Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Evaluation of the Community Renewal Fund 2021/22: Performance and Processes

Appendices B–D

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wavehill
Social and economic research

Appendix B: Full Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions

1. Programme Financial and Output Performance

- 1.1 What progress did the programme make towards the achievement of its financial and output targets?
- 1.2 What was the profile of project spend over the delivery period, and what proportion of projects were completed on time?
- 1.3 How did this performance vary by place and programme theme?
- 1.4 What factors explain variations, including under- or overperformance?
- 1.5 How did external contextual factors affect delivery and achievements?

2. Delivery and Process Evaluation

- 2.1 What types of activities were funded across the four programme themes?
- 2.2 How were these activities selected, including:
    - The prioritisation of project bids at a local level, the breadth of stakeholder involvement, strategic alignment, and the extent of business case development?
    - The appraisal of project bids and decision making by the DLUHC on projects to support?
- 2.3 To what extent were supported projects well designed to deliver local growth, including:
    - Was there a clear rationale, evidence of need and market failure, and local strategic alignment for the project?
    - Were there clear objectives set out for what the project sought to achieve?
    - Was there a clear logic model or theory of change or explanation of how the project would deliver its objectives?
    - Did the output and outcome indicators align well with the project's objectives?
- 2.4 What mechanisms were used for managing CRF funding, including:
    - Central DLUHC management – what approaches were used for strategic governance, data management, contracting and contract management through local authorities and directly with projects (Northern Ireland (NI) only), and project assurance?
    - Local management of projects – what approaches were used for local governance, contracting and contract management, data monitoring, and project assurance?
- 2.5 What worked well and less well in managing the programme, nationally and locally, and what could be improved?

- 2.6 Were local authorities clear on the government's guidance and expectations for the management and delivery of the CRF, and was information provided to places in a timely way?
- 2.7 What support did the Lead Authorities and NI direct applicants receive from central government, and was there variation in the quantity and quality of support?
- 2.8 What common challenges were experienced by local authorities in managing the programme and how were these addressed?
- 2.9 To what extent did government funding for management costs meet the resourcing needs of Lead Authorities?
    - Which aspects of management, if any, required more or less resource than anticipated?
    - Did this differ for different authorities by factors such as the size or location of the local authority?
- 2.10 What challenges did local authorities face in gathering and quality-assuring monitoring information?
    - How could this process be improved in the future?
- 2.11 In response to the CRF, did local authorities establish or refine any of their approaches to managing local growth interventions, including around systems, processes, capacity, strategy, leadership and partnerships?
    - If so, what changes did they make?
    - Have they retained and/or built on these in beginning to deliver the UKSPF?

3. Review of Impacts

- 3.1 Who were the beneficiaries of the interventions and what was their experience of the support received?
    - What were the main types of beneficiaries under each programme theme?
    - Did different groups have differing experiences of the support?
- 3.2 What measurable outcomes, both intended and unintended, occurred?
    - Have different groups been impacted in different ways, how and why?
- 3.3 How much of these outcomes can be attributed to the interventions?
    - How has the context influenced outcomes in that place?
    - Does the available evidence suggest that the intervention could be reproduced in other places?
- 3.4 Are there any factors that determined the success of projects, e.g. the composition of the project team, the role or capacity of local institutions, or the delivery approaches adopted?
- 3.5 What lessons can be learned about planning for robust impact evaluation in similar future local growth programmes?

Appendix C Performance Analysis by Authority Type

<u>Contracted and Actual Expenditure by Local Authority Type</u>

Lead Authority Type	Contracted (£m)	Final Expenditure (£m)	% of Contracted
Combined Authority	£35.6	£33.6	94%
County Council	£55.4	£51.8	93%
Unitary Authority	£32.4	£31.1	96%
Welsh Council	£45.0	£41.9	93%
Scottish Council	£18.3	£16.4	89%
NI-Based Projects (not managed via a Lead Authority)	£11.9	£11.1	94%
Total	**£198.7**	**£185.8**	**93%**

Source: DLUHC Programme Data, March 2023. Note: contracted projects based in Gibraltar are not included in the table above.

<u>Contracted and Actual Expenditure by Size of Local Authority Area (Based on Population of Area Covered by Authority)</u>
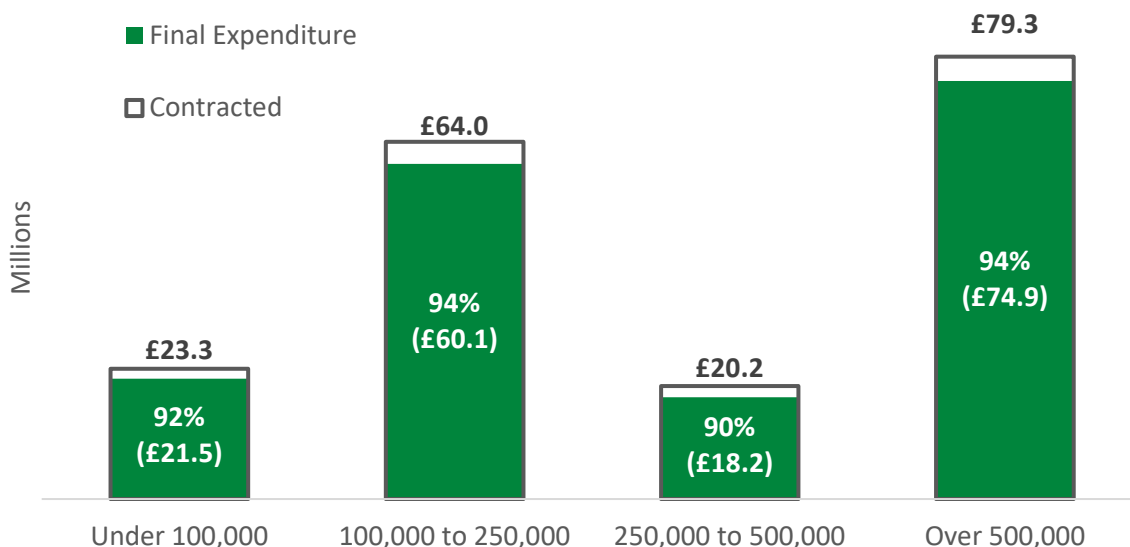
Source: DLUHC Programme Data, March 2023. Note: contracted projects based in Gibraltar are not included in the chart above.

C.1   Analysis by type and size of local government organisation (as shown respectively in the table and figure above) highlights little notable differences

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(when broken down by local authority type) other than the weaker spend against contracted values for authorities in Scotland as noted above.

C.2   The figure shows how much of the contracted value has been spent overall broken down by size of Lead Authority (based on the population of the area that they cover). There is a little difference when examining the sizes of authorities, with larger authorities having spent 94 per cent against contracted values, while the smallest category spent 92 per cent against contracted values.

Appendix D: Investment-Priority-Level Analysis

Investment in Skills

Overview of the Investment Priority

D.1   A total of £42.5m was spent under the CRF programme on the Investment in Skills investment priority, with 285 projects having this as part of their overall intervention[1].

D.2   For the purposes of this evaluation, the Investment in Skills projects have been divided into four types to enable a more insightful analysis of findings from project evaluations. These include:

- Investment in skills to improve employability
- In-work training or upskilling of existing staff
- Investment in skills to support decarbonisation
- Investment in digital skills

D.3   The following sections set out for each intervention type:

- Types of activities and beneficiaries supported
- Example projects
- Achievements against output and outcome targets
- Types of outcomes and impacts realised
- Findings on project delivery and what worked

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[1] Note: most funded projects contributed to more than one investment priority, with the project spend split amongst each IP. For the analysis by intervention type, however, each project is allocated to a single type. As such, the spend figures broken down by the four intervention types do not sum to the overall figure set out for the related investment priority.

