

England and Gibraltar European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence, Competitiveness and Employment Programme 2007-2013

Final ESF Gender Equalities and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Progress Report

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Female participation in the England ESF programme – an analysis of the female participation rate in the first and second halves of the programme period.	5
2.1 Background.....	5
3. Female Participation Rate at programme level	6
4. Female participation rate at programme and CFO level	7
5. Female participation rate at programme priority level	7
(Priority 1 and 4)	7
(Priority 2 and 5)	7
6. Tables 1- 5: Female Participation	8
Table 1: Female participation – programme level	8
Table 2: Female Participation – programme level (excluding NOMS data).....	8
Table 3: Female participation rate (FPR) at programme level by CFO	9
Table 4 Female Participation Rate (FPR) by Priority Levels 1 and 4	11
Table 5: Female Participation Rate (FPR) by Priority Levels 2 and 5	12
7. Progress towards the programme's other key equality targets	14
Table 6: Progress towards key programme equality targets	14
Table 7: Progress towards key employment and skills indicators for females and protected groups specifically targeted by the programme.....	14
8. Key Equality Targets By Priority.....	15
Table 8: Progress towards equality targets - Priority 1	15
Table 9: Priority 1: 'In work on leaving' indicators (no targets).....	16
Table 10: Progress towards equality targets – Priority 4	16
Table 11: 'In work on leaving' indicators (no targets) – Priority 4.....	17
Table 12: Progress towards equality targets - Priority 2.....	17
Table 13: 'Gained basic skills' indicators (no targets) – priority 2	18
Table 14: progress towards equality targets - Priority 5	18
Table 15: 'Gained basic skills' indicators (no targets) – Priority 5.....	19
9. High-level summary of progress made towards the aims and objectives of the England ESF equal opportunities mainstreaming plan during the 2007-2013 programme period	19
10. A summary of progress made towards the ESF mainstreaming plan's key aims and objectives in the first half of the ESF programme (2007-2010).....	21

11. A summary of progress made towards the ESF mainstreaming action plan’s key aims and objectives in the second half of the ESF programme (2012-2015)23

12. Conclusions24

13. Recommendations25

1. Introduction

1.1 This report describes the progress that the England ESF programme (2007-2013) made towards: (i) the programme's equality targets by the end of the programme period and (ii) the aims and objectives set out in the programme's equality mainstreaming plan.

1.2 Section 2 of this report focuses on Aim 1 of the ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Plan which was to increase the female participation rate so that it reached the target of 51% for the period covering the second half of the programme period.

1.3 Section 3 of this report describes the overall progress that the programme made towards the programme and priority-level equality targets that were set out in the ESF operational programme (representation and participant results).

1.4 Section 4 of this report provides a **high level summary** of the progress made toward the mainstreaming plan aims and objectives up until the end of the programme period.

1.5 The report's conclusions and recommendations are set out in sections 5 and 6 respectively.

1.6 Although the 2007-2013 programme clearly supported a large number of people, it should be noted that it counted 'participant events' (i.e. the number of times people started and left the programme) and not individual people. This meant that, inevitably, there would have been some double-counting of those individuals who left and re-joined the programme – which will have inflated the number of 'participants' on the programme. The Head of the European Commission's ESF Evaluation Unit recently explained that such an approach may have resulted in up to a third of ESF participants being double-counted across the EU. This approach was a requirement across all 28 Member States.

1.7 It should also be noted that when the targets were set at the beginning of the programme, the original intention was for them to be reviewed and updated at the mid-point of the programme period. However, the European Commission asked ESF to **only carry forward the original percentage targets into the second half of the programme period and not to update the whole-number (non-percentage) targets. The whole numbers are therefore presented for information only and should not be compared with the original non-percentage targets.**

2. Female participation in the England ESF programme – an analysis of the female participation rate in the first and second halves of the programme period.

2.1 Background

2.2 The issue of the female participation rate being lower than the 51% target that was anticipated at the start of the programme was discussed at the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) in September 2010. The ESF Evaluation Team explained that there was a shortfall because:

- there has been a higher number of unemployed participants in Priority 1 than forecast in the first half of the programme and the higher number of male participants reflects the gender imbalance in the unemployed population; and
- the programme flexed to respond to the increase in unemployment which increased more among men than women in England, thereby supporting the European Economic Recovery Plan.

