or inactive people. It may include piloting new approaches to improving access to employment, alongside mainstream provision.

159. Examples of actions which may be supported for all unemployed and inactive people are:

- additional and innovative approaches to pre-employment training to ensure individuals have the core work-related skills which employers are looking for;

- training for those who need to upgrade their skills or learn new skills (including basic skills and English for speakers of other languages) to compete in the local labour market and adapt to changes in the economy;
- helping people access or benefit from Apprenticeships;
- providing access to transport where this is a barrier to taking up a job;
- providing advice, guidance and support, adding value to National Careers Service where appropriate, in order to help people make better informed choices, and in particular to take account of the jobs available in the local area;
- targeting specific careers advice at women to help them make informed career choices;
- using self-employment as a route out of worklessness, including providing advice and support for self-employment. This can be a particularly helpful option where an individual is struggling to find work with an employer, either because they lack experience or because they face discrimination.

160. The investment priority will also provide additional support for long-term unemployed people, including those who have completed the Work Programme. Where someone is still unemployed after many efforts to help them, this is likely to need innovative solutions, so this will include new approaches to work experience and training, intermediate labour market activity and volunteering opportunities.

161. The investment priority will also provide additional support to specific target groups, whose circumstances mean they face particular challenges in getting back to work. These include people with disabilities or health barriers (including mental health issues), people with caring responsibilities, lone parents, ethnic minorities, ex-service personnel, care leavers, those with chaotic lives, legal migrants, people who have difficulty accessing support because they live in isolated rural areas; and those from households with inter-generational worklessness. It will also help older workers to re-train, re-enter or stay engaged in the labour market.

162. The investment priority will respond flexibly to employer demand in local labour markets where Local Enterprise Partnerships and their partners identify specific needs. This may include demands highlighted by Universal Credit Local Support Service partnerships and health and wellbeing boards to help Universal Credit claimants progress into the labour market, support their career progression (better pay/ work/ hours), and move from the hidden economy to legitimate work.

163. As well as unemployed and inactive people, those who have made the transition to work will also be eligible for continuing support to help them sustain their employment and progress. Those in work who are at risk of, under notice of or facing redundancy will also be able to receive support, including training to upgrade their skills or learn new skills.

164. Activities will usually target both men and women. There may be some activities targeted at women to increase their participation and support their progression, particularly in occupations or sectors where women are under-represented.

165. In limited circumstances (and excluding Traineeships and Apprenticeships) wage subsidies and work incentives will be used but they must be additional to support provided through government programmes. Any proposals for wage subsidies and work incentives must provide an evidence base for using them locally and ensure that deadweight is

avoided. They should be targeted on groups where there is evidence that they are cost effective and can have an impact in terms of sustainable employment. The direct funding of training or wage costs for Traineeships or Apprenticeships will not be supported.

166. The investment priority will also help overcome the challenges brought about by the limited range of employment in some rural areas, complementing actions supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

167. It will also support activities to support labour mobility, including national EURES activities.

168. These activities are relevant across all types of territory, with the exception of those specific to rural areas.

169. The types of beneficiary include public bodies which are co-financing organisations (such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Skills Funding Agency, the Big Lottery Fund, and the National Offender Management Service), local authorities and provider organisations (including employment and training providers, Further and Higher Education institutions, the social partners and VCSE organisations).

Guiding principles for the selection of operations

170. The Government estimates that about 70% of the Operational Programme will be delivered through the co-financing arrangements which has operated in England for the last 10 years. Rather than imposing a national delivery system, local areas have been asked whether they wish to 'opt-in' to these arrangements.

171. Existing Co-financing Organisations will be invited to re-apply for selection, which will include an assessment by the Managing Authority of previous performance. If any other eligible organisation wishes to apply, it will have to meet similar criteria to those used for Co-financing Organisations in the 2007-2013 programme. The proposed criteria for selection of organisations, which will be considered and approved by the national PMC, are:

- They are national public bodies or equivalent to national public bodies.
- They fulfill their statutory functions in relation to one or more of the activities described in the Operational Programme.
- They have sufficient eligible match funding for an agreed duration within the time period of the Operational Programme.
- They have sufficient infrastructure and expertise to carry out the duties.
- The providers which will receive support from the European Structural and Investment Funds are selected in accordance with open and competitive selection procedures.

172. Whilst the majority of ESF provision will be delivered through co-financing, a significant minority will be delivered through the provision of grants to applicants responding to open bidding calls.

173. The national PMC will consider and approve the project selection criteria. The Managing Authority will apply these selection criteria to the assessment and appraisal on the basis of discussion with the local sub-committee.

174. The Managing Authority will work closely with the LEP area partnership to ensure there is no duplication of provision. This will apply to both opt-in and non-opt-in provision. In addition the Managing Authority will actively promote and encourage cross LEP area partnership communications in order to encourage the sharing of good practice, encourage cross LEP applications and support strategic cohesiveness.

175. Co-financing organisations will submit funding applications at LEP level which will be assessed against the agreed core selection criteria (see below).

176. For open bidding calls, the Managing Authority will operate a two-stage application process:

- Stage 1 – Outline Application: Outline application covering purpose of project, planned outputs and intended outcomes, strategic fit and value for money. The outline application will be assessed against Gateway criteria and core selection criteria (see below). It will be much shorter than the full application and will help ensure that applicants do not invest significant time and effort in applications which do not meet the criteria.
- Stage 2 – Full Application: Full technical application with the Managing Authority undertaking a full technical appraisal against all of the core selection criteria.

Gateway Criteria Assessment

177. The application of these criteria at the outline stage will ensure projects meet the basic eligibility criteria for European Structural and Investment Funds. Gateway criteria set out the minimum eligibility requirements which must be met in order for any project to be considered for European Structural and Investment Funds investment. Proposed projects which fail to meet any aspect of the minimum criteria will be rejected and will not be considered for European Structural and Investment Funds support. The gateway criteria are:

- applicant is eligible;
- proposed operation and associated expenditure is eligible;
- evidence that the operation meets the objectives set out in the Operational Programme.

Core European Structural and Investment Funds Selection Criteria

178. Projects meeting Gateway criteria will progress to assessment against European Structural and Investment Funds core selection criteria, taking into account at the outline stage, the level of detail which can be reasonably expected. The full application will also be assessed against the core criteria, at which stage all of the relevant detail will need to be provided. This will determine the degree to which the project proposal contributes to meeting the performance indicators, outputs and impacts of the programme, and will inform the prioritisation of investments. The core selection criteria are:

- strategic fit
- value for money
- management and control
- deliverability
- procurement tendering

- state aid compliance
- publicity
- contribution to cross cutting themes

179. Local sub-committees will consider the fit with local strategies in coming to their views on the proposals which are the highest priority.

The planned use of financial instruments

The use of financial instruments is not planned in this investment priority.

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable to ESF

Output indicators

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets									
Investment priority: 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility									
2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region									
Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
1	Number of unemployed, including long-term unemployed, and inactive (not in education and training) participants	Number	ESF	Less developed	8,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
1	Number of unemployed, including long-term unemployed, and inactive (not in education and training) participants	Number	ESF	Transition	74,000.00			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs
1	Number of unemployed, including long-term unemployed, and inactive (not in education and training) participants	Number	ESF	More developed	188,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1.2: SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Specific Objective

180. More young people are in education, employment or training, and fewer young people are NEET or at risk of being NEET.

181. This priority will support activity for young people in areas that do not qualify for the Youth Employment Initiative.

Results

182. This priority will help to integrate more young people into the labour market. The main result will be young participants aged 15 to 24 who were NEET on starting provision, and in employment (including self-employment), education or training upon leaving. There will be a quantified target set for this result indicator in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

183. The longer term impact of the investment priority will be measured through evaluation activity including surveys of a sample of participants.

184. There will be an output target set for the number of participants below 25 years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training) on starting provision.

Investment Priority 1.2: ESF Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific results indicators]

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets														
Investment priority: 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF) in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee														
Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for ESF)														
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Category of region	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
2	Participants (below 25 years of age) in employment, including self-	Percentage	Less developed		43			Ratio	2012	41			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
2	Participants (below 25 years of age) in employment, including self-	Percentage	Transition		52			Ratio	2012	50			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
2	Participants (below 25 years of age) in employment, including self-	Percentage	More developed		47			Ratio	2012	45			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

185. Unemployment can have a long-term scarring effect on young people, so this group are a high priority as the recovery strengthens. A range of help is already available, but the ESF will be used to support additional and complementary 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.

186. This investment priority will support additional provision that complements existing government programmes to tackle youth unemployment and reduce the number of young people NEET or at risk of being NEET. The ESF will support additional and more intensive provision that meets the needs of individuals and local labour markets. It will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing provision.

187. Examples of actions for all young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET include:

- additional literacy, numeracy, ICT and employability provision to ensure that individuals have the basic skills which are needed in all jobs;
- training and vocational qualifications to equip young people for specific jobs;
- community and informal learning which is effective in engaging young people who have struggled at school and can then help and encourage them to access more formal learning;
- intermediate labour market activity to provide a structured and supportive environment where young people can gain work experience;
- using self-employment as a route out of worklessness, including providing advice and support for self-employment.

188. One of the issues at the moment is that some of the NEET population are disconnected from the mainstream activity which is available. One of the challenges for ESF will be to find and engage young people in this position (e.g. through outreach work) so that they can benefit from what is on offer.

189. The investment priority will help to re-engage marginalised young people NEET, including through innovative approaches, customised training and support and volunteering activities. Activities may be focused on specific target groups such as: young lone parents; looked after children and care leavers; carers; ex-offenders; those involved in gangs; and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

190. Traineeships and Apprenticeships are an important part of the offer for young people, and ESF can help make them more successful. ESF will be able to support Traineeships so long as it is not displacing already planned (and funded) provision and it adheres to the Traineeship Framework for Delivery. In terms of Apprenticeships, any activity must comply with the Apprenticeship Framework or standard as set out by primary legislation.

191. The investment priority will be able to complement Traineeships by enhancing or building on existing and planned Traineeship provision through wrap-around activity. It will also be able to provide additional support for disadvantaged young people beyond the core elements of training (work preparation, English and maths) and work experience.

192. The investment priority will be able to complement Apprenticeships (but not provide direct funding of training or wage costs). This will include supporting improvements to recruitment, assessment and training.

193. Support for both Traineeships and Apprenticeships may include increasing uptake through dedicated marketing or outreach work and supporting individuals to remain on the programme (for example mentoring and paying trainees' costs such as transport).

194. The investment priority will enhance local careers guidance services for young people, including where appropriate providing education and training providers and careers guidance professionals with information on local job options, business developments and local skills shortages. This will help ensure that young people's choices (for example about the training they undertake) are informed by the available jobs; and that their expectations about types of jobs and wages are realistic.

195. It will broker opportunities with local employers to take on young people who are NEET (including those with complex barriers) - including through Traineeships, Apprenticeships, work experience, supported internships for young people with learning difficulties, and support for employers to take on young people NEET. It will also help to improve the employability of unemployed or inactive graduates, including through graduate placements.

196. ESF funding for young people can be used to help those aged 15 to 24 on starting provision. Including providing more informed advice for women to enable them to make important career choices. Any interventions targeting young people still at school must not substitute for provision that schools or local authorities would be expected to provide and must be targeted at those who are at risk of being NEET.

197. The types of beneficiary include public bodies which are co-financing organisations (such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Skills Funding Agency, the Big Lottery Fund, and the National Offender Management Service), local authorities and provider organisations (including employment and training providers, Further and Higher Education institutions, the social partners and VCSE organisations).

The guiding principles for the selection of operations

See text at Investment Priority 1.1.

The planned use of financial instruments

The use of financial instruments is not planned in this investment priority.

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable to ESF

Output indicators

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets									
Investment priority: 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF)									
in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion									
and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee									
2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region									
Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
3	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	ESF	Less developed	10,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
3	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	ESF	Transition	76,000.00			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs
3	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	ESF	More developed	224,000.00			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1.3: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE

Specific Objective

198. More young people are in education, employment or training, and fewer young people are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

199. This priority will support activity for young people in areas that qualify for the Youth Employment Initiative.

Results

200. This priority will help to integrate more young people into the labour market. This will be measured through the following targets which are specific to the Youth Employment Initiative:

- Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention
- Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, Apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving³⁶
- Unemployed participants in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment upon leaving
- Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention³⁷
- Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, Apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
- Long-term unemployed participants in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention
- Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, Apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
- Inactive participants not in education or training or training in education/training gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving

201. These result will be calculated on the basis of those participants who on starting were between 15 and 24 years old and unemployed, long-term unemployed or inactive (but not in education or training). The priority may support preventative work with young people aged 15 to 24 who are at risk of being NEET as long as they are not in full-time education, however those who are in education or training on starting will not count towards the results targets.

202. These result targets are mandatory under the ESF Regulation in all areas that qualify for the Youth Employment Initiative. The specific groups of young people to be targeted will reflect the needs in each local area as identified in ESIF strategies.

³⁶ The definition of an 'offer' is subject to clarification.

³⁷ Long-term unemployed participants are people who on starting are aged under 25 and have had a continuous spell of unemployment of more than six months.

203. The longer term impact of the investment priority will be measured through evaluation activity including surveys of a sample of participants.

Investment Priority 1.3: ESF Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific results indicators]

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets													
Investment priority: 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF) in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth													
Table 4a: YEI result indicators and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective													
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CR01	Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	58			Ratio	2012	57			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR02	Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	77			Ratio	2012	76			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR03	Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed	10			Ratio	2012	9			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR04	Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number	long-term unemployed	36			Ratio	2012	35			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR05	Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	Number	long-term unemployed	67			Ratio	2012	66			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR06	Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	long-term unemployed	10			Ratio	2012	9			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR07	Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number	inactive, not in education or training	20			Ratio	2012	19			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR08	Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	Number	inactive, not in education or training	58			Ratio	2012	57			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR09	Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	inactive, not in education or training	10			Ratio	2012	9			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
CR10	Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	Number	below 25 years of age				Ratio	2014				Longitudinal survey	Once
CR11	Participants in employment six months after leaving	Number	below 25 years of age				Ratio	2014				Longitudinal survey	Once
CR12	Participants in self-employment six months after leaving	Number	below 25 years of age					2014				Longitudinal survey	Once

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

204. This investment priority will deliver the Youth Employment Initiative money which is targeted on NUTS 2 regions with youth unemployment rates above 25% in 2012. The Youth Employment Initiative includes additional money from the dedicated Youth Employment Initiative budget line and an equivalent amount of ESF money from within each Member State's structural fund allocation. The Youth Employment Initiative allocation is front-loaded to 2014 and 2015. These allocations must be spent by 2017 and 2018 respectively.

205. At least 90% of the Youth Employment Initiative money will be targeted on NUTS2 regions with youth unemployment rates above 25% in 2012. The four NUTS2 regions

eligible in England are: Inner London, Merseyside, Tees Valley and Durham, and West Midlands.

206. The UK has decided to make full use of the available 10% flexibility in England only. Therefore Inner London, Merseyside, Tees Valley & Durham and the West Midlands will receive 90% of their funding. Funding will then be allocated to English NUTS3 regions outside the core qualifying regions with a youth unemployment rate in 2012 above 30% in proportion to the numbers of youth unemployed. This applies to Kingston upon Hull, Nottingham, Leicester and Thurrock.

207. Participants in Youth Employment Initiative provision must be aged 15 to 24, and be residing in an area eligible for the Youth Employment Initiative. Participants must be unemployed or inactive. Usually they will be NEET (i.e. not in education or training as well). However, in certain cases young people in education or training may participate, if they are not on full time education or training courses. European Commission guidance excludes full time students from Youth Employment Initiative support.

208. This investment priority will support additional provision that complements existing government programmes to tackle youth unemployment and reduce the number of young people NEET. The ESF will support additional and more intensive provision that meets the needs of individuals and local labour markets. It will not support activities that duplicate or replace existing provision.