Investment in skills to improve employability

D.4   Under the '**Investment in skills to improve employability**' intervention type, £16.4m was invested across 43 projects. Of these, 22 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Creative Futures** (Greater London Authority) – collaboration of providers to support disadvantaged groups with barriers to entering the labour market by offering a mix of career information, advice and guidance, English for work, health and well-being support, and digital skills training.
- **New Skills New Start** (Ceredigion Council) – start-up skills and mentoring programme to help both the unemployed and those in the labour market to create their own businesses or become self-employed.
- **STEM City** (Hertfordshire County Council) – a joint partnership to provide science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) career insight in primary and secondary schools and support employability awareness alongside training courses for disadvantaged groups as well as career information, advice and guidance.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Career information, advice and guidance - Structured learning programmes or courses - Work placements and voluntary experience - Community-based activities and sessions on life skills - Grants to access training - Mentoring to out-of-work individuals - Entrepreneurial skills development - School-based career awareness sessions and employability development activities - Mental health support to overcome barriers to employment	- Unemployed people - Economically inactive people - Young people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.5   The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	20,664	21,596	105%
	Unemployed	3,961	4,730	119%
	Employed	6,645	3,108	47%
Businesses	Small	4,336	2,606	60%
	Medium	351	121	34%
	Large	89	117	131%
Organisations	Public	202	282	140%
	Private	318	529	166%
	Voluntary sector	481	691	144%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		8,197	12,216	149%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		806	2,122	263%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		2,034	4,706	231%
Number of people supported to gain employment		172	679	395%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		6,920	24,429	353%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefit system		150	366	244%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business-ready		50	84	168%
Number of businesses receiving grants		412	183	44%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		910	781	86%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		182	133	73%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		11,269	11,486	102%
People gaining a qualification following support		2,330	1,762	76%
People engaged in job searching following support		2,646	3,946	149%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		770	687	89%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		14,581	27,489	189%
Economically inactive individuals engaging with benefit system following support		207	346	167%
Number of new businesses created as a result of support		69	46	67%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		138	61	44%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.6   Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **The programme exceeded its delivery targets for the main targets under this intervention type**, including in relation to support for economically inactive individuals, support to move into education or training, and accessing life skills support.
- **Programme timescales were a key factor for two other important outcomes which fell short of targets.** These were the targets for people gaining a qualification as well as people moving into employment following support. For the former, the CRF timescales often did not allow sufficient time for formal qualifications to be completed and awarded; for the latter, the lag between support received and securing employment meant that further outcomes were expected to be achieved after the end of the programme delivery period.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.7   Around one third of the project evaluations reviewed under this intervention type (eight out of 22) reported satisfaction scores. Of those, the average satisfaction rate (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support) was 89.3 per cent.

D.8   Outcomes reported were broadly positive, with projects reporting participants moving into work, achieving qualifications or course completion, and improving confidence. Other outcomes included individuals moving into education and training or actively searching for jobs. A range of skills were improved, often in the digital space in conjunction with other support to get participants into employment. Improved social inclusion was another outcome cited in several cases.

D.9   For projects engaged in supporting employability in education it was more difficult to measure outcomes, but there were positive responses from teachers and pupils to the skills developed as well as improved awareness.

Enterprise and Skills Pembrokeshire Case Study Summary

This was a strategic project to develop skills and support enterprises through sector-specific training and broader employability and life skills support. The project was delivered in a rural and coastal area with unemployment levels higher than the national average, and where the tourism and leisure sectors are key sectors for local employment.

Six hundred and sixty-eight economically inactive individuals were supported (alongside 54 businesses), with outcomes including qualifications gained, people into education or training, and some people searching for jobs.

The project has sought to deliver employment impacts in key sectors through increased skills in tourism, land-based heritage, engineering, and digital skills, reducing barriers to employment for individuals and supporting business growth.

Delivery and What Worked

D.10 **In engaging beneficiaries, referrals tended to be one of the most effective routes; the use of social media had mixed effectiveness.** Referrals from partners such as the DWP and the Jobcentre were identified as a key engagement route in around one third of the project evaluations reviewed. Referrals tended to be either moderately or very effective for recruitment for projects, which is likely to be associated with better targeting and filtering of suitability, especially for those who are unemployed from the Jobcentre.

D.11 Social media and online promotion was used in over half of the projects reviewed, with some evaluations identifying that these methods were effective for recruitment, and others less so. Other routes such as engaging existing contacts, community engagement activities, and networking events were also used in some reviewed projects with mixed effectiveness.

D.12 The majority of projects were delivered in line with plans; the main reasons for deviation were often rooted in the timescale delays for the CRF:

- **Around three quarters of projects reviewed were found to have delivered closely against their original design.** Minor changes to these projects were typically concerned with delivery timescale extensions or contractions, adjustments in the intensity of support, or providing more focus towards one approach over another.
- **Around a quarter of projects were found to have adjusted further from their original design.** These tended to be due to misalignments of resource or expectations regarding what could be delivered, leading to revisions down of targets or changes in approach, particularly to meet timescales.

D.13 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **The flexibility of interventions delivered was often cited as a success factor** that allowed the adjustment and refinement of interventions to meet the needs of participants or respond to learning.
- **Intensive and targeted support was valuable** – one-to-one support or a lower ratio of participants to mentors, advisors or trainers was a commonly reported success factor.
- **Working with community networks helped to reach targeted beneficiaries** – where support was aimed at targeted disadvantaged communities, provision in a community setting was beneficial, as well as working with community networks to reach the target audience.
- **Strong relationships between partners and providers** – being able to draw on the strengths of different partners and allow them to deliver complementary activity was cited in several project evaluations as an important factor.
- **Limited timescales for delivery were a barrier** – with delivery timescales being insufficient to meet outcome indicators, creating challenges in recruiting teams, and limiting the time for awareness raising and building demand.

In-work training or upskilling of existing staff

D.14 Under the '**In-work training or upskilling of existing staff**' intervention type, £3.9m was invested across 13 projects. Of these, nine project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Torbay Skills Renewal** (Torbay Council) – a programme of training to upskill both those in work and the unemployed in local economically critical sectors including construction, hospitality and tourism, photonics, and marine leadership through bespoke innovative training programmes.
- **Improving Deaf Awareness and Supporting People with Hearing Loss in the Community** (Rhondda Cynon Taf) – deaf awareness training and British Sign Language training to customer-facing staff at a range of businesses to improve client engagement as well as generate some social benefit outcomes.
- **Progression to Apprenticeships** (Norfolk Council) – providing incentive payments to SMEs to take on apprentices, wage boost contributions, and wraparound support training for both employers and apprentices, including mentoring.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- In-work training and course provision (including apprenticeships and specialist courses) - Introducing educators to businesses and industry representatives to help build relationships - Employer skills needs analyses - Financial incentives for SMEs to support apprenticeships and encourage retention	- SMEs - Employees - Large businesses

Output and Outcome Performance

D.15 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	3,288	3,538	108%
	Unemployed	864	1,456	169%
	Employed	1,376	1,810	132%
Businesses	Small	685	421	61%
	Medium	137	73	53%
	Large	80	69	86%
Organisations	Public	67	98	146%
	Private	151	91	60%
	Voluntary sector	31	36	116%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		212	82	39%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		191	621	325%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		506	2,535	501%
Number of people supported to gain employment		67	100	149%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		15	2,441	16,273%
Number of businesses receiving grants		40	116	290%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		95	180	189%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		535	1,167	218%
People gaining a qualification following support		520	503	97%
People engaged in job searching following support		560	1,100	196%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		180	25	14%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		3,589	2,397	67%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		30	35	117%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		121	161	133%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		61	141	231%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		86	117	136%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		36	33	92%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.16 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **Generally, the key output indicators for this intervention type were exceeded by the projects.** The people-related GFA output targets, which were most relevant to this intervention type — particularly employed

individuals, given the focus on in-work training — were all exceeded, and large numbers were supported to engage in job searching, engage in life skills or gain a qualification.