2.3 Following the PMC meeting, the European Commission wrote to ESF Division stating that:

2.4 Gender equality in the ESF programme was a fundamental issue for the European Commission.

2.5 The ESF Operational Programme was predicated on the basis of promoting gender equality.

2.6 Although the European Commission readily acknowledged the impact that the economic crisis had on mainstream provision in England, with its focus on unemployed and young people, the programme needed to be re-balanced by pro-actively targeting female participants within the unemployed target group and refocusing provision on more inactive participants in P1 and P4. Within Priority 2 there should be more proactive targeting to continue targeting female groups who now face even greater difficulty in entering the labour market.

2.7 ESFD should consider alternative strategies to encourage female participants onto the programme.

2.8 The European Commission asked DWP ESF Division to report on the ESF programme's progress towards increasing the female participation rate to 51% for the second half of the programme period.

2.9 In order to make comparisons in performance between the two halves of the programme, the following periods were selected:

- January 2008-December 2011 (1st half of programme period)

- January 2012 – December 2015 (2nd half of programme period)

2.10 The two periods above were chosen to represent the two halves of the programme period because:

- the delivery of contracts didn't start until 2008;
- the current programme will continue to fund activities up until 2015; and
- contracts for the second half of the programme didn't start until 2012.

2.11 DWP ESF Division put into place arrangements for reporting on female representation for the two halves of the programme period. ESF Division also asked its CFO partners to **take action** to try to improve performance in terms of female representation for the second half of the programme. ESF Division issued the original Action Note 70 to CFOs in February 2012. The Action Note required CFOs to:

- identify providers / provider contracts not achieving the 51% female participation target; and
- prepare a review schedule for providers not achieving the 51% female participation rate (so that contract monitoring / CFO staff could identify providers lagging behind the target - and to agree what action the provider could take to support female participation).

2.12 Although CFOs made good progress in identifying a baseline of providers to include in the review schedule, the fact that many contracts were coming to an end and the timing of the second round of contracts meant that hardly any reviews actually took place in 2012.

2.13 An updated Action Note 70 was issued to CFOs in February 2013, requiring them to submit two progress reports on the reviews that they have had with providers and the action that has been agreed to try to increase the female participations rate. CFOs have been asked to report at the end of April and end of October 2013 and again in 2014. A gender equality good practice checklist was included as an annex to the Action Note to help CFOs develop their reviews with providers. This checklist was based upon the ESF gender equality good practice guidance that was published in March 2012.

3. Female Participation Rate at programme level

3.1 Table 1 shows that the female participation rate achieved **in the second half of the programme** was 40% (representing a 2 percentage point increase compared to the first half of the programme period) and was 11 percentage points below the national programme target.

3.2 Table 2 shows that when National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) data is excluded from the dataset, the female participation rate at programme-level is 44% - which is 7 percentage points short of the overall programme target of 51%. (NOMS provision is male-dominated, reflecting the prison population.)

4. Female participation rate at programme and CFO level

4.1 The **DWP CFO** achieved a female participation rate of 49% by the end of the second half of the programme period (see Table 3) – just 2 percentage points below the 51% target (and 16 percentage points higher than the rate achieved in the first half of the programme period , albeit with a smaller number of participants).

4.2 Table 3 shows that the **Skills Funding Agency CFO** had the largest number of participants recorded on the ESF INES MI database. The overall female participation rate remained at 43% in the second half of the programme.

4.3 Table 3 shows that the proportion of **NOMS CFO** participants who were female remained at 8% by the end of the programme period.

4.4 The **other CFOs** have increased their female participation rate by 7 percentage points and achieved the programme level target by the end of the programme period.

5. Female participation rate at programme priority level

(Priority 1 and 4)

5.1 Table 4 shows that the female participation rate achieved in **Priority 1** by the end of the programme period was 34% - representing a one percentage point increase over the rate achieved in the first half of the programme period (and a 16 percentage point shortfall against the overall programme target). It is clear that the NOMS CFO's male-dominated provision (focusing on offenders) in Priority 1 had a significant effect on the overall female participation rate in Priority 1.

5.2 Table 4 shows that the female participation rate achieved in **Priority 4** by the end of the programme period was 35% - representing a 6 percentage point decrease compared to the female participation rate achieved in the first half of the programme period and a 16 percentage point shortfall compared to the national target of 51%. The total number of participants in Priority 4 (74,888) was relatively small compared to the other priorities.

(Priority 2 and 5)

5.3 Table 5 below shows that the female participation rate achieved in **Priority 2** by the end of the programme period was 48% - representing a one percentage point increase compared to the female participation rate achieved in the first half of the programme period.