209. Examples of actions for all young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET include:

- additional literacy, numeracy, ICT and employability provision to ensure that individuals have the basic skills which are needed in all jobs;
- training and vocational qualifications to equip young people for specific jobs;
- community and informal learning which is effective in engaging young people who have struggled at school and can then help and encourage them to access more formal learning;
- intermediate labour market activity to provide a structured and supportive environment where young people can gain work experience;
- using self-employment as a route out of worklessness, including providing advice and support for self-employment.

210. The investment priority will help to re-engage marginalised young people NEET, including through innovative approaches, customised training and support and volunteering activities. Activities may be focused on specific target groups such as: young lone parents; looked after children and care leavers; carers; ex-offenders; those involved in gangs; and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

211. The ESF will be able to support Traineeships so long as it is not displacing already planned (and funded) provision and it adheres to the Traineeship Framework for Delivery. In terms of Apprenticeships, any activity must comply with the Apprenticeship Framework or standard as set out by primary legislation.

212. The investment priority will be able to complement Traineeships by enhancing or building on existing and planned Traineeship provision through wrap-around activity. It will

also be able to provide additional support for disadvantaged young people beyond the core elements of training (work preparation, English and maths) and work experience.

213. The investment priority will be able to complement Apprenticeships (but not provide direct funding of training or wage costs). This will include supporting improvements to recruitment, assessment and training.

214. Support for both Traineeships and Apprenticeships may include increasing uptake through dedicated marketing or outreach work and supporting individuals to remain on the programme (for example mentoring and paying trainees' costs such as transport).

215. The investment priority will enhance local careers guidance services for young people, including where appropriate providing education and training providers and careers guidance professionals with information on local job options, business developments and local skills shortages.

216. It will broker opportunities with local employers to take on young people who are NEET (including those with complex barriers) - including through Traineeships, Apprenticeships, work experience, supported internships for young people with learning difficulties, and support for employers to take on young people NEET. It will also help to improve the employability of unemployed or inactive graduates, including through graduate placements.

217. The types of beneficiary include public bodies which are co-financing organisations (such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Skills Funding Agency, the Big Lottery Fund, and the National Offender Management Service), local authorities and provider organisations (including employment and training providers, Further and Higher Education institutions, the social partners and VCSE organisations).

The guiding principles for the selection of operations

See text at Investment Priority 1.1.

The planned use of financial instruments

The use of financial instruments is not planned in this investment priority.

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable to ESF

Output indicators

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets									
Investment priority: 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF) in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee									
2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region									
Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
3	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	YEI		86,000.00			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1.4: ACTIVE INCLUSION

Specific Objective

218. To address the root causes of poverty which create barriers to work so more people move closer or into employment.

Results

219. This investment priority will help more disadvantaged people to move towards or into employment by tackling the barriers they face. This will be demonstrated by participants either entering employment, or being engaged in job search, or being engaged in education or training, or gaining a qualification upon leaving. The main result indicator will capture all of these. There will be a quantified target set for this result indicator in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

220. The longer term impact of the investment priority will be measured through evaluation activity including surveys of a sample of participants. This will capture other softer outcomes and participation in volunteering activities.

221. There will be an output target for the number of participants who are long-term unemployed or inactive (not in education or training) on starting provision, in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

Investment Priority 1.4: Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific results indicators]

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets														
Investment priority: 9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability														
Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for ESF)														
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Category of region	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
4	Long term unemployed and inactive (not in education and training) participants engaged in job searching; education or training; gaining a qualification; or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Percentage	Less developed		66			Ratio	2012	64			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
4	Long term unemployed and inactive (not in education and training) participants engaged in job searching; education or training; gaining a qualification; or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Percentage	Transition		65			Ratio	2012	63			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
4	Long term unemployed and inactive (not in education and training) participants engaged in job searching; education or training; gaining a qualification; or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Percentage	More developed		69			Ratio	2012	67			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

222. Rather than simply treating the symptoms, ESF will help to address the root causes of poverty that are barriers to work, and so help more people move closer or into employment. The nature of the issues faced by the most disadvantaged means that barriers to work have to be tackled in a holistic and integrated way, including through supporting early action before problems become entrenched. Outreach activities will be particularly important since some of this group are, by definition, disconnected from existing Government services.

223. ESF will finance integrated packages of support that address gaps in provision to disadvantaged groups and reach those who are not currently receiving support. Investments will help to tackle inactivity particularly by helping disadvantaged groups overcome barriers, improve their employability and move towards employment. In addition, ESF will complement policies to tackle in work poverty by helping people develop the skills needed to progress in work to move into higher skilled jobs with higher pay. There will be a particular focus on workless households, including working through local authority partnerships delivering the extended Troubled Families programme.

224. The investment priority will help address the following issues, and any other barriers to work which individuals face. Many of the most disadvantaged face multiple disadvantage and as a result have chaotic lifestyles which make engaging with support and addressing barriers all the more difficult. But if the underlying issues are not addressed, they will struggle ever to move on.

- caring responsibilities;
- debt and money management;
- digital exclusion;
- drug and alcohol dependency;
- educational attainment (particularly lack of basic literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages skills);
- family, parenting and relationship problems;
- health problems (including mental health);
- gangs;
- homelessness;
- learning difficulties and disabilities;
- life skills;
- offending.

225. This investment priority will complement and add value to other services and funds locally, especially helping those with more complex barriers move closer to employment. This may include helping those in greatest need of a more consistent service offer and who may require extra support to transfer to Universal Credit.

226. The investment priority may provide additional and more intensive and flexible support identified by Universal Credit Local Support Service partnerships and health and wellbeing boards. This may include actions to help Universal Credit claimants progress into the labour market, support their career progression (better pay/work/hours), and move from the hidden economy to legitimate work.

227. Activities at a local level may target specific communities or ethnic minorities with high levels of poverty and social exclusion. This may include spatial targeting in key neighbourhoods where worklessness is persistent, high and inter-generational. These actions should raise aspirations and tackle core economic barriers.

228. The investment priority will promote equal opportunities and combat discrimination in the labour market. Activities should be designed to respond to the specific needs of participants with disabilities or health conditions, care leavers, legal migrants, older workers, participants from ethnic minorities and women. Some participants will experience multiple disadvantages, for example older workers with a disability and individuals with

mental health issues may face barriers related to their age and disability. Providers should take such multiple disadvantages into account when assessing the needs of participants from all backgrounds when they are designing and delivering activities. Providers should work with employers to help integrate people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups, into the workplace.

229. The investment priority may support activities to retain in employment older workers and workers who have, or who develop, disabilities and health conditions, skills training for people facing in work poverty to help them increase their pay and working hours and move out of poverty. These activities will provide support to prevent workers becoming unemployed or inactive because of age, disability or a health condition.

230. The investment priority will also provide additional support through the National Offender Management Service to prisoners and to ex-offenders without work, especially from very hard to help groups. These groups often face a range of barriers (low skills, limited work experience, chaotic lifestyles, substance abuse, employer discrimination), which mean they require specialist tailored support which recognises their particular circumstances.

231. The investment priority may also help to tackle specific barriers faced by refugees and migrants and to integrate them into the labour market.

232. The investment priority will be able to support capacity building for voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations to enable them to deliver ESF activities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market. This may include developing the capacity of community groups.

233. The investment priority will also promote social enterprises, including providing advice and information and support to access social investment; and develop the capacity of social entrepreneurs to address the needs of their local communities. It will also encourage closer collaboration between businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to address social exclusion.

234. Examples of some of the activities that may be supported include:

- basic skills and ESOL training;
- money management support and advice and financial literacy programmes in order to address deep seated debt issues which make moving from benefit into work more challenging;
- digital and internet literacy courses to aid job searching, access to benefits and progress in work;
- local 'Community Grant' type activity to support small scale voluntary sector activity which can be crucial to reaching out to these groups ;
- first contact engagement activities (for example, arranging events in places that people feel comfortable to visit);
- local networks and groups to support people to get a job or access learning (for example, Jobs Club or Learning Champion type activity) to provide people with a safe environment and peer support;
- softer skills development (for example, assertiveness, anger management and motivation);
- volunteering, which is recognised in general terms as a good way to re-engage

those furthest from the labour market.

235. The investment priority may also encourage Social Investment models (e.g. social impact bonds) by providing outcome funding that enables payment by results programmes to be established to support the Government’s agenda on Social Justice and encourage innovative delivery models within local communities. The focus would be on disadvantaged individuals and families, in areas such as those not in education, employment or training, employment and training, drug addiction and other issues which are usually part of the cycle of deprivation.

236. To complement other thematic objectives, the investment priority may support activities that are designed to promote social inclusion whilst also tackling environmental issues such as environmental protection, waste recycling, energy efficiency, and renewable energy.

237. These activities are relevant across all types of territory.

238. The types of beneficiary include public bodies which are co-financing organisations (such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Skills Funding Agency, the Big Lottery Fund, and the National Offender Management Service), local authorities and provider organisations (including employment and training providers, Further and Higher Education institutions, the social partners and VCSE organisations).

The guiding principles for the selection of operations

See investment priority 1.1

The planned use of financial instruments

There are no plans to use ESF to support financial instruments but the ESF will be used to complement ERDF Local Impact Funds.

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable to ESF

Output indicators

Investment Priority 1.4: Common and programme specific output indicators for ESF (broken down by category of region)

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets									
Investment priority: 9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving									
2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region									
Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
5	Participants who are long-term unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	ESF	Less developed	16,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
5	Participants who are long-term unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	ESF	Transition	124,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
5	Participants who are long-term unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	ESF	More developed	408,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 1.5: COMMUNITY LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Specific Objective

239. To facilitate the participation of people in activity identified by communities, especially in deprived or lagging areas that supports local growth and meets the needs of those participating, so that they move towards or into employment.

Results

240. Past EU level evaluations of LEADER have detected significant improvements in rural services and the quality of life, including outcomes such as job creation and the inclusion of marginalised groups, which fit well with the objectives of the ESF programme. There is also evidence that CLLD measures have added value to broader national and sub-national interventions.

241. CLLD is expected to support a range of local development activities from different thematic objectives, which will lead to a diverse range of results in support of local growth. For the ESF programme the results target is focused on the percentage of long-term unemployed and inactive participants engaged in a positive activity after participating. In keeping with the CLLD approach we expect Local Action Groups (LAG) to identify local development needs that are in line with the ESF Operational Programme and UK Partnership Agreement; and identify opportunities and interventions focused on improving labour market participation for which CLLD is the only appropriate approach.

242. Community-led local development (CLLD) will be an optional delivery mechanism, supporting interventions that cannot otherwise be delivered through existing mainstream ESF, ERDF or EAFRD funding mechanisms at national or local level.

243. LAGs and their CLLD funded projects will need to determine barriers to labour market participation appropriate to the characteristics of the local area and their target group(s). Participants will undertake activities that focus on addressing significant barriers to participation in the labour market.

244. Some examples of labour market barriers at the local level and the type of ESF funded activities which complement mainstream provision that may be appropriate to address them include:

- Tackling specific work-related barriers faced by those furthest from the labour market - such as inter-generational worklessness, low aspiration, low self-confidence, lack of digital awareness and high levels of anti-social behaviour. This might include locally determined innovative and flexible interventions tailored to address these barriers at the level of the individual, communities and specific groups; and empowering those supported to use their own experiences to become part of the solution. Specific examples of activities are provided later and include the addressing of skills development and knowledge gaps and experiences, such as volunteering that can help people move towards employment goals.
- Reducing social and economic isolation. This might include: community participation and engagement activity, community leadership and peer support programmes, stimulating local collaboration amongst citizens, local economic

bodies and small businesses, increasing access to information through improving communication and digital skills and addressing issues such as transport and debt and money management.

- Addressing health related barriers. This might include participation in a substance rehabilitation programme, active and constructive engagement with health promotion services, managing mental health.

245. The above are high level examples only and interventions will differ significantly for individuals and groups in response to their needs, the characteristics of the community/LAG area and the priorities of the Local Development Strategy. In multi-fund LAGs ESF interventions may also be supported by complementary LAG activity funded through the other funding streams.

Investment Priority 1.5: Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific results indicators]

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets														
Investment priority: 9vi - Community-led local development strategies														
Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for ESF)														
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Category of region	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
4	Long term unemployed and inactive (not in education and training) participants engaged in job searching; education or training; gaining a qualification; or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Percentage	Less developed		66			Ratio	2012	56			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
4	Long term unemployed and inactive (not in education and training) participants engaged in job searching; education or training; gaining a qualification; or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Percentage	Transition		65			Ratio	2012	55			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
4	Long term unemployed and inactive (not in education and training) participants engaged in job searching; education or training; gaining a qualification; or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Percentage	More developed		69			Ratio	2012	59			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

246. The CLLD arrangements set out below align with the integrated ESIF Growth Programme CLLD delivery approach set out in detail in the 2014-2020 UK ESIF Growth Programme Partnership Agreement (England Chapter); and 2014-2020 England European Regional Development Fund Operational Programme. These arrangements also align closely with proposals that allow for the integrated use of some England EAFRD Growth Programme funds for CLLD; and to separate non-Growth Programme RDPE LEADER programme Local Action Groups (LAG) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) FLAGs as set out in the EAFRD Operational Programme.

247. In England it is expected that ESF CLLD activity will take place in less developed, transition and more developed regions. The main target groups for investment under CLLD will be spatially targeted communities and areas in urban, peri-urban and rural areas

where concentrations of deprivation are in evidence. For example, activity will be prioritised in those areas across all categories of region that are within the 20% most deprived areas by reference to the 2010 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

248. In line with European Commission Regulations 1303/2013 and 1304/2013 ESF support for CLLD in England will be programmed using Thematic Objective 9 resource and therefore will directly address issues of social exclusion and poverty.

249. However, in line with the Common Provision Regulation and in particular Articles 32-35 of European Commission Regulation 1303/2013, CLLD Local Development Strategies will be able to deliver activities under other Thematic Objectives 8 and 10 as long as justified in the context of the ESF Operational Programme and its associated local implementation plans agreed by LEP Area Partnerships, in pursuit of coherent, social, economic and sustainable growth.

250. As described in the UK Partnership Agreement (England Chapter) the Government's localism agenda encourages communities to take control of their own issues and shape their own solutions with power in the hands of citizens and neighbourhoods and decision-making passed down to the lowest possible level. In relation to the wider economic growth agenda the Government is further committed to ensuring that local partners are at the centre of efforts to drive forward economic growth in England.

251. This commitment to localism is also evidenced by the central role that local partners and LEPs will play in shaping and then supporting the delivery of the European and Structural Investment Fund Growth programme Strategies in the period 2014-2020. The use of CLLD within the Growth programme allows for the targeting of regeneration and economic growth on designated local areas of opportunity.

252. The Europe 2020 strategy's pursuit of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth also provides a clear framework within which the Growth Programme will seek to align the ESI Funds in order to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion. Moreover, in the context of a national approach the England ESF Operational Programme will contribute towards the objective of strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion through the following complementary place based initiatives:

- the lead role that LEPs and wider local partnerships have played in developing integrated and coherent territorial strategies at local level through the local ESIF strategies.
- the use of the CLLD methodology in a way that complements LEADER funded LAGs and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund FLAGS; and facilitates the alignment of ERDF/ESF and EAFRD under the England Growth Programme; providing opportunity for a greater local level determination of issues and solutions in support of growth.

253. LAGs are comprised of partnerships of public, private and civil society sectors that come together develop and drive the delivery of a CLLD Local Development Strategy. These must support the delivery of the local ESI Fund(s).

254. Under the Growth programme, LEPs and local partners may choose to deliver part of the ESIF Strategies through CLLD LAGs. Strategies can be mono-funded or multi-funded using appropriate combinations of Growth programme funds (ESF, ERDF and EAFRD); and offer a unique long term investment opportunity of up to seven years. It is

therefore expected that CLLD under the Growth Programme will be implemented through the following high level areas and structures:

Programme	ESI Fund	Area targeted
Growth Programme Resource	ERDF/ESF	Urban based Local Action Groups
Growth Programme Resource	ERDF/ESF/EAFRD	Urban/Rural Local Action Groups
Growth Programme Resource	ERDF/ESF/EAFRD	Rural based Local Action Groups

255. It is also envisaged that non-Growth Programme CLLD under EAFRD LEADER/ EMFF FLAGS may where appropriate and with the agreement of Managing Authorities and local partners bid into Growth Programme resource to supplement their respective LAG/ FLAG activity.