- **Most outcome indicator targets were similarly met or exceeded, although** fewer people moved into employment following support than were targeted, and lower-than-expected proportions engaged in life skills support.
- With a limited sample size of projects under this intervention type, there were no consistent insights shared into the reasons for underperformance; however, it should be noted that the timescales for project delivery (and the point at which evaluation occurred) reduced the ability to capture employment outcomes within these timescales.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.17   One third of the project evaluations reviewed provided a satisfaction score (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with all of these very high (averaging 97.3 per cent).

D.18   Where reported, the outcomes for this intervention type were varied along with the range of activities. Some projects which had looked to engage educators on industry practices achieved some broadening experience which was thought would lead to better career information, advice and guidance in schools. Projects supporting apprenticeships were broadly successful in achieving new apprentice numbers, although they would not complete their provision within the timeframes of the CRF project; therefore, the outcomes regarding improved skills and qualifications were not yet clear. Otherwise, skills were improved by the training and short course qualifications achieved.

D.19   Few project evaluation reports were able to comment on the impacts of this training provision on the businesses or employers of staff who had received the training.

Delivery and What Worked

D.20   **Approaches to engagement were very varied under this intervention type**, although information on engagement approaches was only set out in four out of nine project evaluations reviewed. Approaches included contacting the DWP and colleges to offer training support, cold-calling contacts from a college database as well as direct email engagement, events in schools and through educational representatives (a project supporting teachers' experience of the workplace), and social media.

D.21   Of the four projects reviewed, only two highlighted the effectiveness of the approaches. Social media was found to be ineffective in engaging social care providers to access training, while engaging with educational representatives to get contacts into schools was very effective.

D.22   **There were some changes in the delivery of the planned projects under this intervention type.** Six out of nine project evaluation reports provided

sufficient content to assess whether the project had remained consistent with the original design:

- **Two had remained consistent with the original design to a great extent**, reporting that the only changes were that the team had to take on some unplanned tasks and there were extensions to delivery.
- **Three projects were delivered with some changes to their original design.** These included a revision to targets (given performance), adopting different approaches to backfilling learning provision where students could not be used in care settings as planned, and finding different ways of providing training support for teachers to fit around school commitments.
- **One project was changed substantially from its original design**, having to alter whom it targeted, moving from those requiring new skills to adjust to the post-pandemic environment, instead providing more mainstream training because the labour market was much tighter than envisaged by the time that delivery commenced, and shortages were not as expected.

D.23 Although the limited sample size of projects under this intervention type meant that there was a limitation in terms of common messages arising, some of the success factors and lessons arising in relation to in-work training or upskilling of existing staff include the following:

- **Designing a flexible model to enable individuals to access upskilling support around other commitments** – one project in particular noted that a blended delivery model of online, on-site and off-site learning was effective in supporting positive outcomes for upskilling existing staff.
- **Challenges in recruiting teachers for short-term delivery timescales** – two projects highlighted the challenges of recruiting when considering the time commitments and working practices of the individuals whom they were seeking to recruit for this delivery.
- **Resourcing was highlighted as an issue for several projects** in ensuring both that it is sufficient to deliver projects but also that it is targeted correctly at the intended beneficiaries in order to ensure that the targeted outcomes can be achieved.
- **Importance of understanding indicators and negotiating targets** – one project had set itself unrealistic targets, especially given the delays in delivery, with the evaluation highlighting that they did not effectively seek advice on definitions of output and outcome indicators in order to resolve this.

Investment in skills to support decarbonisation

D.24 Under the '**Investment in skills to support decarbonisation**' intervention type, £7.7m was invested across 21 projects. Of these, 12 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Go Green – A Curriculum for the Future** (West Yorkshire Combined Authority (CA)) – included a research project on a green curriculum as well as some support activity for young people considering careers in sustainable roles, including taster sessions and workshops, as well as some accredited training.
- **Skills for Green Jobs and Entrepreneurship** (West of England CA) – entrepreneurial mentoring for businesses in the sector, courses and training, work experience, and an online resource to develop sustainable skills among the workforce and labour market.
- **Retrofit Skills and Business Accelerator** (Devon County Council) – led by the Retrofit Foundation, the project promoted employment opportunities through training bootcamps and skills qualifications, as well as providing training to trainers and developing a Retrofit Academy in addition to a career portal linking employers with potential staff.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Accredited training courses in retrofit or sustainable skills - Events and online information on how to retrofit buildings - Work experience and volunteering in green roles and spaces - Business support to improve sustainability skills and awareness - Creating Retrofit Academies - Building retrofit demonstrators	- Employed individuals - SMEs - Unemployed individuals - Community groups and volunteers

Output and Outcome Performance

D.25 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	1,755	3,027	172%
	Unemployed	881	670	76%
	Employed	3,600	4,076	113%
Businesses	Small	325	705	217%
	Medium	238	155	65%
	Large	63	34	54%
Organisations	Public	1,157	157	14%
	Private	435	253	58%
	Voluntary sector	183	252	138%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		627	958	153%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		350	691	197%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		97	122	126%
Number of people supported to gain employment		5	37	740%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		55	230	418%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business-ready		15	144	960%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		85	206	242%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		148	169	114%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		817	964	118%
People gaining a qualification following support		681	542	80%
People engaged in job searching following support		169	133	79%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		65	69	106%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		280	207	74%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		81	108	133%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		69	50	72%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		172	479	279%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		42	25	58%
Number of new businesses created as a result of support		11	4	36%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		721	674	93%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		21	33	157%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		146	165	113%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.26 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- This intervention type was primarily focused on supporting people, and exceeded targets for both employed and economically inactive individuals, although it fell short of the target for unemployed individuals.
- **Overall, projects under this intervention type met or exceeded all Annex A output targets** (which included delivering employment gains, supporting people to engage in life skills, and gaining qualifications).
- **The performance against outcome targets was more varied, with some met, some nearly met, and some underperforming.** However, the main outcomes with larger targets tended to be those which performed better, including people in education/training following support.

D.27 Some of the key reasons for underperformance in realising some of the key outcomes included individuals withdrawing from the support due to other commitments, as well as not being able to complete planned activities within the duration of the project. These particularly affected outcomes regarding people into employment and people engaged in job searching.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.28 Two of the 12 project evaluations under this intervention type included reported satisfaction scores (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), although these were high at 85 per cent and 100 per cent.

D.29 Outcomes typically related to skills provision or the number of individuals who gained accredited qualifications as a result of the support received. Many of the projects moved substantial numbers of people into education and training following the support. These skills were often related to construction or retrofitting as well as sustainable or net zero principles. Several projects delivered sustainability-specific skills such as gardening.