5.4 Table 5 shows that the female participation rate achieved in **Priority 5** was 53% (exceeding the programme target by 2 percentage points) and representing a single percentage point increase compared to the rate achieved in the first half of the programme period.

6. Tables 1- 5: Female Participation

Table 1: Female participation – programme level

	1 st half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2 nd half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Total number of participants	3,329,663 Previously: 3,284,849	2,771,677 Previously: 2,262,585
Female participation rate (FPR) target	51%	51%
Female participation rate (FPR)	38% (1,267,726) Previously: 38%	40% (1,109,354) Previously: 38%
Excess / deficit	-13% points	- 11% points

Total number of ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,595,252 40% (631,832)	1,725,200 39% (681,328)
Total number of Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,446,657 37% (537,994)	936,206 41% (386,973)
Total number of Both ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	287,754 34% (97,900)	110,271 37% (41,053)

Source: DWP ESF INES MI

Table 2: Female Participation – programme level (excluding NOMS data)

	1 st half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2 nd half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Total number of participants	3,056,175 Previously: 3,011,450	2,476,571 Previously: 1,967,469

Female participation rate (FPR) target	51%	51%
Female participation rate (FPR)	41% (1,245,867) Previously 41%	44% (1,085,848) Previously: 43%
Excess / deficit	-10% points	-7% points

Total number of ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,559,171 40% (627,197)	1,671,090 40% (674,696)
Total number of Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,220,494 43% (522,203)	725,475 51.5% (373,736)
Total number of Both* ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	276,510 35% (96,467)	80,006 47% (37,416)

**This is a separate funding stream for participants funded by both ESF and Match.*

Source: DWP ESF INES MI

Table 3: Female participation rate (FPR) at programme level by CFO

	1 st half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2 nd half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Total number of DWP CFO participants	740,239 Previously: 740,233	111,045 Previously: 111,132
Female participation rate (FPR) DWP CFO	33% (245,518) Previously 33%	49% (54,746) Previously: 49%
DWP CFO FPR Excess / deficit - compared to 51% target	-18% points	-2% points
Total number of DWP CFO ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	272,392 33% (89,316)	104,148 50% (52,239)
Total number of DWP CFO Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	467,847 33% (156,202)	6,897 36% (2,507)

Total number of Skills Funding Agency CFO participants	2,105,517 Previously: 2,067,426	2,306,478 Previously: 1,800,280
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Female participation rate (FPR) Skills Funding Agency CFO	43% (906,883) Previously: 43%	43% (1,001,172) Previously: 42%
Skills Funding Agency CFO Excess / deficit - compared to 51% target	-8% points	-9% points
Total number of Skills Funding Agency CFO ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,228,657 42% (511,434)	1,551,895 40% (615,733)
Total number of Skills Funding Agency CFO Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	727,264 49% (355,136)	716,434 52% (369,912)
Total number of Skills Funding Agency CFO Both ESF + Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	149,596 27% (40,313)	38,149 41% (15,527)

Total number of NOMS CFO participants	273,488 Previously: 273,399	295,106 Previously: 295,116
Female participation rate (FPR) NOMS CFO	8% (21,859) Previously: 8%	8% (23,506) Previously: 8%
NOMS CFO FPR* Excess / deficit Compared to notional 51% target *	-43% points*	-43% points*
NOMS CFO FPR excess / deficit (compared to operational target of 9%)	-1% point	-1 % points
Total number of NOMS CFO ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	36,081 13% (4,635)	54,110 12% (6,632)
Total number of NOMS CFO Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	226,163 7% (15,791)	210,731 6% (13,237)
Total number of NOMS CFO Both ESF + Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	11,244 13% (1,433)	30,265 12% (3,637)

Total number of `Other' CFOs participants	210,419 Previously: 203,791	59,048 Previously: 56,057
Female participation rate (FPR) `Other CFOs'	44% (93,466) Previously: 45%	51% (29,930) Previously: 50%

`Other' CFOs Excess / deficit - compared to 51% target	-7% points	-0% points
Total number of Other CFO ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	58,122 46% (26,447)	15,047 45% (6,724)
Total number of Other CFO Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	25,383 50% (10,865)	2,144 61% (1,317)
Total number of Other CFO Both ESF + Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	126,914 44% (56,154)	41,857 52% (21,889)