256. The main challenges that CLLD will address are linked to those socio-economic and territorial challenges highlighted in the UK ESIF Partnership Agreement and the separate socio-economic analysis set out in the ESF and ERDF Operational Programmes for England. These include for example:

- embedding access to opportunities for growth for all areas and groups;
- the need to address persistent levels of unemployment, economic inactivity and poverty in rural, coastal and urban areas;
- the promotion of entrepreneurship and access to local services and amenities in urban and rural areas;
- gaps in productivity between rural/coastal and urban areas; and
- poor access to superfast broadband, key services and local amenities.

257. The main objective of ESF CLLD activity is to facilitate the participation of people in activity identified by communities that supports local growth and meets the needs of those participating, so that they move towards or into employment. This will generally be in the context of deprived areas and support for marginalised groups and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

258. ESF funded CLLD activity can be delivered through either a single ESF mono-fund LAG strategy; or a multi-fund LAG strategy which incorporates ESF alongside one or more other ESI Fund programmes. These strategies will be considered and approved at a local LEP area level.

259. Within either option it is expected that ESF CLLD LAG activity will tackle a broad range of issues that are barriers to labour market participation. These include for example: caring responsibilities; debt; digital exclusion; drug and alcohol dependency; poor basic skills; as well as life skills; lack of motivation and confidence; family, parenting and relationship problems; health, mental health and well-being problems; homelessness; learning difficulties and disabilities; offending; isolation issues faced by individuals and

groups - and linked to this access to transport (a key issue in rural areas); and where needed support for childcare.

260. All activity must address specific locally identified needs in support of growth at community level. This will be required to focus on interventions that add value to local strategies, which cannot be adequately met through mainstream ESIF Growth programme provision; and which as it is determined through the CLLD approach is more tailored to local area characteristics and need, empowers and builds capacity across the community and provides longer term sustainable outcomes.

261. ESF CLLD activity will also focus on delivering clear added value to any other ESI fund provision managed by the LAG; and through appropriate local governance structures and delivery mechanisms - complementing other local area growth focused interventions being taken forward within and outside of the Growth programme.

262. CLLD priorities and activities will be determined locally. Indicative activity to be supported using ESF CLLD investment will include for example:

- tackling specific local barriers to accessing employment and skills faced by groups and individuals furthest from the labour market through structured support and more informal approaches. For example around addressing generational worklessness, low aspiration, low self-confidence, poor levels of basic/life skills, lack of digital awareness and high levels of antisocial behaviour;
- providing individual pathways to integration and re-entry into employment through developing links between disadvantaged groups and local employers, the social economy, social enterprises and intermediaries able to provide information, advice and guidance on employment and self employment options;
- improving the sustainable integration of young people not in employment, education or training into the labour market, including care leavers through activity tailored to their employment aspirations; and addressing wider needs that could be barriers to employment;
- facilitating volunteering opportunities, for example to help engage or re-engage those furthest from the labour market;
- improving the integration of marginalised communities and combating discriminations in local areas that are based on sex, racial, or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- reducing employment barriers linked to social and economic isolation, for example by increasing access to information and sources of advice; improving communication and digital skills; and facilitating community participation and engagement. Other practical issues could also be addressed such as debt and money management and poor access to transport;
- stimulating local economies to deliver jobs and growth in deprived urban, rural and coastal areas, including hotspot areas with multiple deprivation often affected by industrial decline - for example ex-mining communities;
- support for the development of community and social capacity building in deprived areas: for example through investment in developing high growth start-ups; community leadership and peer support programmes; and stimulating local level collaboration amongst citizens, small businesses and other local economic bodies;
- promoting equality between men and women in access to employment and career progression, by combating gender stereotypes in education and training, for example by reducing gender-based segregation in the labour market and

developing female entrepreneurship; and promoting reconciliation of work and personal life for men and women;

- promoting the social economy and social enterprises, for example linked to innovation and growth sectors such as climate change, energy saving and other environmentally focused areas;
- developing life skills such as organisational skills as catalysts to enable young people and adults' access volunteering opportunities, work experience and sustained employment for the future;
- addressing poor linkages between areas of deprivation with nearby areas of high economic growth and jobs opportunities.
- creating stronger vertical linkages into jobs and the wider economy including sectors such as the environment, tourism and culture.
- improving ICT and digital awareness and skills.
- providing hubs of relevant information including access to research and development – to address issues of isolation and poor connectivity.
- addressing health related barriers. This might for example include participation in a substance rehabilitation programme, active and constructive engagement with health promotion services, managing mental health and where appropriate support related to accessing aids and adaptations to equipment to facilitate entry or re-entry to work.

263. The Government's adoption of the CLLD methodology will seek to build capacity, empower communities and devolve decision-making to the lowest level. To complement mainstream provision under other Priority Axes it will facilitate long-term, integrated place based approaches that seek to address economic disparities and unlock growth and jobs potential in deprived areas and involve the community directly in delivery. The Managing Authority will, in first quarter 2015 and where proposals for the use of CLLD in locally determined ESIF strategies has been agreed by the MA, invite outline proposals from communities to commence preparatory work to establish Local Action Groups and explore preparation of CLLD strategies taking into account the following key high level principles:

- The need to identify a clear rationale and need justifying the adoption of the CLLD methodology;
- The targeting of deprived urban, peri-urban and rural areas (in particular taking into account areas included in the 20% most deprived areas by reference to the 2010 Indices of multiple Deprivation);
- That a clear added value and value for money justification resulting from use of CLLD in preference to mainstream programme interventions is provided;
- That clear evidence of demand, engagement and capacity at local community level is demonstrated.

264. These principles will underpin the approach taken by the Managing Authority to assess outline applications for support and to identify those areas that will then be selected to develop and submit full CLLD strategies and to progress to constitute Accountable Bodies and Local Actions Groups in line with the provisions set out in Articles 33 and 34 of EU Regulation No 1303/2013. Further detail on selection of CLLD strategies is provided in section 4, however, in line with the Regulations it will be for the Local Action Group itself to provide further detail of the selection procedures and criteria at the level of the operation.

265. The Common Provisions Regulation makes clear that one of the tasks of the Local Action Group is to draw up the selection procedure and criteria for the selection of operations.

266. The use of CLLD will complement mainstream programme activity through the adoption of targeted bespoke interventions promoting regeneration in specific geographic areas of need and opportunity. The Government shares the Commission's view that the tailored, locally determined and integrated delivery approach which underpins CLLD and which seeks to mobilise local and community based resources over the long term has the potential to provide a more coherent and sustainable intervention that adds value to mainstream provision, particularly in those areas where disparities persist in terms of rates of economic activity and performance, entrepreneurship and access to the labour market where concentrated and complementary support is required but unavailable through mainstream provision.

Output indicators

Investment Priority 1.5: Common and programme specific output indicators for ESF (broken down by category of region)

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets									
Investment priority: 9vi - Community-led local development strategies									
2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region									
Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
14	Participants	Number	ESF	Less developed	3,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
14	Participants	Number	ESF	Transition	4,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
14	Participants	Number	ESF	More developed	21,000.00			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

Priority Axis 1: Specific provisions for the ESF where applicable (broken down by category of region where relevant)

Priority Axis 1: Performance Framework

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets													
2.A.8 Performance framework													
Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis													
ID	Type	Key implementation step or indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone total for 2018	Milestone men for 2018	Milestone women for 2018	Final men target (2023)	Final women target (2023)	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of the relevance of the
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	YEI		319,576,848					319,576,848	Monitoring data	
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	ESF	Less developed	34,000,000					116,494,783	Monitoring Data	
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	ESF	Transition	105,000,000					362,866,603	Monitoring Data	
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	ESF	More developed	365,000,000					1,232,265,034	Monitoring Data	
2	O	Participants	Number	ESF	Less developed	10,000					37,000	Monitoring data	
2	O	Participants	Number	ESF	Transition	77,000					278,000	Monitoring data	
2	O	Participants	Number	ESF	More developed	230,000					839,000	Monitoring data	
3	O	Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	YEI		86,000					86,000	Monitoring data	

Additional qualitative information on the set up of the performance framework

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Categories of Intervention

2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	102.Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also ...	36,442,452
ESF	Transition	102.Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also ...	182,173,907
ESF	More developed	102.Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also ...	597,715,766
ESF	Less developed	103.Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including y...	13,296,893
ESF	Transition	103.Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including y...	25,664,409
ESF	More developed	103.Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including y...	152,943,257
ESF	Less developed	109.Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	58,600,438
ESF	Transition	109.Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	144,311,287
ESF	More developed	109.Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	426,515,011
ESF	Less developed	114.Community-led local development strategies	8,155,000
ESF	Transition	114.Community-led local development strategies	10,717,000
ESF	More developed	114.Community-led local development strategies	55,091,000
YEI		103.Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including y...	319,576,848

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	01.Non-repayable grant	116,494,783
ESF	Transition	01.Non-repayable grant	362,866,603
ESF	More developed	01.Non-repayable grant	1,232,265,034
YEI		01.Non-repayable grant	319,576,848

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	07.Not applicable	116,494,783
ESF	Transition	07.Not applicable	362,866,603
ESF	More developed	07.Not applicable	1,232,265,034
YEI		07.Not applicable	319,576,848

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	03.Integrated Territorial Investment - Other	108,339,783
ESF	Less developed	06.Community-led local development initiatives	8,155,000
ESF	Transition	06.Community-led local development initiatives	10,717,000
ESF	More developed	06.Community-led local development initiatives	55,091,000
ESF	Transition	07.Not applicable	352,149,603
ESF	More developed	07.Not applicable	1,177,174,034

Priority axis: 1 - Inclusive Labour Markets			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Transition	01.Supporting the shift to a low-carbon, resource efficient economy	1,167,951
ESF	Transition	02.Social innovation	10,978,743
ESF	Transition	03.Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	1,167,951
ESF	More developed	07.Gender equality	753,329
ESF	Less developed	08.Not applicable	116,494,783
ESF	Transition	08.Not applicable	349,551,958
ESF	More developed	08.Not applicable	1,231,511,705
YEI		08.Not applicable	319,576,848

Priority Axis 2: Skills for Growth

267. This priority axis aims to support skills for growth. It will support the following investment priorities:

- Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning (2.1). This focuses on improving the skills of individuals to meet their goals and the needs of the local economy. This is primarily about training, advising or supporting individuals.
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems (2.2). This focuses on improving employer participation and engagement in learning so that it is responsive to the needs of the local economy and more individuals progress into or within learning. This is primarily about improving partnerships and systems.

268. These investment priorities are from thematic objectives 10 (skills). However the priority axes will contribute indirectly to thematic objectives 8 and 9 by training people in skills that sustain and enhance their employment and reduce their risk of social exclusion.

269. The priority axis covers all three categories of region because many of the skills issues are broadly similar across different areas, and also because some LEP areas cover two categories of region.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 2.1: ENHANCING EQUAL ACCESS TO LIFELONG LEARNING (main)

Specific Objective

270. More people gain the skills they need to achieve their goals and support local growth.

Results

271. This investment priority will support local growth by increasing the number of people with the skills and qualifications that they need to progress into and within local labour markets and that local businesses need.

272. The main results that will be achieved are that participants gain a qualification or a unit of a qualification upon leaving, or successfully complete their course, or progress into or within education or training. These will be captured in a results indicator for which a target will be set for each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

273. The results indicator will not be limited to the achievement of qualifications because some participants will be improving their skills on provision that may not lead to a qualification or a unit of a qualification. The provision may be aimed at responding to a specific local business need, or may be aimed at supporting progression or engagement within education (e.g. Community Learning). In these the result may be that the intervention has been successfully completed or that progression has been achieved.

274. This investment priority will also lead to other results under other indicators which will not have quantified targets including: participants in employment (including self-employment) upon leaving; and participants in education/training upon leaving.

275. The longer term impact of the investment will be measured through evaluation activity including surveys of a sample of participants. As well as measuring the common longer-term result indicators, they will also look at issues such as in-work progression.

276. It is proposed that there should be an output target for the number of participants who are women, over 54, ethnic minorities or disabled, in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed). This reflects the importance of ensuring that support is focused on those groups who face particular barriers in progressing at work, are more likely to be in lower paid or non-permanent full time employment, and in the case of older people and disabled people are less likely to participate in adult learning. It does not mean that people who do not fall within these groups are excluded and clearly they will participate in the investment priority. The targets will be set at a level to reflect this.

Investment Priority 2.1: Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific results indicators]

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth

Investment priority: 10III - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for ESF)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Category of region	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
15	Participants gaining a qualification, or unit, or successfully completing a course, or progressing into or within education or training	percentage	Less developed		40			Ratio	2012	35			Monitoring Data	AR and PMCs
15	Participants gaining a qualification, or unit, or successfully completing a course, or progressing into or within education or training	percentage	Transition		45			Ratio	2012	40			Monitoring Data	AR and PMCs
15	Participants gaining a qualification, or unit, or successfully completing a course, or progressing into or within education or training	percentage	More developed		45			Ratio	2012	40			Monitoring Data	AR and PMCs

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

277. The ESF will be used to tackle the need to improve skills, particularly intermediate skills, in order to improve productivity and drive growth. It will also help people with low or no qualifications so that they can progress in work, increase their income and move out of relative poverty.

278. ESF can be used to support skills at any level, but it is important that the ESF complements and does not duplicate existing policies and provision. It should not displace the investment that employers and individuals make in training and will focus on areas where the market is not delivering the skills needs of the area. The ESF will not subsidise training that would otherwise be funded by business.

279. Full qualifications at level 3 and above are generally provided for in mainstream policy by grants and loans for individuals. Exemptions to this will only be considered where a local specific need and/or market failure has been demonstrated and where these fall within the ESF priority objectives. Any case submitted for consideration will be considered on its individual merits but exemptions are expected to be limited.

280. ESF funding must be targeted where there is clear justification for intervention financed by public expenditure. This may include:

- skills shortages or needs in particular sectors or local areas which are not currently being addressed by employers or individuals;
- training in small and medium size enterprises (up to 250 employees);
- training for people who lack basic skills or qualifications, or for whom a skills need is a barrier to progression at work;
- training for people in low paid, part-time or non-permanent jobs; training for people who may face disadvantage or discrimination in the labour market including disabled people, people from ethnic minorities and older people;
- training for specific groups (e.g. women) in sectors or subjects where they are under-represented.

281. ESF will not substitute for investment in training that would otherwise be funded by employers or individuals, or is a statutory requirement. The specific need for intervention in each local area is set out in LEP area European Structural and Investment Funds strategies.