D.30 There was also evidence of business changes as a result of the interventions, including the introduction of carbon reduction and sustainability plans. One project reported some individuals going on to start businesses following the support.

Decarbonising Rossendale Case Study Summary

The project looked to help Lancashire communities to take action on climate change and reach net zero targets through training and awareness events as well as regenerating and retrofitting a listed building into a sustainable co-working and accommodation space. One hundred and twenty-eight individuals were engaged alongside 35 businesses to develop solutions and implement behavioural changes after attending the events.

A community energy organisation was created to help effect renewable energy change locally, and innovation plans were developed as part of the support for 10

companies that also improved their knowledge and awareness of retrofit activity as well as the benefits of sustainable and energy-efficient buildings alongside the community.

Delivery and What Worked

D.31   Five out of 12 project evaluations discussed client engagement approaches, including social media, community engagement and partner relationships, the use of existing contacts, referrals, cold marketing, and promotion at events. **It was suggested that social media had not been effective, nor had promotion at events** (although this was only from two projects that commented on the effectiveness). **More effective approaches identified included direct calls to companies** as well as work with community organisations.

D.32   Over half of the projects remained consistent with their original delivery plans (beyond extensions), although some made changes to their delivery:

- **Two projects were substantially altered from their original business plans**, with one having to be downsized, given performance, and part of the other being abandoned due to not being appropriate for the CRF (involving support to an overseas company to develop a feasibility report for retrofitting a building).
- **Three projects made small adjustments** including adapting courses in order to fit the available timeframes and changing the focus of specific activities. Key factors for these changes included delays in the awarding of CRF funding, a lower demand for interventions than expected, and original targets being overly ambitious.

D.33   Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Meeting the market need for green skills helped with demand from businesses and individuals** – recognition of the clear under-fulfilled need for skills and training in energy efficiency retrofitting as well as net zero transition meant that there was a strong demand for many of the supported projects under this intervention type.
- **Reputable deliverers** – using existing training providers and reputable stakeholders for the delivery of support, drawing on existing relationships and partnerships, was a success factor for several of the projects.
- **Need for better early planning to deliver projects in tight timescales** – several of the projects highlighted the need for strong planning at the start to ensure the recruitment of training providers, getting management teams in place, assigning tasks, and understanding fund requirements.
- **Challenge of small geographical boundaries for this intervention type** – being bound by local authority areas when providing skills support for such a specialist area as decarbonisation was restricting. Target groups also needed to be better considered to ensure that training was pitched towards the right

individuals for generating decarbonisation benefits, and a larger area might have helped to identify target beneficiaries at a larger scale to enhance the critical mass.

- **Need for bespoke marketing** – this was cited by five of the projects as an area that could be improved, with suggestions for establishing clear marketing and promotional approaches at the outset, taking into account what would work best for the audience. Furthermore, general awareness raising for retrofitting would have helped to prepare the context for project-level engagement.

Investment in digital skills

D.34 Under the '**Investment in digital skills**' intervention type, £10.4m was invested across 19 projects. Of these, 13 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Development of Welsh Institute of Digital Information** (Newport Council) – a project to form a research and development centre to consolidate research across health boards, which will create training opportunities and a digital health village to maximise the use of AI in health and care services.
- **Velocity: VCSE Somerset** (Somerset County Council) – a project to support digital adoption and resilience in the voluntary sector by helping to develop digital skills and transformation through business support and peer-to-peer learning.
- **Discover: Boosting Digital Inclusion in Stoke-on-Trent** (Stoke-on-Trent Council) – a project to promote digital skills and access among disadvantaged and digitally excluded members of the community.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Training in digital skills - Grants for businesses to improve social media presence - Audits of digital needs - Training and support with selected technologies - Digital leadership training to support community digital champions - Development of online resources and tools - Provision of information technology equipment - Community digital innovation grants - Development of digital strategies	- SMEs - Employees - Public sector organisations - Third sector - General community - Unemployed/ economically inactive people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.35 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	6,985	180	3%
	Unemployed	14,862	51	0%
	Employed	10,803	7,051	65%
Businesses	Small	1,284	5,056	394%
	Medium	235	430	183%
	Large	11	4	36%
Organisations	Public	75	150	200%
	Private	316	180	57%
	Voluntary sector	602	540	90%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		1,755	1,845	105%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		0	439	-
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		1,610	787	49%
Number of people supported to gain employment		100	184	184%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		13,515	7,213	53%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefit system		1,500	82	5%
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants		20	1,500	7,500%
Number of businesses receiving grants		0	250	-
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		15	952	6,347%
Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants		0	420	-
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		195	194	99%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		3,661	3,593	98%
People gaining a qualification following support		400	446	112%
People engaged in job searching following support		2,660	1,050	39%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		120	514	428%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		14,844	7,690	52%
Economically inactive individuals engaging with benefit system following support		2,110	253	12%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		670	233	35%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		511	146	29%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		207	85	41%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.36 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **Individuals supported was the main beneficiary type for investment in digital skills**, and although 65 per cent of the target for employed individuals was met, there was very little progress against targets for supporting those unemployed or economically inactive — also reflected in underperformance against related Annex A outputs. **Timeframes were cited as a key barrier** in project evaluations, as delays reduced the number of participants supported.
- **The number of businesses supported, however, exceeded targets** in both the GFA outputs and the Annex A outputs — including with regard to those receiving financial and non-financial support.
- **The outcome targets for people into employment and gaining a qualification after support both exceeded targets**, although other key outcomes for individuals fell short of targets, including those into job searching and those engaging with life skills support and with the benefit system. These shortfalls reflected the lower number of individual beneficiary outputs outlined above.
- **Several other outcomes fell short of targets**, although in most cases these were smaller targets and less central to this intervention type.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.37   Key outcomes under this intervention type were typically focused on upskilling a range of beneficiary types with digital skills, including carers, voluntary organisations, and those in education, creating digital champions, and developing digital strategies for organisations. The key outcome across most projects was the development of life skills, as reflected in this being the largest outcome target for this intervention type.

Breaking Digital Barriers Case Study Summary

The Breaking Digital Barriers project supported working-age residents in Greater Manchester to overcome barriers facing digital inclusion by providing training and support including offering digital devices.

More than 2,000 residents were supported, with hundreds going on to access further learning and support or engage in job searching. Life skills improvements were the key outcome alongside greater access to digital technology and the Internet as well as the establishment of pathways for community organisations to engage with digitally excluded people in the future.

Impacts included increased employability, social and well-being improvements, and reduced digital exclusion.

Delivery and What Worked

D.38   Engagement activity was varied across this intervention type, with projects utilising social media, promotion at events, community partners and referrals, word of mouth, and cold marketing. This reflected that some projects targeted organisations, while others were pushing for individuals and those who were digitally excluded in the community.

D.39 **Direct marketing to businesses was very effective** where used, as were word of mouth and drop-ins through community centres. Moreover, **working with local partners was effective** and networks/referrals were moderately useful. Recruitment through local media and general advertising was used in two projects and found to be less effective.

D.40 Three out of 13 projects adjusted their delivery to some extent, with the remainder continuing to deliver the projects, as had been set out in their original plans, beyond the timeline extensions to the CRF. Changes included:

- reductions in the number of partners (some could not provide the resource to deliver to the project).
- increases in the cohort size to get more participants through in one go.
- one project introduced a pop-up location which had not been planned but brought the project into the community to help with engagement, as well as a bite-sized training intervention to respond to the demand for shorter provision.