The 51% FPR target referred to in the NOMS CFO row of this table is a theoretical one and included for comparison purposes only. NOMS CFO is working towards achieving a **9% FPR** – this target has been set lower due to the nature of its mostly male client group;

Table 4 Female Participation Rate (FPR) by Priority Levels 1 and 4

	1st half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2nd half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Priority level 1	2,036,147	1,639,586 35% (565,804)
Number of participants + FPR%	33% (662,181) Previously: 33%	Previously: 34%
Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target	- 18% points	-16% points
Total number of P1 ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	965,122 35% (336,661)	920,371 36% (329,744)
Total number of P1 Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	970,325 29% (285,349)	651,235 33% (212,156)
Total number of P1 Both ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	100,700 40% (40,171)	67,980 35% (23,904)
DWP CFO P1 Number of participants + FPR%	722,905 33% (239,163) Previously: 33%	101,199 50% (50,693) Previously 50%
SFA CFO P1 Number of participants + FPR%	887,796 37% (331,601) Previously 37%	1,193,357 39% (466,007) Previously 39%
NOMS CFO P1 Number of participants + FPR%	273,278 8% (21,834)	294,531 8% (23,444)

	Previously 8%	Previously 8%
Other CFOs P1 Number of participants + FPR%	152,168 46% (69,583) Previously 46%	50,499 51% (25,660) Previously 51%

Priority level 4 FPR * Number of participants + FPR%	42,236 41% (17,427) Previously 41%	32,652 35% (11,539) Previously 36%
Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target	- 10% points	-16% points
Total number of P4 ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	30,347 41% (12,531)	17,890 38% (6,853)
Total number of P4 Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	11,725 41% (4,804)	14,762 32% (4,686)
Total number of P4 Both ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	164 56% (92)	*
DWP CFO P4 Number of participants + FPR%	17,334 37% (6,355) Previously: 37%	9,846 41% (4,053) Previously 41%
SFA CFO P4 Number of participants + FPR%	24,273 45% (10,831) Previously: 45%	21,844 33% (7,238) Previously: 34%
NOMS CFO P4 Number of participants + FPR%	210 12% (25) Previously: 12%	575 11% (62) Previously 11%
Other CFOs P4	419 52% (216) Previously 52%	387 48% (186) Previously 48%

**None for this funding stream.*

Table 5: Female Participation Rate (FPR) by Priority Levels 2 and 5

	1st half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2nd half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Priority level 2 FPR Number of participants + FPR%	1,173,697 47% (547,482) Previously 47%	1,055,835 48% (508,951) Previously 46%
Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target	-4% points	-3% points

Total number of P2 ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	546,869 46% (252,676)	748,134 43% (324,215)
Total number of P2 Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	446,148 54% (239,217)	265,497 63% (167,644)
Total number of P2 Both ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	180,680 31% (55,589)	42,204 40% (17,092)
SFA CFO FPR P2 Number of participants + FPR%	1,120,289 47% (526,274) Previously:47%	1,051,077 48% (506,933) Previously: 46%
Other CFOs FPR (P2) Number of participants + FPR%	53,408 40% (21,208) Previously 43%	4,758 42% (2,018) Previously 42%

Priority level 5 FPR Number of participants + FPR%	77,583 52% (40,636) Previously 53%	43,604 53% (23,060) 53% Previously 54%
Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target Number of participants + FPR%	+1% points	+2% points
Total number of P5 ESF funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	52,914 57% (29,964)	38,805 53% (20,516)
Total number of P5 Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	18,459 47% (8,624)	4,712 53% (2,487)
Total number of P5 Both ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	6,210 33% (2,048)	87 66% (57)
SFA CFO FPR P5 Number of participants + FPR%	73,159 52% (38,177) Previously: 53%	40,200 52% (20,994) Previously:53%
Other CFOs FPR P5 Number of participants + FPR%	4,424 56% (2,459) Previously: 55%	3,404 61% (2,066) Previously 63%

7. Progress towards the programme's other key equality targets

Table 6: Progress towards key programme equality targets

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/-
1.	Total number of participants	1,790,000	6,101,340	+4,311,340
8.	Female participants	51%	39%	-12% -points
7.	Participants from ethnic minorities	19%	18%	-1 % point
5.	Participants with disabilities or health conditions	19%	16%	-3% points
6.	Participants aged 50 or over	19%	16%	-3% points

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' May 2016

Table 7: Progress towards key employment and skills indicators for females and protected groups specifically targeted by the programme

	In work on leaving (ESF OP priorities 1 and 4 only)	Gained basic skills on leaving	Gained full qualification at level 2 or above on leaving
Target 2007-13	201,000	160,000	174,000
Cumulative achievement	581,395	343,827	788,569
% female	34%	56%	48%
% disabled	16%	11%	9%
% aged 50 or over	10%	11%	14%
% ethnic minority	16%	22%	14%

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' Database May 2016

7.1 Tables 6 and 7 above provide data on the extent to which ESF has helped the different protected groups and the progress that different groups have made towards getting a job or achieving skills.