282. Examples of activities that will be supported within this investment priority are:

- basic skills interventions for the existing workforce to support progression and generate opportunity;
- additional or innovative approaches to training in a vocational context for those with low level skills in Maths, English and ICT, to support them in finding work or progressing in work; and to enable them to achieve vocational qualifications and continue to upskill;
- support for intermediate, technical and advanced vocational provision for the unemployed and for career progression;
- skills training for people facing in work poverty to help them progress in work and increase their pay and working hours or obtain better quality higher paid jobs and move out of poverty;
- support for intermediate, technical and advanced skills for specific industries and sectors identified as driving growth in local economies in support of other relevant thematic objectives;
- support for generic skills such as customer handling, team working, and communication;
- tailored training and lifelong learning opportunities for older people;
- skills and training packages in response to redundancies (including earlier support to companies, as well as when redundancy occurs);
- skills support for Traineeships and Apprenticeships (but not direct funding of training or wage costs) including improvements to the recruitment, assessment and training;
- support for informal learning and community based learning;
- support for women to enter non-traditional sectors which addresses barriers to entry (for example, construction) in order to provide the skilled labour needed for growth;
- initiatives to promote participation by women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) provision;
- training to support the career progression of women including to leadership and management roles, especially in SMEs;
- support for specific activities to promote equality and diversity, retention, progression and employability in further and higher education; particularly related to the raising of aspirations towards improved economic and social outcomes;
- improving or enhancing information, advice and guidance provision, in a way that complements National Careers Service provision and increases awareness of career opportunities. For example providing more targeted advice to women to help them to make important career choices

283. In relation to advanced (higher level) skills, examples of activities that could be supported are:

- Increase access to advanced skills for the most disadvantaged through:
- funding the delivery of outreach activity including taster courses to under-represented groups to help improve take up and retention. This might for example include the cost of participation in summer schools or work-based access course delivery;
- funding the development of new outreach activity including taster or access courses, particularly where this is being co-designed with intermediaries or representatives of the target groups and/or involves developing innovative approaches;
- funding the development of new methods of delivering learning to reach remote learners (including e-learning and local delivery of provision in non traditional venues) where this does not duplicate mainstream activity;
- offering financial/bursary support targeted at under-represented groups, specifically for course related costs (but not tuition fees) demonstrated as being a barrier to accessing learning. Additional funding would supplement existing government grants and loan schemes, and learning and learner support packages.
- Support retention and reduce drop out rates for the most disadvantaged from advanced skills provision: by funding additional learning support for under-represented groups where this activity can be demonstrated to enhance retention and attainment.
- Increase participation where there are current or predicted skills shortages, particularly where this addresses the needs of SMEs with growth potential or includes targeting under-represented groups. ESF could fund the development and delivery of outreach activity including access and taster programmes to increase the participation of particular groups (for example, female take-up of STEM provision).
- Support intermediate and advanced vocational provision for the unemployed and for career progression (but not tuition costs and not where mainstream provision is available):
- funding the development costs and contribute to the delivery costs of specific vocational short courses designed to enable the unemployed to progress onto advanced courses or access good quality employment;
- funding the development costs and contribute to the delivery costs of specific vocational short courses designed to help low skilled employees to progress to higher value employment; (particularly where this targets groups under-represented in higher skill roles).
- Develop skills to meet future needs (for example, in relation to new technology, construction or production methods or responding to restructuring/diversification).

284. This will include developing skills for innovation in companies including aligning with ERDF supported activities and in line with local growth priorities.

- Support employability and the transition into employment including:
- funding the costs of specific modules (additional to the core credit-bearing element of higher education programmes) designed to better prepare under-graduates and

graduates for employment or self-employment or to increase the effectiveness of those recently securing employment in SMEs;

- funding specific activity (development or delivery) targeted at increasing the employability of particular groups (including graduates) who are under-represented in the workforce or who face particular barriers to gaining employment (for example, those with a disability);
- supporting activity to develop self-employment or entrepreneurial skills to start and grow a business or social enterprise.

285. Where appropriate training may complement activities delivered within the thematic objectives relating to innovation, low carbon, climate change, ICT and SME competitiveness, especially where improving intermediate, technical and advanced skills can contribute to these thematic objectives.

286. The types of beneficiary include public bodies which are co-financing organisations (such as the Skills Funding Agency), local authorities and provider organisations (including employment and training providers, Further and Higher Education institutions, the social partners and VCSE).

The guiding principles for the selection of operations

See text at Investment Priority 1.1

The planned use of financial instruments

The use of financial instruments is not planned in this investment priority.

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable to ESF

Output indicators

Investment Priority 2.1: Table of Common and programme specific output indicators for ESF (broken down by category of region)

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth									
Investment priority: 10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences									
2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region									
Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
16	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	ESF	Less developed	18,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
16	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	ESF	Transition	134,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
16	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	ESF	More developed	644,000.00			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs

Note: This output indicator reflects the importance of ensuring that support is focused on those groups who face particular barriers in progressing at work, are more likely to be in lower paid or non-permanent full time employment, and in the case of older people and disabled people are less likely to participate in adult learning. It does not mean that people who do not fall within these groups are excluded; clearly they will participate in the Investment Priority; and the target will be set at a level to reflect this. However, it is aimed at ensuring that ESF resources help those most in need of support.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY 2.2: IMPROVING THE LABOUR MARKET RELEVANCE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

Specific Objective

287. Skills provision is more responsive to the needs of the local economy and more individuals progress into or within skills provision, through increased employer engagement and participation in the planning, design and delivery of vocational education provision.

Results

288. This investment priority will lead to better skills interventions which are more effective in supporting employer needs for economic growth. Unlike the previous investment priority which focuses on the training of individuals, this investment priority will focus on improving partnerships, capacity and systems. Projects will improve provision so that more individuals progress into or within provision that is relevant to the labour market and addresses employers' skills needs.

289. The main result will be the number of projects that are successfully completed. There will be a quantified target set for this result indicator in each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

290. There will be an output target for the number of projects within this investment priority with a quantified target set for each category of region (less developed; transition; more developed).

Investment Priority 2.2: Common Results Indicators [for which a target value has been set and programme specific results indicators]

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth														
Investment priority: 10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes														
Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for ESF)														
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Category of region	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
17	Successfully completed projects (which increase employer engagement; and/or the number of people progressing into or within skills provision)	Percentage	Less developed		0			Ratio	2014	75			Monitoring Data	AIR and PMCs
17	Successfully completed projects (which increase employer engagement; and/or the number of people progressing into or within skills provision)	Percentage	Transition		0			Ratio	2014	75			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs
17	Successfully completed projects (which increase employer engagement; and/or the number of people progressing into or within skills provision)	Percentage	More developed		0			Ratio	2014	75			Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

Actions to be supported under the investment priority

291. In order to maximise its contribution to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, ESF will support projects that make education and training provision more responsive to the needs of the economy, so that employers' skills needs are more quickly and more effectively met. This will include projects to increase the number of people who progress into or within provision that addresses employers' skills needs.

292. ESF will not fund activity that duplicates or cuts across national policy on grants and loans for tuition for skills activities. Exemptions to this principle will be considered only where a local specific need and/or market failure has been demonstrated and where the activity falls within the scope of the Operational Programme.

293. Examples of activities that will be supported within this investment priority are:

- support for collaborative projects, placements, internships or other activities with SMEs that enable students and graduates to gain industry relevant experience and skills;
- building capacity in SMEs to provide project/placement/internship opportunities and enhance the contribution of advanced skills to SME growth. In particular this could include programmes to specifically engage the most disadvantaged groups or those who face particular local disadvantages in advanced skills;
- brokering opportunities to encourage and increase work experience, work placements, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, and graduate placements particularly through wider employer engagement and involving supply chains;
- promoting Apprenticeships (especially at advanced levels in manufacturing and other priority sectors) by developing a supportive environment for employer engagement;
- developing better links between business and schools, further and higher education and other education partners to equip students with the skills to start and grow a business to meet local business needs;
- support for activities to start and grow a business, including promoting entrepreneurship, social enterprise and self-employment, providing leadership and management training/advice within SMEs mentoring with existing businesses and entrepreneurs and developing internal capabilities and growth potential;
- capacity building activities, in the form of training, networking measures and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners (employers and trade unions);
- complementing mainstream funding to boost demand from young people to study mathematics and develop innovative provision at level 3 which can be combined with vocational qualifications to meet local skills and shortages, for example in engineering;
- supporting the capacity of education providers (including schools, further education and higher education) to deliver better focused provision for employers and to innovate.

294. Where appropriate training may complement activities delivered within the thematic objectives relating to innovation, low carbon, climate change, ICT and SME

competitiveness, especially where improving intermediate and advanced skills can contribute to these thematic objectives.

295. The types of beneficiary include public bodies which are co-financing organisations (such as the Skills Funding Agency), local authorities, and provider organisations (including employment and training providers, Further and Higher Education institutions, the social partners and Civil Society organisations).

The guiding principles for the selection of operations

See text at Investment Priority 1.1.

The planned use of financial instruments

The use of financial instruments is not planned in this investment priority.

The planned use of major projects

Not applicable to ESF

Output indicators

Investment Priority 2.2: Table of Common and programme specific output indicators for ESF (broken down by category of region)

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth

Investment priority: 10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
CO23	number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	Number	ESF	Less developed	3,000.00	0	0	Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs
CO23	number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	Number	ESF	Transition	5,000.00	0	0	Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs
CO23	number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	Number	ESF	More developed	19,000.00	0	0	Monitoring data	AIR and PMCs

Priority Axis 2: Specific provisions for the ESF where applicable (broken down by category of region where relevant)

Priority Axis 2: Performance Framework

Table: Performance framework (by category of region)

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth													
2.A.8 Performance framework													
Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis													
ID	Type	Key implementation step or indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region	Milestone total for 2018	Milestone men for 2018	Milestone women for 2018	Final men target (2023)	Final women target (2023)	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of the relevance of the indicator
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	ESF	Less developed	14,000,000					49,739,346	Monitoring data	
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	ESF	Transition	90,000,000					314,475,865	Monitoring data	
1	F	Amount of spend	Euros	ESF	More developed	280,000,000					940,920,700	Monitoring data	
16	O	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	ESF	Less developed	5,000					18,000	Monitoring data	
16	O	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	ESF	Transition	35,000					134,000	Monitoring data	
16	O	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	ESF	More developed	175,000					644,000	Monitoring data	

Additional qualitative information on the set up of the performance framework

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Categories of Intervention

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	117.Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skil...	26,380,318
ESF	Transition	117.Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skil...	269,181,541
ESF	More developed	117.Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skil...	777,179,969
ESF	Less developed	118.Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strength...	23,359,028
ESF	Transition	118.Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strength...	45,294,324
ESF	More developed	118.Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strength...	163,740,731

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	01.Non-repayable grant	49,739,346
ESF	Transition	01.Non-repayable grant	314,475,865
ESF	More developed	01.Non-repayable grant	940,920,700

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	07.Not applicable	49,739,346
ESF	Transition	07.Not applicable	314,475,865
ESF	More developed	07.Not applicable	940,920,700

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	03.Integrated Territorial Investment - Other	49,739,346
ESF	Transition	07.Not applicable	314,475,865
ESF	More developed	07.Not applicable	940,920,700

Priority axis: 2 - Skills for Growth			
2.A.9 Categories of intervention			
Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Transition	01.Supporting the shift to a low-carbon, resource efficient economy	2,335,903
ESF	More developed	01.Supporting the shift to a low-carbon, resource efficient economy	4,787,830
ESF	Transition	03.Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	28,684,887
ESF	More developed	03.Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	71,986,685
ESF	Less developed	04.Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	5,839,757
ESF	Transition	04.Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	4,087,830
ESF	More developed	04.Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	2,820,603
ESF	Transition	05.Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies	5,232,422
ESF	More developed	05.Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies	1,167,951
ESF	Less developed	08.Not applicable	43,899,589
ESF	Transition	08.Not applicable	274,134,823
ESF	More developed	08.Not applicable	860,157,631

Priority Axis 3: Technical Assistance

296. This priority axis covers all three categories of region because the Operational Programme and other priority axes cover all three categories of region, and therefore Technical Assistance actions will need to be taken across the whole of the programme territory.

Specific objectives

297. Technical Assistance will facilitate robust governance, accountability and partnership engagement to support the efficient and compliant management and implementation of the ESF Operational Programme. It will help ensure that programme performance targets are achieved and that the delivery is compliant with EU regulations.

298. The Growth Programme represents a new approach in the delivery of the European Structural and Investment Funds in England. The Government proposes to make up to half of the ESF and ERDF Technical Assistance available to LEP and local partners to support the delivery of European Structural and Investment Funds strategies in 2014-2020 subject to the requirements set out in EU regulations. The Government's intention is that Technical Assistance should be available to partners to support activities which they undertake and which are eligible for Technical Assistance. It should be made available by means of open calls and will be appraised in the same way as other European Structural and Investment Funds.

Results expected

299. ESF Technical Assistance will contribute to the effective delivery of the programme so that it is compliant with EU regulations and is better able to deliver objectives and targets of the priorities.

The list of result indicators (only where the union support to TA in the OP exceeds EUR 15 million)

Priority axis: 3 - Technical Assistance											
Specific objective: 3 - Technical Assistance											
2.B.5 Result indicators											
Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective)(for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)											
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Total baseline value	Men Baseline Value	Women Baseline Value	Baseline year	Total Target Value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
6	Proportion of MA and IB staff completing training in regulatory requirements (procurement, state aids, equal	Percentage	0			2014	100			Managing Authority	Annual
7	Completion of evaluation strategy	Percentage	0			2014	100			Managing Authority	Annual
8	Completion of communications strategy	Percentage	0			2014	100			Managing Authority	Annual
9	Achievement of N+3 targets	Percentage	0			2014	100			Managing Authority	Annual

Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

Programme Management

300. Effective Programme management requires that the programme organisation and structure, roles and responsibilities and reporting arrangements are well defined and implemented. Examples of activities include:

- Preparation, management, monitoring and implementation of the programme, including appraisal, contract management, monitoring and verification, audit.
- Specialist advice and support including legal and financial expertise.
- Provision of secretariat support and coordination of the PMC (Growth Programme Board), the thematic, technical and local sub committees, and relevant ad hoc groups established to support the delivery of the programme;
- Provision of advice and support to help embed the horizontal principles of sustainable development, equal opportunities and gender equality using appropriate expertise to grow the understanding, commitment and capacity of management bodies and beneficiaries.
- Acquisition, installation and maintenance of the necessary IT hardware and software to support programme and project management which complies with EU and UK e-cohesion requirements.
- The production of high quality programme management information to facilitate monitoring, decision making and programme operation.
- Preparation of reports, including annual implementation reports to the Commission

Programme Development and Capacity Building

301. Robust governance, accountability and partnership engagement requires continuous improvement. This is a key element of programme management good practice. Technical Assistance will be used to ensure that (i) the Programme develops effectively and (ii) management bodies' staff, partners, applicants and suppliers are aware of their responsibilities and what is required of them. Examples of activities include:

- Technical advice and support for project development activity to help ensure that the requirements of EU regulations and national guidance are incorporated within project design.
- Training and development of MA, IB and beneficiary staff, and relevant partners including members of the PMC and of the sub committees.
- Support for Civil Society networks to support participation of voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the programme (NB any capacity building activity for individual Civil Society organisations will be supported under Investment Priority 1.4)..
- Support and advice to LAGs and local partners on the development and delivery of CLLD Local Development Strategies.

Programme Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation

302. Robust governance and accountability requires that programme related analysis, monitoring and evaluation forms an integral part of programme delivery. Examples of activities include:

- baseline data to measure programme performance, particularly results and output indicators and value for money.
- policy and socio-economic analysis updates to facilitate production of the Annual Implementation Reports.
- cohort surveys to measure long-term indicators.
- evaluation studies and implementing the relevant findings from these evaluations at suitable intervals including mid-term and programme completion.
- Development of research and evaluation expertise through provision of training.
- an independent impact assessment of the programme's horizontal principles and to update the equality analysis as required during the lifetime of the programme.
- studies to support the preparation or impact assessment of specific projects as necessary.
- Implementation and impact evaluations linked to the monitoring of the programme
- Additional monitoring support if required in order to comply with EU regulations.
- On-going review and refinement of European Structural Investment Fund strategies by relevant partners.

Information and Publicity

303. Publicity forms an integral part of the programming strategy and the Managing Authority will ensure that the benefits of the funds are communicated to the wider public. To help achieve this, a communication strategy will be established for the programme to be ratified by the PMC. The delivery of the strategy will be led by the Managing Authority with support from Intermediate Bodies, Co-financing Organisations and national and local partners who will have a key role to play in contributing to its implementation. All projects will be required to comply with the publicity requirements of EU regulations. Examples of activities include:

- A website Portal to help publicise the activities, achievements and impact from the ESF funding stream;
- Effective channels for communication and publicity including the publishing of booklets, bespoke newsletters, films and social media.
- Guidance and pro-active monitoring to ensure all projects adhere to the publicity requirements.
- Promotional events to launch the programme or recognise programme milestones, publicise calls for proposals and disseminate best practice.
- Supporting partners in communicating programme and project activities in their own and across other areas.

Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Priority axis: 3 - Technical Assistance						
2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results (by priority axis)						
Table 13: Output indicators (by priority axis)(for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)						
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Target value (2023)	Men target value (2023)	Women target value (2023)	Source of data
10	MA staff part-funded by Technical Assistance	Number				MA
11	Number of evaluations undertaken	Number				MA
12	Number of publications produced and communications events held	Number				MA
13	Expenditure	Number				Management Information

Categories of Intervention

Priority axis: 3 - Technical Assistance			
2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)			
Table 14: Dimension 1 - Intervention field			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	121.Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	5,541,137
ESF	Transition	121.Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	24,404,669
ESF	More developed	121.Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	75,939,219
ESF	Less developed	122.Evaluation and studies	692,642
ESF	Transition	122.Evaluation and studies	3,050,584
ESF	More developed	122.Evaluation and studies	9,492,402
ESF	Less developed	123.Information and communication	692,642
ESF	Transition	123.Information and communication	3,050,584
ESF	More developed	123.Information and communication	9,492,402

Priority axis: 3 - Technical Assistance			
2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)			
Table 15: Dimension 2 - Form of finance			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	01.Non-repayable grant	6,926,421
ESF	Transition	01.Non-repayable grant	30,505,837
ESF	More developed	01.Non-repayable grant	94,924,023

Priority axis: 3 - Technical Assistance			
2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)			
Table 16: Dimension 3 - Territory type			
Fund	Category of region	Code	€amount
ESF	Less developed	07.Not applicable	6,926,421
ESF	Transition	07.Not applicable	30,505,837
ESF	More developed	07.Not applicable	94,924,023

SECTION 3: FINANCING PLAN

SECTION 3. FINANCING PLAN																	
3.1 Financial appropriation from each fund and amounts for performance reserve																	
Table 17																	
Fund	Category of region	2014 Main Allocation	2014 Performance Reserve	2015 Main Allocation	2015 Performance Reserve	2016 Main Allocation	2016 Performance Reserve	2017 Main Allocation	2017 Performance Reserve	2018 Main Allocation	2018 Performance Reserve	2019 Main Allocation	2019 Performance Reserve	2020 Main Allocation	2020 Performance Reserve	TOTAL Main Allocation	TOTAL Performance Reserve
ESF	Less developed	21,893,586	1,397,463	22,331,899	1,425,440	22,778,914	1,453,973	23,234,820	1,483,074	23,699,801	1,512,753	24,174,086	1,543,027	24,657,811	1,573,903	162,770,917	10,389,633
ESF	Transition	96,867,517	5,712,570	98,806,822	5,826,937	100,784,627	5,943,574	102,801,768	6,062,531	104,859,063	6,183,856	106,957,523	6,307,608	109,097,744	6,433,822	720,175,064	42,470,898
ESF	More developed	300,890,711	18,304,396	306,914,594	18,670,853	313,058,071	19,044,586	319,323,730	19,425,751	325,714,118	19,814,504	332,232,373	20,211,036	338,880,342	20,615,459	2,237,013,939	136,086,585
Total ESF		419,651,814	25,414,429	428,053,315	25,923,230	436,621,612	26,442,133	445,360,318	26,971,356	454,272,982	27,511,113	463,363,982	28,061,671	472,635,897	28,623,184	3,119,959,920	188,947,116
YEI		89,768,778	0	70,019,646	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	159,788,424	0
Total		509,420,592	25,414,429	498,072,961	25,923,230	436,621,612	26,442,133	445,360,318	26,971,356	454,272,982	27,511,113	463,363,982	28,061,671	472,635,897	28,623,184	3,279,748,344	188,947,116

SECTION 3. FINANCING PLAN

3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co-financing (€)

Table 18a: Financing Plan

Priority Axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of union support	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	National public funding (c)	National private funding (d)	Total funding (e) = (a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e)	EB contributions	Main union support (h) = (a) - (j)	Main National Counterpart (i) = (b) - (k)	Performance reserve Union support (j)	Performance Reserve National Counterpart (k) = (b) * ((j) / (a))	Performance Reserve Amount as proportion of Total Union Support (l) = ((j) / (a)) * 100
1	ESF	Less developed	Total	116494783	20557903	20557903	0	137052686	85%	0	109213859	19273034	7280924	1284869	6%
1	ESF	Transition	Total	362866603	241911068	241911068	0	604777671	60%	0	340114050	226742699	22752553	15168369	6%
1	ESF	More developed	Total	1232265034	1232265034	1232265034	0	2464530068	50%	0	1155099637	1155099637	77165397	77165397	6%
1	YEI		Total	319576848	0	0	0	319576848	100%	0	319576848	0	0	0	NA
2	ESF	Less developed	Total	49739346	8777532	8431960	345572	58516878	85%	0	46630637	8228936	3108709	548596	6%
2	ESF	Transition	Total	314475865	209650576	195371904	14278672	524126441	60%	0	294757520	196505013	19718345	13145563	6%
2	ESF	More developed	Total	940920700	940920700	887512530	53408170	1881841400	50%	0	881999512	881999512	58921188	58921188	6%
3	ESF	Less developed	Total	6926421	1222310	1222310	0	8148731	85%	0	6926421	1222310	0	0	0%
3	ESF	Transition	Total	30505837	20337225	20337225	0	50843062	60%	0	30505837	20337225	0	0	0%
3	ESF	More developed	Total	94924023	94924023	94924023	0	189848046	50%	0	94924023	94924023	0	0	0%
Total	ESF	Less developed		173160550	30557745	30212173	345572	203718295	85%	0	162770917	28724280	10389633	1833465	6%
Total	ESF	Transition		707848305	471898869	457620197	14278672	1179747174	60%	0	665377407	443584937	42470898	28313932	6%
Total	ESF	More developed		2268109757	2268109757	2214701587	53408170	4536219514	50%	0	2132023172	2132023172	136086585	136086585	6%
Total	YEI			319576848	0	0	0	319576848	100%	0	319576848	0	0	0	0%
Grand Total				3468695460	2770566371	2702533957	68032414	6239261831	56%		3279748344	2604332389	188947116	166233982	5.45%

Table 18b: Youth Employment Initiative - ESF and YEI specific allocations (where appropriate)									
Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of union support	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	National public funding (c)	National private funding (d)	Total funding (e) = (a)+(b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e)
1	ESF	Less developed	Total	0	0	0	0	0	0%
1	ESF	Transition	Total	54,797,657	36,531,771	36,531,771	0	91,329,428	60%
1	ESF	More developed	Total	104,990,767	104,990,767	104,990,767	0	209,981,534	50%
1	YEI		Total	159,788,424				159,788,424	100%
1	Total			319,576,848	141,522,538	141,522,538	0	461,099,386	69%
Total				319,576,848	141,522,538	141,522,538	0	461,099,386	69%
Ratio	%								
Ratio of ESF for less developed regions	0.00%								
Ratio of ESF for transition regions	34.29%								
Ratio of ESF for more developed regions	65.71%								

Table 18c: Breakdown of the financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective						
Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total
1	ESF	Less developed	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	49,739,345	8,777,532	58,516,877
1	ESF	Transition	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	207,838,316	138,558,877	346,397,193
1	ESF	More developed	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	750,659,023	750,659,023	1,501,318,046
1	ESF	Less developed	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	66,755,438	11,780,371	78,535,809
1	ESF	Transition	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	155,028,287	103,352,191	258,380,478
1	ESF	More developed	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	481,606,011	481,606,011	963,212,022
Total				1,711,626,420	1,494,734,005	3,206,360,425

Table 19: The indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority Axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the operational programme (%)
1	1,167,951	0.03%
2	7,123,733	0.21%
3	0	0.00%
Total	8,291,684	0.24%

SECTION 4: INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

304. As described in the UK Partnership Agreement, the Government's localism agenda encourages communities to take control of their own issues and shape their own solutions. In relation to the wider economic growth agenda the Government is further committed to ensuring that local partners are at the centre of efforts to drive forward economic growth in England. This is evidenced by the central role that local partners and LEPs will play in shaping and then supporting the delivery of the European and Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) Growth Programme Strategies in the period 2014-2020.

305. The Europe 2020 strategy's pursuit of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth also provides a clear framework within which the Growth Programme will seek to align the ESI Funds in order to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion. Moreover, in the context of a national approach the England ESF Operational Programme will contribute towards the objective of strengthening economic and social cohesion through the following complementary place based initiatives:

- the lead role that LEPs and wider local partnerships have in developing integrated and coherent territorial strategies at local level through local ESIF strategies.
- the use of the CLLD methodology in a way that complements LEADER funded Local Action Groups (LAGs) and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund LAGs (FLAGs); facilitates the alignment of ERDF/ESF and EAFRD under the England Growth Programme; and provides an opportunity for a greater local level determination of issues and solutions that leads to outputs and results that would not otherwise be realised.
- An Integrated Territorial Investment in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

4.1 Community-led local development

306. The Government's localism agenda encourages communities in England to take control of their own issues and shape their own solutions, with power in the hands of citizens and neighbourhoods and decision-making passed down to the lowest possible level.

307. During the development of local European Structural and Investment Growth Programme strategies, LEPs were asked to consider the use of CLLD, which will be an optional delivery mechanism available to local areas.

308. Within the ESF Operational Programme the main focus of CLLD will be on reducing barriers to participating in the labour market, particularly in deprived areas and for marginalised groups.

309. CLLD local development strategies will be able to fund activities that cannot be delivered through mainstream ESF delivery mechanisms such as ESF opt-in organisations. CLLD will be financed within thematic objective 9 (social inclusion) but can be used to support relevant activities that fall within the scope of objectives 8 (employment) and 10 (skills), as long as justified in the context of the ESF Operational Programme and LEP Area Partnerships implementation plans.

310. Circumstances in which a CLLD approach might apply include:

- Tackling specific work-related barriers faced by those furthest from the labour market;
- Reducing social and economic isolation through community participation and engagement and support to address specific issues;
- Addressing health-related barriers.

311. More detailed examples of types of ESF CLLD activity are set out earlier within Investment Priority 1.5 (CLLD).

312. CLLD will be focused on the specific needs and opportunities of a particular area, typically much smaller than the average LEP area, and be based on communities with a population size of between 10,000 and 150,000. CLLD can be used across urban, rural and coastal areas, and within less developed, transition and more developed areas. CLLD will be employed in preference to mainstream ESIF Growth Programme provision in England only in circumstances where it provides a demonstrably more effective and appropriate means of addressing identified territorial development needs.

313. The Government is seeking a co-ordinated, multi-fund approach at local level. Where justified it will support a lead fund arrangement for the management and administration costs of a CLLD strategy, up to 25% of total investment identified for CLLD. Government has committed to align any proposed CLLD funded under the Growth Programme by the ESF, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD – for use in rural areas only) with any future EAFRD LEADER and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) CLLD investment using non-Growth Programme resource to ensure complementarity and synergy in implementation.

314. CLLD under the Growth Programme will be implemented through the following funds and areas:

European Structural and Investment Fund	Area targeted
ESF / ERDF	Urban based Local Action Groups (LAGs)
ESF / ERDF / EAFRD	Urban/Rural LAGs
ESF / ERDF / EAFRD	Rural based LAGs

315. Where appropriate and with the agreement of Managing Authorities and local partners, non Growth Programme CLLD under EAFRD LEADER/ EMFF Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) may also seek Growth Programme resource to supplement their respective LAG activity.

Coordination, administration and funding

316. CLLD will be based on a partnership of public, private and civil society sectors coming together to form a Local Action Group (LAG) that will develop and drive the delivery of a CLLD strategy. The LAG is an essential feature of CLLD and its responsibilities are set out in European Commission regulation 1303/2013 – Article 34.

317. CLLD funded by Growth Programme resource will build on the LEADER approach used in the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme for England - to strengthen community capacity and mobilise local resources to embed the ability of targeted communities to engage in sustained regeneration and economic development over the longer term. Through accessing CLLD the local community itself will build its capacity to identify local needs, address them through determining appropriate solutions and empower itself to build on its achievements. The funding for CLLD will come from the LEP area's notional ESI Fund allocation. Subject to a robust rationale and intervention logic being set out at local level, local partners may consider making up to 5% of their notional allocation available to CLLD.

Commissioning of Community Led Local Development

318. During the development of local European Structural and Investment Fund strategies, local partners and LEPs were asked to consider the use of CLLD to address issues that could not otherwise be supported through the mainstream business process. Where a robust case has been made that CLLD is an appropriate response and this has been agreed by the Managing Authority, the Managing Authority will work with local partners to commission local development strategies. This commissioning will be in accordance with the agreed ESI Fund growth programme business process and the selection process required by the Common Provisions Regulation. The Managing Authority will initially invite 'outline' expressions of interest from existing or new Local Action Groups where agreed in the local ESIF strategy. Where these outline applications meet the agreed criteria they will then be selected to develop and submit full strategies. The following high level criteria will be considered when assessing the full strategies:

- fit with the local European Structural and Investment Funds strategy;
- fit with the respective ESI fund Operational Programme;
- clear socio-economic rationale underpinning proposed use of Community Led Local Development in targeted geographic areas;
- clear explanation as to the rationale for the use of CLLD over and above mainstream programme activity;
- demonstration of value for money;
- identification of thematic objectives and results and outputs;
- identification of the population to be targeted;
- demonstration of robust governance and partnership arrangements;
- evidence of community engagement and demand for CLLD methodology;
- demonstration of capacity and resource.

319. The Managing Authority will consider reimbursing the preparatory costs of developing and designing local development strategies and for facilitation and capacity building activity from Technical Assistance resource. Funding for management and implementation of approved CLLD strategies and for associated animation and running costs through the Local Action Group will be available through programme resource up to a value of 25% of total CLLD strategy budget. This will be subject to activities and expenditure being compliant with EU rules.

4.2 Sustainable urban development

320. No ESF will be used to support sustainable urban development in line with Article 7(2) of the ERDF regulation.

321. In England, the Government is giving England's cities new powers and freedoms through City Deals. These are agreements between government and a city that give the city control to take charge and responsibility of decisions that affect its area.

322. Building on this devolution of responsibility, England's cities are playing a leading role within LEP areas in the development of European Structural and Investment Funds strategies. These strategies include many examples of integrated investments in city regions.

323. Sustainable urban development will be financed through the ERDF. It will be possible to align the ESF with ERDF support for sustainable urban development where there is a clear need and intervention logic at local level.

4.3 Integrated territorial development (ITI)

324. England includes a particular territory that is identified as unique in terms of its socio-economic challenges and opportunities and requires a more targeted approach. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, as the only Less Developed region in England, will benefit from an Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) to ensure the implementation and delivery of a targeted programme of investment for the territory. This is on the basis that no management and selection functions will be delegated and the ITI will not be delivered through an Intermediary Body.

Table: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

Priority	Fund	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (EUR)
Priority axis 1	ESF	116,494,783
Priority axis 2	ESF	49,739,345
Priority Axis 3	ESF	2,000,000
TOTAL	ESF	168,234,128

4.4 The arrangements for inter-regional and transnational actions, within the OP, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State

325. The Operational Programme will support transnational co-operation with the aim of promoting mutual learning and thereby increasing the effectiveness of policies supported by the ESF. Transnational co-operation activities will involve partners from at least one other Member State as well as the UK. Transnational co-operation may be implemented within priority axis 1 or 2; there will not be a specific priority axis dedicated solely to transnational co-operation.

326. In principle, transnational co-operation may be part of any operation within Priorities 1 or 2, subject to the agreement of the Managing Authority. The Managing Authority will decide whether to participate in co-ordinated or joint action at EU-level including the common implementation framework. If it does take part in the common framework, it will consult the relevant sub-committee of the Programme Monitoring Committee on the themes in which the programme will participate.

4.5. The contribution of the planned actions under the programme to macro-regional and sea-basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State

Not applicable.

SECTION 5: SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION

5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

327. The target groups who are at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion include:

- People in households where no one works. Workless households are more likely to be in poverty and dependent on benefit.
- Long-term unemployed people.
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. At age 16 4.6% are NEET, at age 17 6.0%, at age 18 13.8% and at age 19-24 18.2%. [DN Update figures to be consistent with strategy section.] Young people who are particularly likely to be marginalised including care leavers, offenders and those learning difficulties or disabilities.
- Disabled people. They are more than twice as likely not to hold any formal qualifications as are non-disabled people. Around half of disabled people of working age are not in employment.
- Certain ethnic minority groups. People of Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic origin have the lowest employment rates.
- Offenders and ex-offenders. Almost half of prisoners have no qualifications and 13% have never had a job.
- Older people aged 50 and above who are unemployed or inactive and need to update their skills to re-engage in the labour market.
- People with multiple disadvantages. About 11% of adults in England experience, at any one time, three or more of six areas of disadvantage (education, health, employment, income, social support, housing and local environment).