D.41 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Bespoke delivery** – some projects highlighted that structuring projects around a diagnostic and then developing flexible solutions in response to identified needs constituted a successful approach.
- **Community-based delivery** – for those projects targeting disadvantaged individuals with digital skills training, bringing the interventions into the community (where there was a strong demand) was key to output attainment.
- **Longer timeframe needed to capture outcomes** –evaluations suggested that outcomes were not able to be captured at that stage and should have been measured over a longer term.
- **Need for better-considered marketing approach** – several projects highlighted opportunities in relation to marketing and engagement where improvements could have been made in communication, the phasing of engagement activities, and targeting engagement at the specific audience. Accessibility of marketing was mentioned by several projects where activities were focused on disadvantaged groups.

Investment for Local Business

Overview of the Investment Priority

D.42 A total of £50.0m was spent under the CRF programme on the Investment for Local Business investment priority, with 239 projects having this as part of their overall intervention.

D.43 For the purposes of this evaluation, the Investment for Local Business projects have been divided into four types to enable a more insightful analysis of findings from project evaluations. These include:

- Development and promotion of visitor economy
- Business support for start-up and growth
- Investment in business hubs (incubators and accelerators)
- Supporting decarbonisation measures

D.44 The following sections set out for each intervention type:

- Types of activities and beneficiaries supported
- Example projects
- Achievements against output and outcome targets
- Types of outcomes and impacts realised
- Findings regarding project delivery and what worked

Development and promotion of visitor economy

D.45 Under the '**Development and promotion of visitor economy**' intervention type, £5.4m was invested across 12 projects. Of these, 10 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Feasibility Study – Winter Tourism in North East Pembrokeshire** (Pembrokeshire) – a feasibility study to consider if a partnership approach can create a viable winter event programme to improve visitor footfall, create sustainable year-round tourism jobs, and reduce underemployment resulting from seasonal work.
- **Coventry Creative Growth and Cultural Tourism Recovery Programme** (West Midlands Combined Authority) – an integrated business, skills and employment support package targeting Coventry's cultural sectors including creative industries, tourism, events, and businesses/freelancers supplying these sectors.
- **Tresorys Kernow/Cornish Treasure** (Cornwall Council) – a pilot to explore how culture and heritage can breathe new life into towns and villages by modelling imaginative approaches in order to increase footfall as well as testing sustainable approaches to culture-led regeneration in 12 towns across Cornwall.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Augmented interactive heritage experiences - Networking events and workshops - Website and social media support to promote shopping and cultural attractions - Development of a global wine tourism brand - Business development support - Sustainable travel pilots - Heritage and cultural activities on high streets and in museums and organisations - Skills programme for tourism businesses - Financial support via grants - Training for hospitality and tourism on disabled accessibility	- SMEs - Public sector organisations - Large businesses - Voluntary sector organisations - Employees - Unemployed people - General community

Output and Outcome Performance

D.46 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	228	144	63%
	Unemployed	364	197	54%
	Employed	1,019	2,011	197%
Businesses	Small	1,170	1,802	154%
	Medium	314	186	59%
	Large	58	68	117%
Organisations	Public	53	106	200%
	Private	1,883	930	49%
	Voluntary sector	72	88	122%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		117	75	64%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		330	259	78%
Number of people supported to gain employment		0	141	-
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants		140	41	29%
Number of businesses receiving grants		102	221	217%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		820	1,322	161%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		86	219	255%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People gaining a qualification following support		123	115	93%
People engaged in job searching following support		420	266	63%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		164	130	79%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		112	107	96%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		42	74	176%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		266	257	97%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		371	800	216%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		56	60	107%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		214	116	54%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		7	7	100%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.47   Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- The main targets for this intervention type were supporting businesses and employed individuals in visitor economy sectors. The GFA output targets for those indicators were mostly met or exceeded (other than for medium-sized businesses).
- **Performance against relevant outcome for this intervention type was mixed**, with some important outcomes (such as an employment increase) exceeding targets, but others (such as the number of decarbonisation plans as well as businesses introducing new products to the market) falling short of targets.

D.48   In project evaluations, the most common explanation for output and outcome targets being missed was that of the tight delivery timescales, as well as participants in some cases enrolling in programmes but later withdrawing.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.49   Outcomes reported were predominantly positive, with project reviews finding a range of business or organisational outcomes (covering business development, job creation/safeguarding, new products developed, and knowledge transfer).

D.50   Other common outcomes for this intervention type were increased amounts of visitors and footfall. Projects with multiple themes or strands of delivery typically produced a wider range of often interlinked outcomes across organisational and personal development in addition to visitor and tourism outcomes.

D.51   Two of 10 projects in this intervention type reported satisfaction scores (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with an average satisfaction rate of 74.5 per cent.

Coventry Creative Growth and Cultural Tourism Recovery Programme Case Study Summary

Led by Coventry City Council, the programme incorporated 10 sub-strands of activity across the CRF themes, with delivery provided by several internal and external partners. The strands included multiple projects with an aim of providing support to facilitate the growth, transformation, and long-term competitiveness of SMEs/freelancers in target sectors, as well as supporting the hospitality, tourism and events sector. Specialist grants were also provided.

The grants helped diversification. As well as creating new businesses, the project supported the development of new-to-market and new-to-firm products and services. Employment increased in some of the supported organisations, and other businesses were able to safeguard jobs following the support. This resulted in employment increases and overall growth in gross value added (GVA) in the creative and tourism sectors.

Delivery and What Worked

D.52 Only seven out of 10 projects provided details on their engagement techniques, with only three detailing the effectiveness of the approach. All of the projects responding had utilised social media, including the development of new brands and work distributed through existing networks (including particular success when linked to a wider media campaign across radio and magazines).

D.53 Regarding adaptations to projects:

- Six of the 10 projects had followed their original design to a great extent, with the only changes in relation to timing, covering delays, and extensions.
- Two of the 10 projects were found to have partly adjusted from their original design. One project made adjustments to outcome targets, shifting the emphasis from macro-targets linked to economic growth to micro-targets including safeguarding jobs and supporting new business start-ups.
- One project revealed substantial changes to activities delivered, as it found that some of the proposed activities (sustainable transport pilots and bookable product targets) were unrealistic and unachievable.

D.54 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Wide-reaching tourism partnerships** – several project evaluations noted the importance of collaborative working, recognising the benefits of engaging a range of partners involved in and crucial to the success of the visitor economy. Additionally, projects utilised a broad range of experts and consultants to inform innovation plans, maximising existing networks and relationships to inform and promote programmes.
- **Facilitating quality interactions with businesses**, e.g. through face-to-face contact, was also cited as a success factor in reinforcing messages, understanding challenges and issues from different perspectives, and therefore gaining understanding and buy-in.
- **Need for enhanced early planning where delivery timescales are short and need to be managed around peak tourist season** – this was frequently cited as a challenge to effective delivery and achievement of outputs and outcomes. Common issues included initial delays and insufficient time for engagement. Suggested improvements linked to timing included extending the timeframe for key processes, e.g. testing products, and moving engagement in order to take place outside of the peak tourist season.
- **Need for design adjustments for cultural and heritage sector organisations** – some projects noted that these organisations often had less capacity for more extensive monitoring and reporting requirements, and less ability to front-load project costs due to cashflow needs. Making adjustments to the requirements and payment approaches in order to support better engagement of these bodies was seen to be important in enabling their participation.