7.2 Table 6 shows that the total number of 'participants' (participant events) exceeded the original target by 4,311,340 and that the participation rate for women (for the **whole** programme period) was 12 percentage points below the 51% target.

7.3 Table 7 shows that the target for those entering work on leaving ESF was 201,000. This target has been exceeded by 380,395 so far (cumulative total = 581,395).

7.4 Of those who went into work on leaving, 66% were male – although women appear to out-perform men in terms of achieving basic skills (56% women compared to 44% men – see Table 7).

7.5 Nearly half of women achieved level 2 qualifications on leaving (48%).

7.6 Participants aged 50+ are the lowest achievers in terms of finding work on leaving (10%).

7.7 Although 16% of disabled people entered work on leaving ESF, they were less likely to achieve basic skills (11%) and level 2 qualifications (9%) than other groups.

8. Key Equality Targets By Priority

Table 8: Progress towards equality targets - Priority 1

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
1.1	Participants	887,000	3,675,733	+2,788,733
1.5	Disabled	22%	22%	0% points
1.7	Aged 50 plus	18%	15%	-3% points
1.8	Ethnic minorities	25%	21%	-4% points
1.9	Female	51%	33%	-18% points

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (May 2016)

8.1 The table above describes overall progress towards the equality targets since the start of the programme.

8.2 The total number of participants in Priority 1 since the start of the programme is 3,675,733. The total number of participants target has therefore been exceed by 2,788,733 (see table 8 above).

8.3 In Priority 1, the largest shortfall is for female participation (18 percentage points below the programme's 51% target) followed by participants from ethnic minorities. The target for the participation of disabled people was fully met (22%).

Table 9: Priority 1: 'In work on leaving' indicators (no targets)

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement
1.10a	In work on leaving	195,000	567,412
1.10b	In work on leaving (% of leavers)	22%	16%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	34%
	Disabled	N/A	16%
	50+	N/A	10%
	Ethnic Minority	N/A	16%

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (May 2016)

8.4 16% of Priority 1 leavers were in work on leaving. Of these, 66% were male and 34% were female.

8.5 16% of leavers in work on leaving were disabled – as were 16% of participants from ethnic minorities. 10% of participants aged 50+ entered work on leaving Priority 1.

Table 10: Progress towards equality targets – Priority 4

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
4.1	Participants	24,500	74,888	+50,388
4.5	Disabled	27%	37%	+10% points
4.7	Aged 50 plus	30%	15%	-15% points
4.8	Ethnic minorities	1%	2%	+1% points
4.9	Female	51%	39%	-12% points

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (May 2016)

8.6 Table 10 above shows the proportion of female participants is 12 percentage points below the target of 51%. Participants with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities have exceeded the programme targets by 10 percentage points and one percentage point respectively.

8.7 Participants aged 50+ make up 15% of Priority 4 participants (compared to a target of 30%). The participation rate for participants aged 50+ at programme level is 16% - see Table 1).

Table 11: 'In work on leaving' indicators (no targets) – Priority 4

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Cumulative achievement
4.15	In work on leaving (as % of all leavers)	19%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>	
	Female	38%
	Disabled	27%
	50+	15%
	Ethnic Minority	1%

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (May 2016)

8.8 The table above shows that 19% of all Priority 4 leavers are in work on leaving.

8.9 Participants from ethnic minorities make up only one percentage point of those in work on leaving. This reflects the small ethnic minority population in the South West.

Table 12: Progress towards equality targets - Priority 2

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
2.1	Participants	825,000	2,229,532	+1,404,532
2.5	Disabled	15%	7%	-8% points
2.6	Aged 50 plus	20%	17%	-3% point
2.7	Ethnic minorities	13%	15%	+2% points
2.8	Female	50%	47%	-3% points

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (May 2016)

8.10 Table 12 above shows that the female participation rate is only three percentage points below the 50% target for Priority 2.