328. There are people in these groups across the whole of England. The highest concentrations are urban areas in the north and midlands of England and in inner London.

5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, and where relevant, the contribution to the integrated approach to poverty set out in the Partnership Agreement

329. The programme will aim to tackle the root causes of poverty and barriers that prevent these groups from entering the labour market and accessing employment opportunities. This will include integrated packages of support tailored to the needs of disadvantaged people in local areas. Each person needs to be treated as an individual who may face a number of disadvantages or barriers. There is no single model for helping

all people who face a particular disadvantage. The most effective interventions will often be designed at a local level.

330. Integrated approaches will be able to include: early intervention to tackle problems before they become entrenched; thorough needs assessment so that effective tailored support can be offered; outreach activities; employability support and skills training; and community-based provision. They will tackle a range of issues and barriers including: caring responsibilities; debt; digital exclusion; drug and alcohol dependency; poor basic skills; as well as life skills; lack of motivation and confidence; family, parenting and relationship problems; health and well-being problems; homelessness; learning difficulties and disabilities; offending; and access to transport, a key issue in rural areas. Activities should involve close coordination between local services and align with or enhance with other national or local provision.

Table 22: Actions to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

Target group/ geographical area	Main types of planned actions which are part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Categ ory of regio n	Inves tment priori ty
People in households where no one works.	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1	ESF	All	1.1 1.4
Long-term unemployed people.	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1	ESF	All	1.1 1.4
Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET.	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1	ESF and YEI	All	1.2 1.3
Disabled people.	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1 and 2	ESF	All	1.1 1.4 2.1
Ethnic minority groups.	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1 and 2	ESF	All	1.1. 1.4 2.1
Offenders and ex-offenders.	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1	ESF	All	1.4

Older people aged 50	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1 and 2	ESF	All	1.1. 1.4 2.1
People with multiple disadvantages	Employment, skills and social inclusion actions.	1	ESF	All	1.4

SECTION 6: SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WHICH SUFFER FROM SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS.

331. England has no special territorial features as defined in Article 174 of the Treaty.

SECTION 7: AUTHORITIES AND BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND AUDIT AND THE ROLE OF RELEVANT PARTNERS.

7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 23: Identification of and contact details for the relevant authorities and bodies

Authority / body	Name of authority/body, and department/unit	Head of the authority/body (position or post)
Managing Authority	Department for Communities and local Government	Julia Sweeney
Certifying authority, where applicable	Department for Communities and local Government	Stephanie Lockhart
Audit authority	Cross Departmental Internal Audit Service (XDIAS), jointly hosted by DCLG, BIS, DfE, DfT and HMT.	Mike Reed, Deputy Director of Cross Departmental Internal Audit Service (XDIAS), jointly hosted by DCLG, BIS, DfE, DfT and HMT.
Body to whom payments will be made by the Commission	Department for Communities and local Government	Julia Sweeney

7.2 Involvement of relevant partners

7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme

Preparation of the Operational Programme

332. The Government engaged extensively with partners during the development of the ESF Operational Programme.

333. The Government began the process of consulting substantively with partners in April 2012 with an informal written consultation. Key messages from the informal consultation were support for:

- flexible programme boundaries allowing for place based and thematic programmes as necessary and including local engagement;
- integrating and aligning the European Structural and Investment Funds;
- better use of local and national match funding;
- reducing the administrative burden on beneficiaries and project developers.

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334. This was followed by a series of events that included over 1,000 local partners across England, in November and December 2012, to seek views on a new streamlined approach for delivering EU funds.

335. The Government's proposition was that Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) should bring together local authorities and local businesses based on functional economic areas and develop European Structural and Investment Funds strategies that target the needs of their local area and the businesses based there. There was general support for this approach. Key messages from stakeholders included:

- There should be flexible working across functional economic areas and for new opportunities to collaborate.
- Advice from Managing Authorities through the local teams must be co-ordinated, consistent and of a high standard.
- Communications and stakeholder engagement should be clear and co-ordinated.
- The requirements on LEPs for partnership, consultation and collaboration must be clearly set out as soon as possible.
- Clear mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that partners – especially SMEs – are able to take part in developing the European Structural Investment strategies.
- Lessons learnt and best practice from current programmes and other areas need to be incorporated into programme design.
- Pooling and capturing existing local and national expertise, knowledge and ideas will be crucial in the delivery of appropriate local strategies.
- Government should take action to ensure best use of national and local funding sources.
- Government needs to take bold and innovative steps to harmonise and simplify the Funds in order to align them administratively.
- Allocations methodology should be made transparent.
- An effective transition from the current to future programmes is necessary.
- Rural and fisheries interests should be safeguarded.

336. Following this input from local partners a formal consultation on the delivery of 2014-20 European Structural Investment Funds was undertaken in spring 2013.

337. In summer 2013 Government commissioned each LEP area to produce a local European Structural and Investment Funds strategy based on Europe 2020 strategic priorities, national policy goals and local needs and opportunities. These strategies were developed by local partners in two stages and submitted to Government in October 2013 and January 2014. The Government's approach of asking all LEPs to produce European Structural and Investment Funds investment strategies against an indicative allocation of

³⁸ Beneficiaries are the organisations which are responsible for initiating, or both initiating and implementing, operations or projects within the programme.

ERDF and ESF funding has produced a locally coherent and prioritised set of strategies which have provided the building blocks for the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes. In producing their local European Structural and Investment Funds strategies, LEPs have engaged with and consulted the widest possible range of local stakeholders.

338. DWP has co-ordinated the production of the ESF Operational Programme. This has been informed by:

- consultations on the delivery of European Structural and Investment Funds in England co-ordinated by BIS.
- LEP area European Structural and Investment Funds strategies;
- input from Government policy experts and analysts;
- informal consultations with a working group of partners on drafts of the strategy and priorities (including representatives from government departments, local authorities, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, social partners, Equality and Human Rights Commission and further and higher education);
- the ex-ante evaluation.

339. The official consultation on the ESF Operational Programme was launched on Monday 14 April 2014. The consultation documents were made available for online viewing on GOV.UK together with a series of questions to guide partner responses. The consultation ran for a four-week period, closing on Friday 9 May. To support the consultation, two partner events were held in London at the end of March 2014 where detailed discussions on key themes and areas contained within the Operational Programme took place.

340. The feedback provided at the events and the responses received through the consultation document have been used by DWP to inform the development of the ESF Operational Programme.

341. We received around 50 responses to the formal consultation. Most were complimentary about the approach we had taken. There were a few requests for greater clarity which we have responded to in the revised draft; and a few requests for additional detail which we concluded was not appropriate for the Operational Programme.

Partnership working: governance

342. Government has established a European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme Board to act as a shadow national Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for EU funds in the England Growth Programme. Once the Programme moves into an operational phase following agreement by the European Commission of the Operational Programmes within the Growth Programme, the Board will review its membership and terms of reference and act as the Programme Monitoring Committee for the ESF and ERDF in England.

343. The PMC will be chaired by the MA for the programmes and the secretariat will be provided by the Managing Authority. It will meet four times a year. Membership will be drawn from a wide range of partners across the public, private and voluntary sector. The remit of the PMC is to oversee the programmes in line with the requirements set out in the

regulations.

344. The PMC will be supported by a number of sub-committees. These will include:

- thematic committees covering innovation, SMEs, low carbon and skills, employment and social inclusion;
- cross cutting thematic committees for equalities and sustainability;
- functional committees for communications, evaluation and other relevant topics;
- a Technical Assistance sub-committee;
- a performance and accountability sub-committee to oversee delivery of the programme, guard against conflicts of interest and provide a forum for holding both partners and the Managing Authority to account.

345. The European Commission will be invited to participate in each committee in an advisory capacity.

346. The PMC will be supported by 39 local sub-committees, one for each LEP area. The Government will seek recommendations from LEPs and partners in their area on the membership of the local sub-committee in accordance with the Code of Conduct on Partnership. Local sub-committees will be chaired by local partners and supported by the MA. They will report to the PMC and by extension to its sub-committees. Their membership must include the full range of local partners as set out in EU regulations. The exact format of such groups and its fit with local governance is a matter for partners provided arrangements are compliant with EU regulations.

347. The local sub-committee will in relation to funds within the scope of the Growth Programme:

- publicise and promote the opportunities that the funds provide for economic growth;
- develop a pipeline of operations that meet the local needs in line with European Structural and Investment Funds strategies;
- develop and agree the breadth, scope and timing of calls required in each local area;
- develop and agree with the MA selection of operations, especially in regard to prioritisation, the additional opportunities and the fit with local needs;
- agree with the MA the level and detail of information required to monitor the progress of European Structural and Investment Funds implementation against spend, milestones and results agreed in their European Structural and Investment Funds strategy, recommending remedial actions where necessary.

Partnership working: roles and responsibilities

348. The successful delivery of funds within the Growth Programme will depend on close working between the MA and LEPs who will co-ordinate and bring in local partners on a fully inclusive basis. This will be based on a clear split of roles and responsibilities, and on close and frequent communication at working level. The local sub-committee will provide a formal basis for this relationship. It will be chaired by a locally-determined partner organised through the LEP with the MA as Deputy Chair. Provided that the membership

and functions meet the regulations for the programme, the exact form of the local sub-committee can vary with local need.

349. The MA is responsible for managing the Operational Programmes in accordance with the principle of sound financial management.

350. The MA will do so by working in partnership with economic and social partners and bodies representing civil society at national, regional and local levels throughout the whole programme cycle consisting of preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

351. For the funds within the EU Growth Programme LEPs will be responsible for coordinating these partners and driving the production and delivery of a strategy which makes best use of the Funds in delivering growth in their area and reflects the aims set out in the Strategic Economic Plan. This LEP organised partnership will collectively bring forward operations which deliver the best balance of outcomes and agree those with the Managing Authority.

352. In outline Government envisages the process working as follows:

- Local partners will undertake a role in publicising and communicating opportunities for investment; the MA will ensure requirements on publicity and communications are met.
- Local partners co-ordinated by the LEP will promote desired investments for key local priorities and how they might be met through the Funds on a basis agreed by the local sub-committee. They will develop a pipeline of operations.
- The local sub-committee will develop and agree Annual Implementation Plans that will include arrangements for tendering and calls for projects by ESF Opt-In Organisations. The local sub-committee will also work with the Managing Authority to develop and implement open and fair calls for ESF project proposals involving competitive bidding arrangements for their area in line with EU regulations. The local sub-committee will agree with the MA what calls should take place and when: the MA will ensure compliance and carry out the calls agreed with the local sub-committee.
- The MA will then issue funding agreements for all compliant operations which are supported by the local sub-committee. The MA will not approve any operations that have not been approved as meeting the European Structural and Investment Funds strategy by the local sub-committee; and of course it will not approve any operation which is not compliant.
- The local sub-committee will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of investments and outputs, and as such will have access to project data for its area. The MA will be responsible for managing tenders and contracts.
- The local sub-committee will have the ability to challenge the MA and beneficiaries, to hold projects and providers including Opt-In Organisations to account.
- The local sub-committee will help design and oversee programme evaluation, which will be carried out on its behalf by the MA.

353. Managing Authorities will (amongst other tasks) ensure that:

- A single standardised business process is used for all ESF and ERDF operations using standard documentation and a shared information system. The

administration of EAFRD will follow similar principles but the processes will rest within the larger EAFRD administrative processes which will be aligned to the ESF and ERDF processes where possible.

- Coordination between ESF and ERDF is effectively 'hard-wired' into the system. The system will allow collaboration across LEP geographic areas and allow applicants to bring funds together to achieve desired outcomes. For example, local communities might support new businesses in a food supply chain, using ERDF to provide support for local companies, ESF to help build local skills and EAFRD to support training. As the ERDF, ESF and part of the EAFRD Operational Programmes underpinning the Growth Programme sit at the national level, coordination between the European Structural and Investment Funds will not be constrained by variations between spatial boundaries of the Funds.
- Partners co-ordinated by the LEP will work to ensure that European Structural and Investment Funds investments are aligned and complementary to interventions funded through local public and private sector funding. Partners are close to the practical implementation and understand the local economic needs and are therefore very well placed to advise on this complementarity and alignment. At national level, relevant government departments and agencies have been involved in the development of the framework to bring national public funding as match funding alongside European Structural and Investment Funds to offer national 'opt-in' arrangements (the 'opt-in model').

354. At least 70% of ESF will be delivered by opt-in organisations and they will therefore be key delivery partners throughout the programme. They will work closely with the LEP and local partners to put in place provision which meets their local priorities, and will provide regular information about its performance. Their knowledge of what works, and what is already available through core Government programmes, will be invaluable in shaping ESF provision which adds value and makes a difference.

7.2.2 Global Grants

355. There are no plans to use Global Grants in the ESF Operational Programme.

7.2.3 Earmarking for capacity building

356. Within Investment Priority 2.2 the programme will support capacity building activities, in the form of training, networking measures and to activities jointly undertaken by the social partners (i.e. employers and trade unions).

357. Within Investment Priority 1.4 the programme will support capacity building for VCSE organisations to encourage adequate participation of and access to actions supported by the European Social Fund, notably in the fields of social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities. Support for VCSE networks will be funded via Technical Assistance

SECTION 8. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FUNDS, THE EAFRD, THE EMFF AND OTHER UNION AND NATIONAL FUNDING INSTRUMENTS, AND WITH THE EIB - ARTICLE 87(6) (A) CPR

358. Coordination between the European Structural and Investment Funds is an overarching principle of the Growth Programme which will combine the ESF and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It will also include part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and will be aligned with the objectives of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Bringing the funds together in this way will allow much greater flexibility in the way money is spent.

359. Closer alignment will be achieved in three main ways:

- Integrated strategies. The strategies which have been produced at LEP level have been built on an integrated view of the needs of the local area, which have then informed the priorities of how the funds should be used at local level. This means that the funds will be used in a complementary way to drive local growth;
- Integrated oversight. At national and local levels single committees will oversee the implementation of the funds, and will be supported by Managing Authority teams working closely together;
- Integrated business processes. We have designed business processes which apply across ESF and ERDF, which will make it easier for any project which needs to apply for money from both funds.

360. There is also scope for ESF to be aligned with three other EU funding streams: ERASMUS for All, EURES and the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

ERASMUS for All

361. Within the Growth Programme, LEPs and partners have identified that ERASMUS for All has the potential to complement the skills thematic objective by supporting the development of STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills identified by employers as crucial for future prosperity. Other activities identified include: developing projects to support staff mobility across all sectors of lifelong learning; tapping into the programme's knowledge alliances between higher education institutions and employers; sector skills alliances to promote creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship; mobility for students; and youth exchanges and youth volunteering.

362. To complement the employment thematic objective, LEPs and partners have identified how ERASMUS for All can improve employability through improving the links between education and training providers and businesses, and improving the skills and employment prospects for young people and the long term unemployed.

363. The ERASMUS for All knowledge alliance initiative is an area which could be explored to see if there is potential to make effective linkages to social inclusion activities to add value and greater impact.

EURES

364. Within the Growth Programme, some LEP areas plan to utilise the EURES job matching initiative to complement activities around advice and guidance towards employment and skills. In addition, EURES has been identified as a programme to support initiatives and projects to assist activities to promote the mobility of workers.

Programme for Employment and Social Innovation

365. LEP areas have identified the potential for complementarity in areas such as skills and employment for young people, improving the working conditions, addressing gender/age imbalances and tackling barriers faced by vulnerable people. It is possible that local partners may wish to use ESF to test new approaches to employment and social inclusion developed through the Programme for Employment and Social Change, and to disseminate good practice.

National Funds

366. National government-funded programmes have historically been a key source of match funding for, and drawn down, significant EU funds. The programme will retain the delivery of ESF through Co-financing which was introduced in 2000-2006 and further developed in the 2007-2013 programme. Co-financing has enabled public bodies such as the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Work and Pensions and National Offender Management Service to manage ESF and national funding together.