Business support for start-up and growth

D.55 Under the '**Business support for start-up and growth**' intervention type, £31.5m was invested across 63 projects. Of these, 48 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **East Midlands Accelerator – Nottinghamshire** (Nottinghamshire County Council) – an innovative collaborative model uniting the region's universities, local authorities, and specialist sector-focused business support organisations to strengthen the business ecosystem, supporting recovery from the pandemic, new entrepreneurship and growth sectors, and assisting people in securing permanent jobs.
- **Next Generation: Youth Enterprise Hub and Start-Up Bootcamp** (Greater London Authority) – a bespoke education hub on Enterprise Nation (SME support network) hosting training and providing start-up e-learning and bootcamps, connections to advisors, and sectoral peer groups available to more than 3,000 young Londoners.
- **Innovate for Good** (Sunderland City Council) – a programme of tailored support to enable social entrepreneurs/VCSEs to develop, pivot and innovate their business in line with market opportunities, comprising workshops, action learning, one-to-one business advice, coaching and mentoring, and a subsequent grant to accelerate development, promote collaboration, and increase social impact.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Workshops, online learning and materials, mentoring, networking, and peer support - Business grants - Funded internships - Short course training to help reskill and upskill - One-to-one consultancy and advice - Support for social enterprises - Converting spaces for self-employed people and remote workers - Investment bootcamps for start-up founders	- SMEs - Aspiring entrepreneurs - Unemployed and economically inactive people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.56 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	6,179	5,220	84%
	Unemployed	3,907	1,905	49%
	Employed	9,752	5,730	59%
Businesses	Small	11,781	14,468	123%
	Medium	1,994	299	15%
	Large	94	146	155%
Organisations	Public	103	145	141%
	Private	1,138	1,376	121%
	Voluntary sector	446	519	116%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		1,268	293	23%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		935	1,196	128%
Number of people supported to gain employment		696	345	49%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business-ready		367	465	127%
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants		130	365	281%
Number of businesses receiving grants		812	1,488	183%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		3,039	4,137	136%
Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants		0	216	-
Number of organisations receiving grants		38	116	305%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		92	669	727%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		614	642	105%
People gaining a qualification following support		1,053	2,621	249%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		820	362	44%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		855	669	78%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		1,605	1,542	96%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		713	1,031	145%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		1,704	1,509	89%
Number of new businesses created as a result of support		670	476	71%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		681	827	121%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		664	670	101%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		840	886	105%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		47	90	191%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.57 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **Key outputs from this intervention type were support to businesses and support to potential entrepreneurs**, both of which broadly performed well, with small businesses supported exceeding targets, but medium-sized businesses supported falling short of targets. Potential entrepreneurs assisted in the Annex A outputs exceeded the target level.
- Many of these projects had wider aims as well, but overall there was underperformance against the targets for individuals supported, including those employed, unemployed, and economically inactive.
- Against key outcomes, only 71 per cent of project targets for new businesses created were delivered, although the employment increase target was exceeded. Performance against other outcomes was mixed, with some exceeding targets, including people gaining a qualification, although others fell short, including individuals gaining employment (including self-employment) after support.

D.58 Underperformance against the target for new businesses created in particular partly reflects the timescales during which the programme was delivered and evaluations completed — with the business start-up process often taking significant time after support has been received to be fully realised (and therefore the outcome captured).

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.59 Projects delivering support for start-ups and SME growth plans generated multiple outcomes across a number of related themes linked to organisational development, innovation and training. Other outcomes were individual-focused, including support for employed and/or self-employed people, and improvements in life skills, confidence. and health as well as access to education and qualifications.

D.60 Eleven of 48 projects in this intervention type reported satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with an average rate reported of 87.8 per cent.

Enterprise Powys Case Study Summary

Enterprise Powys had the objectives to provide pre-employment support to economically inactive, unemployed, and furloughed or young individuals (16–24-year-olds) as well as post-COVID-19 business support to newly established or existing businesses. The project aimed to achieve inclusive growth and boost productivity, jobs, and living standards.

Though the project struggled to meet targets for individuals, the programme surpassed its targets for business support, and the interventions provided guidance to entrepreneurs that included emotional and personal support. The scheme helped to improve individuals' ability to overcome barriers to engaging with employment as

well as their confidence as entrepreneurs. Impacts on improved business resilience and entrepreneurial attitudes were expected following the support.

Delivery and What Worked

D.61 Thirty-nine of 48 projects provided details on their engagement techniques, with 28 detailing the effectiveness of the approaches used. Projects typically used a mixed-methods approach including a combination of social media, promotional work at events, community engagement, partner referrals, and cold marketing.

D.62 The use of existing networks and partners including Chambers of Commerce and Jobcentre Plus was highlighted as being particularly effective alongside the use of word of mouth and direct approaches from delivery partners. Some noted that social media engagement techniques had been less effective for this support type.

D.63 Several projects adapted their original delivery due to substantial delays from tendering, issues surrounding procuring suitable delivery consultants, as well as shifts in delivery approach based on what worked.

D.64 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Providing multiple interrelated support strands enhanced effectiveness** – these could combine at key points on the business start-up journey, including vouchers enabling businesses to benefit from specialist resources and training alongside the availability of expert advice in local venues.
- **Targeting start-up support at particular groups was beneficial** – identifying and meeting the demand for support, such as providing specific support for young people to start businesses or identifying opportunities based on clear evidence of need and intervention logic, aided effectiveness.
- **Ongoing mentor role was valued** – for business growth support, the value of a mentor allocated at the beginning of the support process who would remain with the businesses throughout also improved efficiency.
- **Need to work around business commitments** – given the limited spare time available to many SMEs, some activities, e.g. all-day sessions, are difficult to justify for an SME when engaging with the support.
- **Need for longer-term investments** – tight project timescales were often cited as a barrier to effective delivery, as there was limited time to establish good management processes, develop partnerships, and maximise the scale and benefit of support.

Investment in business hubs (incubators and accelerators)

D.65 Under the '**Investment in business hubs (incubators and accelerators)**' intervention type, £4.7m was invested across eight projects. Of these, four project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Derbyshire Accelerator** (Derbyshire County Council) – an innovative collaboration between universities, business support organisations, and local authorities to pilot five 'accelerator' strands. Activities targeted the business sectors impacted by COVID-19, as well as helping residents through employment, training, and new entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Betaden Tech Bootcamp Pilot** (Worcestershire County Council) – the Betaden Tech Bootcamp Pilot is a 90-day pilot version of the existing, highly successful Betaden Business Technology Accelerator.
- **Ideas to Innovation (I2I)** (Rhondda Cynon Taf) – boosting entrepreneurial activity through a partnership with the Alacrity Foundation. The project aimed to support 20 entrepreneurs to create new products, services and processes to develop towards commercialisation and create jobs and prosperity through the creation of an incubator for participant businesses.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Financial acceleration grants to fund strategic consultancy advice/training - Net zero accelerator providing carbon literacy and management training - Start-up accelerator with specialist product development support for new businesses - Digital transformation acceleration with workshops and peer support for adopting digital processes - Intensive entrepreneurial bootcamp - Grant funding - Graduate entrepreneurial internships	- SMEs - Aspiring entrepreneurs - Unemployed people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.66 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	15	9	60%
	Unemployed	70	123	176%
	Employed	1,205	1,089	90%
Businesses	Small	799	1,284	161%
	Medium	91	71	78%
	Large	5	10	200%
Organisations	Public	2	3	150%
	Private	22	100	455%
	Voluntary sector	2	4	200%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		50	75	150%
Number of people supported to gain employment		48	64	133%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business-ready		25	35	140%
Number of businesses receiving grants		88	271	308%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		378	1,003	265%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		20	24	120%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		54	48	89%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		55	34	62%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		20	67	335%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		160	263	164%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		272	285	105%
Number of new businesses created as a result of support		87	52	60%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		58	49	84%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		118	60	51%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		80	64	80%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.67   Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- This intervention type was mainly focused on supporting businesses and employed individuals and was broadly successful in meeting its key output targets.
- **Against key outcomes, there was overperformance against some key targets, such as for an employment increase and jobs safeguarded**, in supported businesses, although there was a shortfall against others (including new businesses created and innovation plans developed).