8.11 The proportion of disabled participants in Priority 2 is 8 percentage points below the target of 15%.

8.12 The proportion of ethnic minority participants is two percentage points above target.

8.13 Table 13 below shows that 42% of Priority 2 participants achieve basic skills. Over half of the participants gaining basic skills were female (59%) and nearly a fifth (19%) of those gaining basic skills were participants from ethnic minorities.

8.14 Nearly half of the participants achieving level 2 qualifications were female (46%) and 18% of participants achieving level 2 qualifications were aged 50+.

Table 13: 'Gained basic skills' indicators (no targets) – priority 2

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement
2.9	Gained basic skills	152,000	225,773
2.9b	Gained basic skills	45%	42%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	59%
	Disabled	N/A	7%
	50+	N/A	12%
	Ethnic Minority	N/A	19%
2.10a	Gained level 2	135,000	401,547
2.10b	Gained level 2	40%	40%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	46%
	Disabled	N/A	7%
	50+	N/A	18%
	Ethnic minority	N/A	15%

Source: DWP 'INES' ESF Database (May 2016)

Table 14: progress towards equality targets - Priority 5

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
5.1	Participants	50,200	106,376	+70,987
5.8	Disabled	17%	10%	-7% points
5.9	Aged 50 plus	22%	18%	-4% points
5.10	Ethnic minorities	1%	2%	+1% point
5.12	Female	51%	53%	+2% points

Source: DWP 'INES' ESF Database (May 2016)

8.15 Table 14 above shows that the participation rate for Priority 5 females exceeds the 51% target by two percentage points.

8.16 The participation rate for disabled participants is 7 percentage points below the target of 17%.

Table 15: 'Gained basic skills' indicators (no targets) – Priority 5

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement
5.12a	Gained basic skills	8,200	10,524
	<i>Of whom.....</i>	N/A	
	Female	N/A	55%
	Disabled	N/A	10%
	50+	N/A	15%
	Ethnic Minority	N/A	2%
5.13a	Gained level 2	7,300	16,058
5.13b	Gained level 2	40%	45%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	45%
	Disabled	N/A	9%
	50+	N/A	18%
	Ethnic minority	N/A	2%

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (May 2016)

8.17 Table 15 above shows that 55% of those gaining basic skills in Priority 5 were women. The table also shows that 45% of those gaining level 2 qualifications were women.

8.18 The small percentage of ethnic minority participants gaining basic skills and level 2 qualifications reflects the small population in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

9. High-level summary of progress made towards the aims and objectives of the England ESF equal opportunities mainstreaming plan during the 2007-2013 programme period

9.1 This section of the progress report describes the progress made towards the ESF equal opportunities mainstreaming plan and focuses on the 'non-statistical' progress made in the first and second halves of the programme period.

9.2 The aims and objectives of the mainstreaming plan for the first half of the programme period were discussed and agreed with the ESF Equality Sub Committee and very much reflected the commitments that had been made in the ESF Operational programme – including the setting up of monitoring and reporting systems as well as basic training in equality for staff and the promotion of good practice. The mainstreaming plan also reflected legal and regulatory requirements.

9.3 The mainstreaming plan was significantly revised in 2011 – with a much greater emphasis being placed on promoting female participation in the second half of the programme period. The mainstreaming plan was discussed and agreed by the ESF Equal Opportunities Sub Committee.

9.4 The revisions to the plan reflected the recommendations for action that had been made in the update to the Equality Impact Assessment (August 2011) as well as recommendations made in: the formal evaluation of gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming; the annual mainstreaming reports; and on-going regulatory / legal requirements.

9.5 Recommendations made in the ESF Equality Impact Assessment Update (2011) included the need to:

- update the mainstreaming plan for the second half of the programme to include a specific aim to increase female participation rates during the second half of the programme increase female participation by setting up an ESF Technical Assistance Project to: deliver national gender equality workshops in ESF to identify current practices in promoting gender equality, including procurement, contracting processes and monitoring – as well as well as considering delivery issues such as care provision and other good practice;
- promote gender equality through the ESF Leader Awards for 2011 by having a specific gender category of the award;
- update equality guidance for CFO staff so that it is tailored to meet their needs;
- promote good practice as identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) Triennial Review of equality (for example, EHRC's Trans Research review report no. 27);
- ask the Skills Funding Agency to report on under performance of representation of disabled people in Priority 2 and ask the Skills Funding Agency to explain what action they can take to increase participation rates of this group; and
- to produce annual updates of the EIA – these will be much briefer than the original update and will focus on key issues identified and may be incorporated as a specific section within the annual mainstreaming progress report .