367. Co-financing has proved an effective means of delivering ESF investment, and the programme intends to build on this success by allowing local partners to 'opt-in' to Co-financing in 2014-2020. This will allow LEPs and local partners to access match funding and administrative support from key national delivery organisations while retaining influence and strategic control of how services funded by European funds are delivered locally. The model provides a mechanism for national bodies to deliver policy priorities that are part-funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds and which are tailored to local conditions.

368. The National Offender Management Service will continue as a Co-financing Organisation and because of the complex nature of its client group, will receive a national allocation from the ESF.

SECTION 9: EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITY

Ex-ante conditionality	Criterion	Fulfilled	Reference (if fulfilled)	EXPLANATIONS
T 08.1	1 Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: personalised services and active and preventive labour market measures at an early stage, which are open to all jobseekers while focusing on people at highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	<p>Jobcentre Plus Pre-Work Programme Support</p> <p>Rapid Response Service</p> <p>Claimant Commitment</p> <p>National Careers Service</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>Help to Work (Post Work Support Programme)</p> <p>Access to Work</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-people-to-find-and-stay-in-work</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/moving-from-benefits-to-work/job-search-programmes</p>	Pre-Work Programme support delivers provision for all Jobcentre Plus claimant groups including JSA, Lone Parents, Carers, Partners, PET, ESA and those under notice of redundancy. Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches have the power to judge which work search interviews will best meet the needs of the individual and deliver these to encourage a return to employment. The model has three main elements; a core regime of regular face-to-face meetings, flexible Work Coach support, and a flexible menu of support options including, Skills provision and job search help Work Programme offers tailored support to those at risk of becoming long term unemployed. Jobseeker's Allowance claimants returning from the Work Programme will go onto one of three modes of support under the 'Help to Work' scheme. They will either attend the Jobcentre daily for jobsearch support, receive intensive adviser support, or undertake community work placements. Access to Work provides additional support for individuals whose he
T 08.1	2 Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: comprehensive and transparent information on new job vacancies and employment opportunities taking into account the changing needs	Yes	<p>The DWP has set up various initiatives with stakeholders to ensure vacancies and opportunities are made available and matched with candidates with appropriate skills.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-</p>	Arrangements are in place at Jobcentre Plus National, Group and District Level for • Forging relationships with key external partners such as Skills Funding Agency, National Careers Service, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Local Authorities, Tribunal Services, Local Strategic Partnerships, City Region Partnerships and Third Sector Organisations. • Local face to face employer engagement activity in District in including temporary work agencies• Engagement with local training providers including VET institutions and the Skills Funding Agencies• Managing relationship with the private employment agencies, temporary work agencies and major employers

	of the labour market.		people-to-find-and-stay-in-work	
T 08.1	3 Employment services have set up formal or informal cooperation arrangements with relevant stakeholders.	Yes	The DWP has set up various initiatives with stakeholders to ensure vacancies and opportunities are made available and matched with candidates with appropriate skills. https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-people-to-find-and-stay-in-work	Arrangements are in place at Jobcentre Plus National, Group and District Level for • Forging relationships with key external partners such as Skills Funding Agency, National Careers Service, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Local Authorities, Tribunal Services, Local Strategic Partnerships, City Region Partnerships and Third Sector Organisations. • Local face to face employer engagement activity in District in including temporary work agencies • Engagement with local training providers including VET institutions and the Skills Funding Agencies • Managing relationship with the private employment agencies, temporary work agencies and major employers.
T 08.6	1 A strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment is in place that:	Yes	‘Building Engagement, Building Futures’ sets out the aims and objectives for tackling youth unemployment. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-engagement-building-futures Youth Contract – a range of measures additional to the support already in place for young people http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/	he Youth Contract builds on existing support to provide young people with more intensive adviser support and work experience, as well as providing employers with wage incentives and apprenticeship grants to encourage them to recruit young people. The package of support followed extensive discussion with businesses about the practical help Government can provide to make it easier for them to take on fresh talent. Additional targeted support in ‘youth unemployment hotspots’ because those living in certain areas require more help because of the local conditions they face; Additional help is being targeted where it is needed the most. As part of the Youth Contract, Government is providing extra help to 16-17 year olds who are NEET and have low levels of attainment. This support is provided by voluntary and private sector organisations. Traineeships help young people aged 16 to 23 (inclusive) develop the skills and attributes they need to secure Apprenticeships .
T 08.6	2 is based on evidence that measures the results for young people not in employment, education or training and that represents a base	Yes	Data on people who are NEET is produced quarterly by both DfE and ONS at a national and regional level. The statistics can be found at https://www.gov.uk/	The data covers the total number of people that are Neet and breakdowns by age, sex and also splits by economic status ie; unemployed or inactive. As part of the Youth Contract, resource is focused to support the most disengaged and disadvantaged 16-17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. Destination Measures focus accountability on progression as well as achievement. Key Stage 4 and 5 Destination Measures show what proportion of a school or college’s students progressed to further education, Apprenticeships and to employment and

	to develop targeted policies and monitor developments;		government/publications/neet-statistics-quarterly-brief-july-to-september-2013 . The Client Caseload Information System is a system that monitors 16-18 year olds and records their activity (eg training, employment NEET) at local authority level.	training, in addition to the proportion of young people NEET.
T 08.6	3 identifies the relevant public authority in charge of managing youth employment measures and coordinating partnerships across all levels and sectors;	Yes	Measures to tackle youth unemployment are delivered through Government Ministries and Agencies, Local Government, and Education Authorities in concert as appropriate with a broad range of partners including business and not-for profit organisations.	
T 08.6	4 involves stakeholders that are relevant for addressing youth unemployment;	Yes	‘Building Engagement, Building Futures’ sets out the aims and objectives for tackling youth unemployment. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-engagement-building-futures	Measures to tackle youth unemployment are delivered through Government Ministries and Agencies, Local Government, and Education Authorities in concert as appropriate with a broad range of partners including business and not-for profit organisations.
T 08.6	5 allows early intervention and activation;	Yes	Sector Based Work Academies https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sector-	Sector-based work academies are designed to help meet employers’ immediate and future recruitment needs as well as to recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow their business. Work experience is targeted at claimants who are harder to help, particularly those who want to work but find their lack of experience a barrier to employment, for example, people seeking a job for the first time. All 16

			<p>based-work-academies-employer-guide</p> <p>Work Experience</p> <p>http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/</p>	<p>and 17 year olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training under the 'September Guarantee' regardless of what qualifications they had gained when they left school.</p>
T 08.6	<p>6 comprises supportive measures for access to employment, enhancing skills, labour mobility and sustainable integration of young people not in employment, education or training into the labour market.</p>	Yes	<p>Building Engagement, Building Futures: Our Strategy to Maximise the Participation of 16-24 year olds in Education, Training and Work'</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-engagement-building-futures</p> <p>Sector Based Work Academies</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sector-based-work-academies-employer-guide</p> <p>Work Experience</p> <p>http://www.dwp.gov.uk/youth-contract/</p>	<p>The strategy sets out the Government's approach to improving opportunities for young people, so they can succeed in education and training and gain the skills they need to secure employment and how to gain an Apprenticeship. It sets out how radical reforms to schools, vocational education, skills and welfare provision will all make a significant difference to young people's opportunities and support. Sector-based work academies are designed to help meet employers' immediate and future recruitment needs as well as to recruit a workforce with the right skills to sustain and grow their business. Work experience and Apprenticeships are part of decisive action across Government to address youth unemployment. Through increased access to work experience opportunities, the Government will foster the work habit in young people whilst boosting their confidence and creating opportunities for them to get on the job ladder.</p>
T 09.1	<p>1 A national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction, aiming at active inclusion, is in place that:</p>	Yes	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49515/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf</p> <p>See Annex</p>	<p>The Government's Social Justice Strategy was published in March 2012. The Government's reforms to the welfare system recognise work as the primary route out of poverty. The reforms make it fairer, more affordable and better able to tackle the causes of poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency. In tackling poverty, the Government's strategy is designed to address and reduce social exclusion.</p>

T 09.1	2 provides a sufficient evidence base to develop policies for poverty reduction and monitor developments;	Yes	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49515/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49518/social-justice-outcomes-framework.pdf https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-justice-transforming-lives-one-year-on	The Social Justice Strategy provides the evidence base for policies for poverty reduction. The Social Justice Outcome Framework sets out what the Government wants to achieve and how it will measure success. The Social Justice Transforming Lives One Year One report, published in April 2013, set out the progress made since the initial Strategy was launched.
T 09.1	3 contains measures supporting the achievement of the national poverty and social exclusion target (as defined in the National Reform Programme), which includes the promotion of sustainable and quality employment opportunities for people at the highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49515/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf Chapters 3 and 4	For example, the Work Programme began in 2011 and brings together support for people on a range of benefits and delivered by providers offering tailored, locally-appropriate employment support. By giving providers freedom to design support around the needs of the individual and by offering the greatest financial rewards for helping people with the greatest need, the Government is encouraging providers to find new and innovative solutions to getting individuals facing multiple disadvantages back to work. Prison Leavers for example, have Day One access to the Work Programme as soon as they are released from prison to help them back to work
T 09.1	4 involves relevant stakeholders in combating	Yes	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/	The Social Justice Strategy recognises that the most effective solutions will often be designed and delivered at a local level, requiring close partnership between the private, public and voluntary sectors. As outlined in the One Year On report, many local projects underway that

	poverty;		file/49515/social-justice-transforming-lives.pdf Chapter 5	are using these new approaches are producing better outcomes in combating poverty.
T 09.1	5 depending on the identified needs, includes measures for the shift from institutional to community based care;	Yes	The Government's Mental Health Strategy https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213761/dh_124058.pdf Closing the gap https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281250/Closing_the_gap_V2_-_17_Feb_2014.pdf	There has been a managed move over the last decade from an over dependence on inpatient services towards a comprehensive, community-based service, resulting in the development of networks of intensive community teams in many areas.
T 09.1	6 Upon request and where justified, relevant stakeholders will be provided with support for submitting project applications and for implementing and managing the selected projects.	Yes	ESF guidance http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esf/resources/guidance/	The ESF Managing Authority provides comprehensive online guidance for all project providers. In addition there is on the ground advice and guidance provided through local teams in the ESF Co-financing Organisations. ESF monitoring teams are also available to provide ongoing support and guidance during the life of an ESF project.
T 10.3	1 A national or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning is in place that contains measures:	Yes	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-	Sets out how government plans to:- raise standards by making the system more professional and intervening in poor provision;- create traineeships to prepare young people for work;- reform and improve the quality of Apprenticeships;- make qualifications relevant and valued;- use funding to make provision more responsive;- give employers and individuals the information to make the right choices. Sets out the basis for the HE reforms based on three key challenges:- Putting HE on a sustainable footing- Ensuring institutions deliver a better student experience; and,- Ensuring institutions take more responsibility for social mobility.

			<p>skills/docs/s/10-1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-challenges-new-chances-next-steps-in-implementing-the-further-education-reform-programme</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-white-paper-students-at-the-heart-of-the-system.</p>	
T 10.3	2 to support the developing and linking services for LL, including their implementation and skills upgrading (i.e. validation, guidance, education and training) and providing for the involvement of, and partnership with relevant stakeholders ;	Yes	<p>National Careers Service –the right advice at the right time April 2012 BIS publication URN 12/677</p> <p>Inspiration Vision Statement – Careers September 2013 BIS publication 13/1176</p> <p>Government Response to Recommendations from Ofsted’s Thematic Review and National Careers Council’s Report published September 2013 DFE-00169-2013</p>	National Careers Service provides information on careers, training opportunities and education and a place to store client’s searches – Life Long Learning Accounts. BIS is working with UKCES to develop “LMI for All” an online data portal which brings together existing labour market information. The data portal makes it easier for developers to create apps and websites which will help individuals and businesses make informed decisions about careers and learning options. LEPs publish local skills priorities on the National Careers Service website. Sets out a new direction for careers education in schools and colleges to inspire young people about the world of work and raises their aspirations for learning and career opportunities that are open to them. Sets out actions to be undertaken to improve careers guidance in schools, colleges and for adults through the National Careers Service
T 10.3	3 for the provision of skills development for	Yes	http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/s/10-	Sets out how Government will prioritise funding support for learners with very low levels of skills or the disadvantaged, while there will be an expectation that learners and employers will co-invest alongside Government in meeting the costs of intermediate and

	various target groups where these are identified as priorities in national or regional strategic policy frameworks (for example young people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities);		1274-skills-for-sustainable-growth-strategy.pdf https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-challenges-next-steps-in-implementing-the-further-education-reform-programme https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-white-paper-students-at-the-heart-of-the-system	higher level training courses from which they will derive private benefits. Sets out what Government will financially support and the programme of work required to take forward the reform of the FE and skills system for adults aged 19 and over in England - based on the principles set out in Skills for Sustainable Growth. New Challenges, New Chances also sets out new objectives for community learning. These focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in learning, including in rural areas and people on low incomes and with low skills. The objectives also seek to extend provision to those least able to pay through the collection of fees from those who can afford to pay.
T 10.3	4 to widen access to LL including through efforts to effectively implement transparency tools (for example the European Qualifications Framework, National Qualifications Framework, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training, European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training);	Yes	National Careers Service – the right advice at the right time April 2012 BIS publication URN 12/677	BIS is working with UKCES to develop “LMI for All” an online data portal which brings together existing labour market information. The data portal makes it easier for developers to create apps and websites which will help individuals and businesses make informed decisions about careers and learning options. LEPs publish local skills priorities on the National Careers Service website.

T 10.3	5 to improve the labour market relevance of education and training and to adapt it to the needs of identified target groups (for example young people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low-skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities).	Yes	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills</p> <p>The Richard Review of Apprenticeships</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-richard-review-of-apprenticeships</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-richard-review-next-steps</p> <p>http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/cavtl</p> <p>We promote skills competitions through the Skills Show and are an active participant in World Skills.</p> <p>http://www.theskillsshow.com/</p>	<p>Sets out how government plans to:- raise standards by making the system more professional and intervening in poor provision;- create traineeships to prepare young people for work;- reform and improve the quality of Apprenticeships;- make qualifications relevant and valued;- use funding to make provision more responsive;- give employers and individuals the information to make the right choices.</p> <p>Recommendations include redefining apprenticeships, focusing with greater rigour on the outcome of an apprenticeship, and using recognised industry standards to form the basis of every apprenticeship. It also recommends ensuring that all apprentices reach a good level in English and maths before they can complete their apprenticeship. Set up to investigate how to improve the quality of VET it's report makes 10 recommendations for improving the quality of adult teaching and learning</p>
T 10.4	1 A national or regional strategic policy framework is in place for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU which includes measures for the	Yes	<p>http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/adult-vocational-qualifications-in-england-review</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professionalism-in-further-education-final-report-of-the-independent-</p>	<p>The Review of Adult Vocation Qualifications in England presents a vision and strategy for adult vocational qualifications, building on other related reviews (such as CAVTL). The review looked at the characteristics appropriate to a regulated adult VQ - whether or not it is funded by public money. Report recommended that the regulation of the qualifications should be strengthened to focus vocational qualifications more clearly on the needs of employers and individuals. Work will be taken forward as part of a wider programme of policy initiatives which is aimed at transforming the vocational education and training system in England.</p>

	following:		<p>review-panel</p> <p>http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/</p> <p>http://news.bis.gov.uk/Press-Releases/Bursaries-of-up-to-20-000-offered-to-teach-maths-English-or-Special-Educational-Needs-SEN-690cc.aspx</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fe-commissioner-to-tackle-poor-performing-fe-colleges</p>	
T 10.4	2 to improve the labour market relevance of VET systems in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the strengthening of work-based learning provision in its different forms;	Yes	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-apprenticeships-in-england-richard-review-next-steps</p> <p>http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/cavtl</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-white-paper-students-at-the-heart-of-the-system</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rigour-and-responsiveness-in-skills</p>	<p>Sets out how government plans to:- raise standards by making the system more professional and intervening in poor provision;- create traineeships to prepare young people for work;- reform and improve the quality of Apprenticeships;- make qualifications relevant and valued;- use funding to make provision more responsive;- give employers and individuals the information to make the right choices. Sets out what an apprenticeship should be, and how apprenticeships can meet the needs of the changing economy. Recommendations include redefining apprenticeships, focusing with greater rigour on the outcome of an apprenticeship, and using recognised industry standards to form the basis of every apprenticeship. It also recommends ensuring that all apprentices reach a good level in English and Maths</p>

			ications/business-university-collaboration-the-wilson-review	
T 10.4	3 to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET including through establishing a national approach for quality assurance for VET (for example in line with the, European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) and implementing the transparency and recognition tools, for example European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training. (ECVET).	Yes	http://www.ukces.org.uk/publications/adult-vocational-qualifications-in-england-review https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professionalism-in-further-education-final-report-of-the-independent-review-panel http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/ http://www.theskillsshow.com/ https://worldskillsuk.apprenticeships.org.uk/home https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fe-commissioner-to-tackle-poor-performing-fe-colleges	The new independent and sector owned Education and Training Foundation has at the core of its responsibilities the development of a well qualified effective and up-to-date professional workforce, supported by good leadership, management and governance. It will define and promote professionalism in the sector, setting standards for teachers and teaching and ensure the availability of high quality initial teacher training. It will also focus on the continual professional development of the workforce to help improve learner outcomes. The Further Education (FE) Commissioner, will be responsible for driving improvement and acting quickly to tackle failing colleges. He will advise on the actions that need to be taken to swiftly tackle poor performance in FE colleges. .