D.68　With only four projects reviewed under this intervention type, there was a limited explanation available for underperformance against the indicators in which there were shortfalls.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.69　Outcomes reported typically included business or organisational benefits such as improvements in organisational skills/development as well as new products developed for the firm or market, alongside employment gains, greater understanding of the importance of innovation as a route to growth, the upskilling of staff, and a contribution to environmental improvements.

D.70　Three of the four projects in this intervention type reported satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with an average satisfaction rate of 71.0 per cent.

Derbyshire Accelerator Case Study Summary

The Derbyshire Accelerator programme was led by East Midlands Chamber and delivered in partnership with Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire, the University of Derby, and the Food and Drink Forum. It had the objectives to test new modes of delivery to support the area's business support ecosystem through building partnerships with sub-regional universities and business support providers.

Five accelerators were developed to enhance or fill gaps in business support, and targeted both employed and unemployed people as well as businesses through one-to-one and one-to-many consultancy and advisory sessions. Business growth grants, wage subsidies, and vouchers for one-to-one consultancy were also provided.

The project overachieved against its targets, delivering support to 582 businesses and supporting product development, business growth, and some new business creation. Impacts were in relation to business effects including greater gross value added in the economy and more jobs created.

Delivery and What Worked

D.71　Three of the four projects provided details on their engagement techniques, with only one detailing the effectiveness of the specific approach. **Projects used a combination of social media techniques complemented by a mix of partner referrals, cold marketing, and promotion at events or via business support organisations.**

D.72　All four projects adhered to their original design to a great extent, with the only changes concerning timing.

D.73　Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Flexibility of eligible sectors for support was advantageous** – greater flexibility in terms of eligible sectors with which to work in comparison to European Structural Funds investment was helpful, with the accelerator

programmes able to bring together multiple aspects of bespoke business support coordinated under one funding source. This helped to better meet business needs and encourage investment in innovation, ideas and products.

- **Development of connections between businesses and into local and national industry experts increased benefits** – this was a success factor for several projects, sometimes leading to sales opportunities for those businesses.
- **The combinations of workshops and peer-to-peer support was effective** – with workshops helping to reinforce the peer-to-peer support function, especially where large proportions of the beneficiaries engaged had not previously accessed publicly funded business support.
- **Longer lead-in times would allow partners to prepare more effectively for a new programme** – the short timeframes associated with delivery represented a barrier to establishing programme partnerships that could add greater value, enable businesses to deliver their projects, and generate the full range of positive outcomes.

Supporting decarbonisation measures

D.74   Under the '**Supporting decarbonisation measures**' intervention type, £8.1m was invested across 21 projects. Of these, 15 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Smarter Energy North East Lincolnshire** (North East Lincolnshire Council) – the development and testing of innovative approaches to SME engagement and energy reduction support provision, evaluating their effectiveness for inclusion in the delivery of future support packages.
- **Suffolk Road to Net Zero Business Support Programme** (Suffolk County Council) – business support/consultancy and grant pilot focusing on advancing SMEs towards net zero, as well as building business advice expertise and developing a portfolio of tested interventions to be rolled out in the future.
- **Gwynedd Digital and Net Zero Business Academy** (Gwynedd) – a project focused on the North Wales Business Academy 'evaluate/mentor/develop/succeed' model to engage with businesses to improve their capabilities in terms of digital and net zero, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of customers, business efficiency, and increasing demand.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Grants for business progress to net zero - Research into energy reduction and decarbonisation solutions - Consultation advice from specialists - Business directory of all business support and skills support in the low-carbon field - Net zero audits informing action plans for potential improvements - Online training and awareness sessions - Assistance in securing finance, including applying for grant funding or loan financing - Online decarbonisation portal as a tool for carbon management	- SMEs - Large businesses - Public sector organisations - Employees - Unemployed people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.75   The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	140	180	129%
	Unemployed	176	51	29%
	Employed	1,329	3,378	254%
Businesses	Small	5,264	4,462	85%
	Medium	589	619	105%
	Large	54	298	552%
Organisations	Public	135	227	168%
	Private	4,144	2,549	62%
	Voluntary sector	131	138	105%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		115	87	76%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		53	322	608%
Number of people supported to gain employment		40	0	0%
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants		25	15	60%
Number of businesses receiving grants		223	298	134%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		992	1,836	185%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		315	440	140%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		141	185	131%
People gaining a qualification following support		261	229	88%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		27	21	78%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		102	61	60%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		147	64	44%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		95	52	55%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		544	242	44%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		630	606	96%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		167	217	130%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		810	823	102%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		10	12	120%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.76 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **The main outputs relating to this intervention type were businesses supported.** There was a slight shortfall in small businesses supported overall (85 per cent of target achieved).
- **A key outcome for this intervention type was that of decarbonisation plans developed, for which the target was exceeded.** Other relevant outcomes saw more mixed performance, with achievements falling short of the overall target for new-to-firm and new-to-market products, an employment increase, and job safeguarding.

D.77 In project evaluations, key factors behind this performance included inappropriate target setting in some cases, weaknesses in marketing and the recruitment of small businesses, and a lower demand for support than had been anticipated.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.78 Outcomes under this intervention included environmental and sustainability benefits for businesses, as well as benefits through the development of strategic, feasibility and innovation plans for businesses and organisations.

D.79 Three of the 15 projects in this intervention type reported satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with an average rate of 70.0 per cent.

Smarter Energy North East Lincolnshire Case Study Summary

Smarter Energy North East Lincolnshire (SENEL) had the aims to develop and test the feasibility and effectiveness of innovative approaches to the engagement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and community organisations in energy reduction actions. Due to the heavy nature of local industry, existing investments tended to be focused on assisting larger and multinational companies to decarbonise at the expense of SMEs.

Examples of support for decarbonisation plans included £40,000 of grant funding and £48,000 of incentive payments to achieve 60t of CO_2 savings and share the knowledge, supporting SMEs in their green net zero carbon journeys. The results were to be used to address existing market failures and inform delivery actions in future support packages for community collaboration approaches in order to inform larger interventions to be supported through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Delivery and What Worked

D.80 Twelve out of 15 projects provided details on their engagement techniques, with eight exploring the effectiveness of the approaches used. Engagement approaches for targeting businesses linked to decarbonisation measures tended to use social media less than did other business interventions, and instead focused on promotion at events, targeted community engagement, and the use of partner networks, alongside some cold marketing. **The use of existing networks including interest groups, Chambers of Commerce,**

and organisations with direct links to potential beneficiaries was the most effective engagement approach.