9.6 Key recommendations from the evaluation report on ESF gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming included the need to:

- improve female participation rates;
- agree a position statement on CFO contract managers and monitoring officer roles in actively promoting equal opportunities as part of the programme's mainstreaming requirement and amending the national guidance accordingly (this was targeted on DWP contract managers – see Aim 7 below and development of a standardised DWP13 checklist);
- agree minimum standards for assessing equal opportunities policies and implementation plans, including on-going progress, as well taking into account existing or planned procurement arrangements as far as possible;
- provide targeted training workshops where required to ensure a consistent level of expertise and updating good practice guidance and training materials where necessary; and
- agree good practice for publicising and recruiting people from ethnic minorities and other protected groups.

9.7 Key recommendations identified in the annual ESF gender equality mainstreaming progress report identified the need to:

- address the shortfall in the female participation rate;
- promote female participation through DWP CFO's Priority 1 provision for families with multiple problems;
- commission action research on unemployed female participation (Skills Funding Agency);
- update the mainstreaming plan; and
- continue promoting good practice

9.8 Legislative and regulatory requirements meant that there was a need to maintain mainstreaming processes in-line with on-going commitments made in the ESF Operational Programme i.e. integrating equality into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as meeting general and specific duties and Equality Act 2010.

9.9 Obviously, there is some duplication and overlap between issues and priorities identified and the recommendations made in the various reports listed above.

10. A summary of progress made towards the ESF mainstreaming plan's key aims and objectives in the first half of the ESF programme (2007-2010)

Aim 1: To promote high level commitment to gender equality and equal opportunities

10.1 Progress reports were presented to national ESF Programme monitoring committee (ESF PMC) on a regular basis.

10.2 The cross-cutting themes were a standing agenda item at ESF PMC.

Aim 2: To promote a balanced participation of men and women in the management and delivery of ESF

10.3 A report and good practice guidance on gender balance in monitoring committees was included in the 2009 mainstreaming progress report. National equality mainstreaming training provided as part of the ESF Technical Assistance project run during 2008-2009 highlighted the importance of CFO providers having equality policies and implementation plans that related to their own staff as well as delivery for ESF participants.

Aim 3: Establishing a reporting system on equality mainstreaming

10.4 A reporting system was developed and implemented. It was aligned to the ESF annual implementation reporting system for the programme.

10.5 Three annual progress reports were produced in the first half of the programme (2009, 2010, and 2011).

Aim 4: To set up an ESF Technical Assistance project delivering equality training for key CFO staff (2008 - 10)

10.6 Nearly 200 delegates participated in training workshops across the country along with a number of regional training events.

10.7 Presentations on gender equality and equal opportunities were delivered to the ESF regional committees that existed at the time of the training.

10.8 An equality toolkit for equality policies and plans was developed and published on the ESF website.

Aim 5: To update the original Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the ESF programme

10.9 The update to the EIA was completed in 2011 and published on the ESF/ DWP website in August 2011.

Aim 6: To ensure that gender equality and equal opportunities is a highly visible theme

10.10 Equal opportunities was fully integrated into the programme's publicity arrangements, for example: there were regular equality-related features in the ESF e-zine; there was a dedicated web-page on gender equality and equal opportunities on the ESF website; the ESF-Works good practice website contained many examples of good practice in helping disadvantaged groups; and a virtual equality network was piloted in 2010.

10.11 The annual ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Awards were successfully launched in 2010, with a new 'Gender Equality Leader' award being introduced in 2011. These awards received high-level coverage at the ESF mid-programme review event held in Birmingham in 2010 and the global 2011 'World Skills' Event held in London Docklands.

Aim 7: To consider the findings and recommendations made from the evaluation of gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming conducted during 2009 and published in 2010.

10.12 DWP launched new standardised ESF 13 checklists to help clarify what contract managers and compliance managers needed to check when assessing progress and minimum standards for equality policies and implementation plans. These new checklists built upon and clarified the toolkits developed under the TA training project. (see section 5 - Action Plan)

11. A summary of progress made towards the ESF mainstreaming action plan's key aims and objectives in the second half of the ESF programme (2012-2015)

Aim 1: To increase the female participation rate to 51% in the second half of the programme (NB: Aim 1 was clearly the most substantial part of the plan and made up 75% of the ESF equality mainstreaming plan).