SECTION 10. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

369. This section outlines the action that is being taken to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiary organisations.

370. The key focus of the approach to simplification has to been to review and apply the lessons learned from the 2007-2013 programmes and to introduce measures that reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries.

371. Beneficiary feedback has indicated that partners wish the Managing Authorities to develop a process and approach that includes the following features:

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
- approach aligned across different funds;
- standard documentation within a single business process, where possible;
- clear and unequivocal guidance;
- better access to information.

372. The Managing Authority has taken this feedback into account and designed the business process to be employed for the 2014-2020 programme on the following principles:

- a single process for structural Funds (the ERDF and ESF) including a single point of access, single application documentation/process whilst maintaining separate management of funds;
- the customer journey is at the heart of the process design – keeping things clear, simple and as accessible as possible. The emphasis is on clear and explicit information and guidance so that there are no surprises for the applicant/beneficiary;
- doing the right things at the right time and doing it well. Avoiding duplication and focusing resources and effort where they deliver most impact/benefit;
- reducing compliance risk through clear guidance and early and robust testing;
- digital by default - design and implementation of a single accessible IT system holding all relevant information and operating on the principle of 'collect once, use often'.

373. The process design reflects the valuable learning from the 2007-2013 and previous programmes resulting in a process that incorporates:

- clearly defined roles and responsibilities at all stages of the process;
- an IT system designed around the needs of the business process, and capable of meeting the varying needs of the programme life cycle;
- review and continuous improvement a key component of the process;
- systems designed to survive possible structural and organisational changes.

374. Specific examples of how the process will help reduce administrative burden on beneficiaries whilst maintaining robustness in approach are set out below.

Standardisation of management arrangements

375. A standard business processes will apply across all ERDF and ESF from the beginning of the programme. Applicants will have a single, clear route of entry into the European Structural and Investment Funds avoiding confusion and duplication.

Application and appraisal process

376. The application and appraisal process has been designed to focus on relevant and essential information appropriate to each stage in the application/approval process. Applications will be submitted through a single portal. Information should be provided once and tested at the appropriate time. The process has a strengthened focus on identifying and addressing potential compliance risk at the earliest stages. This will help mitigate risk to both the beneficiary and Managing Authority and ensure potential beneficiaries consider compliance more fully in developing applications.

Information technology

377. A single IT system will underpin the new business process. The Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority, Intermediate Bodies and beneficiaries will all have access and use the same system as the primary source of data and reporting. Wherever possible all transactions will be done electronically. This will ensure greater transparency, greater and faster access to information and simplify reporting.

Support for applicants

378. The Managing Authority will provide information, advice and support to local partners and applicants to ensure that all players are very clear of the requirements early in the process and are empowered to bring forward robust compliant applications capable of delivering the ambition of the Operational Programme.

Regulations, guidance and procedures

379. Guidance and information will be available from a single accessible portal. A single national set of controlled documents will be produced for the ERDF and ESF. The guidance will draw directly from the EU regulations and guidance as a minimum. Additional requirements will only be established where there is clear evidence from the lessons learned that additional requirements should be added. Guidance will be concise, clear and will avoid use of jargon.

Monitoring and audit

380. The scheduling of monitoring and verification visits will be co-ordinated across the ERDF and ESF. This is intended to reduce the number of individual visit requests and promote greater consistency. Standardised documents will be used for all monitoring and the Audit Authorities will use a shared set of criteria for ERDF and ESF audits. This will enable beneficiaries to better plan for and understand the requirements of monitoring and verification visits.

Simplified costs

381. Simplified costs will be the default approach for all indirect costs. This will provide greater clarity for applicants and beneficiaries and reduce the requirement for complex apportionment methodologies. This approach will also help reduce the risks of non compliance for beneficiaries.

Opt-in model

382. The 'opt-in' model has been developed to allow local partners to access national 'match' funding and administrative support from key national delivery organisations. The model provides a mechanism for national bodies to deliver policy priorities that are part-funded by the European Structural and Investment Funds and which are tailored to local conditions. The 'opt-in' model builds on Co-financing which was introduced in the 2000-2006 European Social Fund programme and further developed in the 2007-2013 programme. Co-financing has enabled public bodies to manage ESF and public match funding together, and has proved an effective means of delivering European Social Fund investment. By providing and accounting for 'match' funding, the 'opt-in' model will reduce administrative burdens on providers. It will also allow providers who do not have 'match' funding to access European Structural and Investment Funds, thus removing a major barrier to participation.

SECTION 11: HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

383. The Partnership Agreement sets out the overall approach to the horizontal principles of sustainable development and equal opportunities. This section describes the specific actions that will be taken to promote these principles within the England ESF Operational Programme.

11.1 Sustainable development

384. The objectives of the ESF programme will be pursued in line with the principle of sustainable development, including the aim of preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment as well as the need to prepare for expected changes to the environment and climate. The programme will build on the approach adopted in the 2007-2013 ESF programme and the lessons learned during that programme.

385. The ESF will support complementary activity, where possible, through skills enhancement and training, for sustainable development projects directly supported by other programmes such as the ERDF.

386. The Managing Authority will prepare a programme-level sustainable development mainstreaming plan in consultation with the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) sub-committee for sustainable development. This will include ESF partners and experts in sustainable development. Progress towards the aims and objectives of the plan will be reviewed on a regular basis during the life of the ESF programme and reports will be submitted to the PMC.

387. The Managing authority will build on good practice identified in the 2007-2013 programme. The Managing Authority will produce a brief report which looks back at lessons learned and which also identifies good practice examples of projects which had a specific environmental focus and those which demonstrated how environmental, social and economic actions could be mutually supportive. The report will also consider what types of project can be funded in the 2014-2020 period. The report will be publicly available to all partners and will also help inform the mainstreaming plan for 2014-2020.

388. The Managing Authority and Co-financing Organisations³⁹ will require all programme providers to have sustainable development governance, policies and implementation plans which explain: a) their commitment to promoting sustainable development and complying with relevant EU and domestic environmental legislation; and b) how the commitment will be turned into action at project level. Programme providers will also be required to lead by example in the way they run their own operations, including procurement and the way in which their personnel is equipped with relevant skills in sustainable development. In this way, individual ESF projects will, wherever possible, protect and improve the environment and be designed to ensure that environmental, social and economic activities are mutually supportive. The approach to this work will be proportionate and developmental: it will take account of the size, experience and nature of the organisations being funded.

³⁹ The Co-financing Organisations will include Opt-In Organisations and the National Offender Management Service.

389. The Managing Authority will require all Co-financing Organisations, Intermediate Bodies and Local Action Groups to ensure that sustainable development requirements are covered in their overall aims and decision making, project selection/procurement arrangements, contract management and monitoring (for both ESF and match funding). This requirement will also apply to the selection and management of projects which contract directly with the Managing Authority.

390. The Managing Authority will use ESF technical assistance funding to part-fund a sustainable development awareness training programme for Managing Authority, Intermediate Body and Co-financing Organisation procurement, contract management and monitoring staff during 2014-2020.

391. Provider contracts will be monitored. This will include basic checks such as ensuring that sustainable development policies and implementation plans are in place and that appropriate action is being taken to implement them.

392. The Managing Authority and Co-financing Organisations will ensure that sustainable development requirements are embedded into the specifications and contracts for ESF-funded and match-funded support.

393. The Managing Authority and Co-financing Organisations will ensure that relevant calls for proposals will, wherever possible, actively and visibly encourage applications which: support ESF activities that have a specific environmental focus, whilst also supporting jobs or skills; and provide complementary training support for specialist sustainable development activities delivered by other programmes such as ERDF.

394. The Managing Authority will monitor the extent to which: projects and providers are using sustainable development policies and plans; the programme is supporting specialist environmental projects; and the programme is providing specialist complementary support for specialist sustainable development projects that are being delivered by other programmes such as the ERDF. Sustainable development mainstreaming will be covered in the evaluation strategy.

11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

395. The programme will promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The Managing Authority and all partners involved in managing and delivering the programme will adhere to the principles and processes set out in EU and UK equality legislation.

396. By adhering to the principles and processes set out in domestic legislation, the UK Government will ensure that the programme will promote equal opportunities, non-discrimination and accessibility in accordance with EU requirements.

397. In line with domestic legislation and EU requirements, the UK Government has adopted the following principles to further integrate promotion of equality into the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation actions of all the European Structural and Investment Funds programmes for 2014-2020:

- no individuals are excluded from participation in the programmes on the grounds of their protected characteristics;
- the needs of all potential participants are considered at project design stage in

- order that the service is appropriately targeted and delivered;
- services are responsive to the needs of all communities and under-represented groups;
- support is targeted towards under-represented communities where relevant;
- responsiveness to, and inclusiveness of, under-represented groups in delivery and management.

398. DWP commissioned an evaluation of the mainstreaming of gender equality and equal opportunities within the ESF in England in 2010⁴⁰. The key findings of the final report were:

- Gender equality and equal opportunities legislation are valuable tools in the promotion of equalities, placing equalities issues high on the agenda of publicly funded bodies.
- ESF stakeholders promote equality in line with their public duties but improvements in the quality of gender equality and equal opportunities policies should be encouraged.
- Training on gender equality and equal opportunities for staff at all levels is highly desirable so that they can support and advise providers in mainstreaming gender equality and equal opportunities.
- There were some concerns from niche providers that the dual approach was under threat from an increase in prime contracting.
- Outreach, especially via community organisations, to disadvantaged groups is an important tool for meeting targets.

399. An equality assessment will be conducted as part of the ex-ante evaluation and will assess the likely impact that the programme will have on groups with protected characteristics. The findings from the ex-ante evaluation will inform the design of the programme and the equal opportunities and gender equality mainstreaming plan.

400. The Managing Authority will prepare a programme-level equal opportunities and gender equality mainstreaming plan in consultation with the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) sub-committee for equal opportunities.

401. The Managing Authority will ensure that equality is embedded in all relevant ESF guidance manuals, cross referring to existing good practice guidance and key lessons learned from the 2007-2013 programme. The guidance will include specific references to the need for disability and other equality organisations to be actively involved in preparing calls for proposals at local level so that specifications meet the needs of people with relevant protected characteristics.

402. Good practice guidance in promoting gender equality was published in 2013 and the good practice checklist which formed part of the guidance will be used to help inform core criteria for project selection along with other equality-related criteria. Projects will be required to adopt a holistic approach to meeting individual needs, and ensuring that the design and delivery of their provision, including recruitment is gender sensitive will also be a contractual requirement under the programme.

⁴⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/194251/667summ.pdf

403. The Managing Authority will require all Co-financing Organisations, Intermediate Bodies and Local Action Groups to ensure that equal opportunities is embedded in project selection/procurement arrangements, contract management and monitoring. This requirement will also apply to the selection and management of projects which contract directly with the Managing Authority.

404. The Managing Authority will use ESF technical assistance funding to part-fund an equal opportunities awareness training programme for Managing Authority, Intermediate Body and Co-financing Organisation procurement, contract management and monitoring staff during 2014-2020. Key staff from local partners, including LEPs and projects, will also be invited to the workshops. Workshop material will be made available to staff who are unable to attend the workshops.

405. Provider contracts will be monitored and will include basic checks such as ensuring that equality policies and implementation plans are in place for delivery. Providers will be required to ensure that their activities are fully accessible to disabled people in line with their public duty under the 2010 Equality Act.

406. The Managing Authority will ensure that there is regular monitoring of the participation rates by age, disability, ethnicity and gender. Results data will also be monitored and the Managing Authority will report on performance to the PMC and PMC sub-committee for equal opportunities. Equality will be embedded in the evaluation strategy.

11.3 Equality between men and women

407. The EU regulations attach a particular importance to the equal treatment of men and women and the need to ensure that that women can access and benefit from ESF support. The promotion of gender equality is also a key legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The same approach and actions set out in section 7.2 will apply to equality between men and women.

408. The Managing Authority, Co-financing Organisations, Intermediate Bodies and Local Action Groups will be required to promote gender equality when preparing their calls for proposals or procurement rounds. Project applicants submitting tenders or applications will be required to explain how they will actively promote gender equality through the design and delivery of their projects. For example, a tender specification for in-work training should require the applicant organisation to explain how it will ensure that female employees will have access to support, including those who may be working part-time and or have child care needs.

409. Providers targeting disadvantaged people and other groups in the programme are also required under the Equality Act 2010 to do so with a corresponding gender focus. This will include actively encouraging more women to take part in the programme, as well as making sure that the type and nature of support offered is appropriate and helps meet the needs of women, including disadvantaged women.

410. Programme providers will be expected to consider the needs of women in a number of key areas of design and delivery of their services, for example by:

- promoting gender equality throughout their recruitment process;
- offering information, advice and guidance;

- providing or procuring childcare support where this might be a barrier to participation;
- ensuring that the structure and content of the activities delivered are suitable and appropriate for women and men;
- ensuring that provision is accessible, flexible and gender-sensitive where necessary.

411. The Managing Authority will ensure that there is regular monitoring of the participation rates for women and men. Results data will also be monitored and the Managing Authority will report on performance to the PMC and local sub-committees. The Managing Authority will make data on participation and results available to local sub-committees so that they can monitor progress in their areas.

SECTION 12: SEPARATE ELEMENTS

Performance Framework of Operational Programme

Table 28 Performance Framework by fund and category of region (summary table)

Priority	ID	Fund	Category of Region	Key Implementation Step or Indicator	Measurement of Unit	Milestone Total for 2018	Milestone Men for 2018	Milestone Women for 2018	Final Men Target (2023)	Final Women Target (2023)	Final Target (2023)
	1	ESF	Less developed	Amount of spend	Euros	34,000,000					116,494,783.00
1	2	ESF	Less developed	Participants	Number	10,000					37,000.00
1	1	ESF	Transition	Amount of spend	Euros	105,000,000					362,866,603.00
1	2	ESF	Transition	Participants	Number	77,000					278,000.00
1	1	ESF	More developed	Amount of spend	Euros	365,000,000					1,232,265,034.00
1	2	ESF	More developed	Participants	Number	230,000					839,000.00
1	1	YEI		Amount of spend	Euros	319,576,848					319,576,848.00
1	3	YEI		Participants (below 25 years of age) who are unemployed OR inactive (not in education or training)	Number	86,000					86,000.00
2	1	ESF	Less developed	Amount of spend	Euros	14,000,000					49,739,346.00
2	16	ESF	Less developed	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	5,000					18,000.00
2	1	ESF	Transition	Amount of spend	Euros	90,000,000					314,475,865.00
2	16	ESF	Transition	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	35,000					134,000.00
2	1	ESF	More developed	Amount of spend	Euros	280,000,000					940,920,700.00
2	16	ESF	More developed	Participants who are women or over 54 or ethnic minorities or disabled	Number	175,000					644,000.00