11.1 The Managing Authority produced an updated national ESF gender good practice guide in booklet and digital formats in March 2012. The good practice was based upon action-research funded by the LSC (now SFA) and ESF TA. (The good practice checklist contained in the guide was adapted and used in the Action Note 70 issued to CFOs to help inform future provider / contractor reviews)

11.2 Two national gender equality workshops were held in November 2012 to consider what action could be taken to increase the female participation rate to 51% for the second half of the programme period. The workshops were organised by ESFD and a consultant was appointed to facilitate the workshops. The workshops began with a series of presentations from key stakeholders setting out the importance of gender equality and approaches that were being taken to promote female participation. Stakeholders included the EC, DWP ESFD; DWP ESF Evaluation Team and a range of CFOs. The second half of the workshops focused on and exchange of views, ideas and issues amongst the participants. The report of the workshops was published on ESF works website and the ESF website.

11.3 An updated Action Note 70 was issued to CFOs on 22 January 2013 and a further Action Note 70 issued in 2014 - requiring them to (i) identify providers who were failing to achieve a target of 51% and (ii) to identify which of these should be subject to review in future. CFOs submitted returns in April and October in 2013 and 2014. ESFD decided not to issue further Action Note 70s after 2014.

11.4 Regular progress reports on female participation were sent to the ESF PMC (the first one was sent in September 2012) and equality sub committee (in December 2013)

11.5 DWP CFO introduced new provision for families with multiple problems in Priority 1 for the second half of the programme period. The DWP CFO subsequently reported that provision had achieved a female participation rate in excess of 51%.

Aim 2: To maintain on-going commitments made in the ESF Operational Programme in order to help ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements concerning gender equality and equal opportunities are met.

11.6 Meetings of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities sub committee have been held annually up until December 2013 – and a final meeting covering 2014-15 will be held in July 2016 (when final datasets are available).

11.7 All ESF evaluation reports contain sections or coverage of equal opportunities – including the ESF cohort survey evaluation report for 2012-2014.

11.8 The Skills Funding Agency report on helping people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities access ESF in Priority 2 and 5 provision was presented to the ESF equal opportunities sub committee in December 2013 and was published on the SFA and ESF websites.

Aim 3: To consider lessons learned from the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach during the 2007-2013 programme and to take these into account when mainstreaming equality in the next programme period.

11.9 The Managing Authority has prepared a lessons learned report which will be discussed at the final meeting of the equal opportunities subcommittee in early 2016.

12. Conclusions

12.1 This report contains the final sets of equality data for the 2007-2013 ESF programme. Clearly, the main challenge for mainstreaming equality in 2007-2013 has been trying to achieve the 51% female participation rate target for the programme (and in particular the 51% target set for the second half of the programme). The targets were set and agreed only shortly before the economic crisis of 2008. Although the overall programme target of a 51% female participation rate has not been met, the final data contained in this report shows that there has been a two percentage point increase in the second half of the programme. (This translates into a one percentage point increase at programme level when both halves of the programme are combined.) If the male-dominated NOMS CFO data is excluded from the datasets then the female participation rate increase to 44 percentage points – which is a seven percentage point shortfall against the target.

12.2 It is likely that the increase in female participation in the second half of the programme is due to a number of factors, namely: the introduction of the new DWP CFO 'families with multiple problems provision' in Priority 1 (being female dominated); the recalculation of the matched provision sample of participants in SFA CFO provision (to make it a more realistic and representative sample); and finally, mainstreaming action taken by ESFD and CFOs to generally promote and highlight the importance of gender equality.

12.3 The programme has generally been successful in targeting other groups – with the final data showing that ethnic minorities' participation target at programme level being only one percentage point short of the 19% target and participants with disabilities and aged over 50 being only three percentage points below target.

12.4 The programme does not have many result targets. Two thirds of those entering employment on leaving ESF were men. However women out-perform men in achieving basic skills (56% compared to 44% men). Nearly half of all women in ESF achieved level 2 qualifications. Disabled people were less likely to achieve level 2 qualifications.

12.5 The ESF Division and partners have maintained and built on the mainstreaming approach developed in the 2000-2006 programme and have met their main

commitments in terms of promoting equality mainstreaming in the 2007-2014 programme period.

13. Recommendations

13.1 The separate 'lessons learned' in mainstreaming equality report produced by ESF Division should help inform aspects of the equality mainstreaming approach in the 2014-2020 ESF programme.