D.81 Seven of 15 projects were found to have followed their originally planned delivery approach to a great extent. The remaining eight projects were found to have adjusted to some extent from their original design. These changes included the following:

- delays in the CRF award notification necessitating the use of contractors and consultants to deliver projects, rather than internal teams, while issues surrounding contractors, supply, and skills shortages altered the grant funding in one project.
- changing the content or focus of delivery, with one shifting its emphasis from digital to decarbonisation support in line with changing business demand, and another refining plans in order to avoid the duplication of existing schemes and support.

D.82 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **The quality of partnership working at a strategic and management level** was cited as a success factor, especially when underpinned by effective communications and expertise to engage as many SMEs as possible.
- **Breadth of support attracted interest** – the scale and range of the support offer, ranging from groups and bespoke interventions provided by experienced delivery partners and reaching different beneficiaries including not-for-profits and those struggling after the pandemic, helped with recruitment in a tight delivery timescale.
- **Larger grant funds needed to engage medium-sized businesses** – increasing the size of the grants available for decarbonisation to over £25,000 would also attract medium-sized businesses, providing the flexibility to engage and support this business size.
- **Longer timescales needed to enhance outcomes** – the most frequently cited area for improvement focused on project timescales to allow delivery and outcomes, but particularly for businesses to develop decarbonisation plans and access grants to facilitate recommended investments. More streamlined funding mechanisms, enhanced procurement, and higher-quality project processes were also felt to have been possible with longer projects.
- Improvements in initial project planning could have provided clearer alignment between available funding and targets for job creation and safeguarding; furthermore, more thought could have been given to the monitoring process in order to avoid requesting duplicate and unnecessary information.

Investment in Communities and Place

Overview of the Investment Priority

D.83   A total of £38.5m was spent under the CRF programme on the Investment in Communities and Place investment priority, with 263 projects having this as part of their overall intervention.

D.84   For the purposes of this evaluation, the Investment in Communities and Place projects have been divided into four types to enable a more insightful analysis of findings from project evaluations. These include:

- Supporting the development of new or existing infrastructure or green space
- Developing the local arts, culture and heritage offer
- Investment in community engagement schemes
- Actions to support decarbonisation and net zero.

D.85   The following sections set out for each intervention type:

- Types of activities and beneficiaries supported
- Example projects
- Achievements against output and outcome targets
- Types of outcomes and impacts realised
- Findings regarding project delivery and what worked

Supporting the development of new or existing infrastructure or green space

D.86 Under the '**Supporting the development of new or existing infrastructure or green space**' intervention type, £13.4m was invested across 44 projects. Of these, 29 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Research on the Impact of COVID-19 on our Town Centres** (Conwy) – the project aimed to deliver a systematic appraisal of the current state of the 12 town and district centres in Conwy County Borough to not only capture the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also recognise longer-term pre-pandemic trends. This project commissioned a study to specifically focus on understanding the impact of future working patterns, as well as impacts on town centres (including the knock-on effects on footfall, spend, home working, and the need for town centre co-working office hubs).
- **Community-led Sustainable Transport Solutions** (Swansea) – delivery of activities to strengthen sustainable transport and active travel in Swansea, focusing on what communities can do for themselves to solve travel and transport challenges.
- **Pennine Lancashire Linear Park Pilot** (Lancashire County Council) – pilot project to engage local communities to build confidence and skills, as well as implementing place-making and access improvements along the canal. Projects relate to food growing, testing interactive lighting, and access improvements along the canal corridor.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Research and feasibility testing for new infrastructure - Infrastructure investments - Engagement activities - Local/community initiatives - Workshops, group events, information sessions - Training course provision	- SMEs - Public sector organisations - Voluntary sector organisations

Output and Outcome Performance

D.87 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	27,656	13,600	49%
	Unemployed	5,881	3,622	62%
	Employed	35,114	27,895	79%
Businesses	Small	6,178	1,311	21%
	Medium	394	177	45%
	Large	88	43	49%
Organisations	Public	852	747	88%
	Private	293	619	211%
	Voluntary sector	403	403	100%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		220	529	240%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		0	299	-
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		168	98	58%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		1,835	352	19%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business-ready		275	320	116%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		365	440	121%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		340	455	134%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		213	91	43%
People gaining a qualification following support		120	74	62%
People engaged in job searching following support		258	84	33%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		2,857	2,652	93%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		106	49	46%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		295	302	102%
Number of new businesses created as a result of support		20	21	105%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		1,078	700	65%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		117	162	138%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		156	78	50%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		82	135	165%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.88 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- The key outcome under this intervention type related to feasibility studies, often linked to later plans for new infrastructure, for which the target was exceeded.
- **Other wider outputs and outcomes for this intervention type related to individuals and small businesses supported**, which mostly fell below target levels. Consequently, the outcomes stemming from these for individuals and businesses typically also fell short of targets.

D.89 **The reasons behind the underperformance varied with projects and indicators**, with ineffective marketing and inconsistent data collection highlighted by reviewed projects. Timeframes to enable the achievement of outcomes were also noted to be a limitation.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.90 Outcomes from this intervention type typically focused on establishing an evidence base and generating knowledge and understanding of a place or space. This then informed the next steps, strategic direction, feasibility, and planning of subsequent projects (given that timescales for delivery were often not sufficient to enable the completion of infrastructure projects). Whilst these outcomes were unlikely to lead to social, economic and environmental impacts in themselves, they could contribute to impacts being realised in the future as a result of better-planned interventions.

D.91 Whilst increases in visitor numbers and footfall were reported, there was little evidence of how these outputs led to economic impacts. Likewise for the sq. ft. of blue/green space improved, there was little evidence of how this improvement had generated further environmental or social impacts.

D.92 Four projects (of 26) reported a beneficiary satisfaction rate (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with an average rate of 92.5 per cent.

Space for Local Production Case Study Summary

The Space for Local Production project aimed to improve the sustainability of local farms through researching and identifying opportunities that are available to farmers to make the most of available resources.

The project successfully worked with 11 farms (out of a target of 20), applying the Global Farm Metric tool to provide a baseline of their whole-farm impacts in a rigorous and consistent way. At the farm level, this provided data and insight as to the strengths and weaknesses within systems and led to an increased understanding of aspects of sustainability within farming systems.

Delivery and What Worked

D.93   The most common engagement approach was promotion at events (including networking events and workshops) and this method appears to align with the nature of the activities that were commonly delivered under this intervention type. Only two evaluation reports commented on the effectiveness of the approach, but in both cases this was noted to be very effective.

D.94   Many supported projects made changes from the initial design, including adapting the project scope (e.g. by increasing the number of locations to which the project delivered or reducing the number of feasibility studies that could be completed). Other changes noted related to the targets set and the delivery timescales. Changes primarily related to further development of projects, revealing that certain aspects were not feasible or not the best way in which to deliver targeted outcomes.

D.95   Common success factors for delivery under this intervention type were the effectiveness of partnership working and strategic relationships that had aided delivery as well as the input from a range of consultants, experts, and other stakeholders with specialist knowledge and expertise.

D.96   Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Need for time to build relationships and trust when working with communities in place shaping** – in some cases the tight timescales for CRF project delivery had not always made this possible.
- **Better and more comprehensive project planning at the outset was needed to fully scope, cost, and resource-plan projects for effective delivery.** More could have been done to establish greater strategic buy-in, and a narrowing or more focused project scope/ambition could have been helpful in some cases.
- **Greater clarity surrounding the roles and responsibilities of delivery partners and project managers to improve delivery efficiency** – a number of projects indicated that this could have enhanced project delivery, as well as stronger monitoring processes.

Developing the local arts, culture and heritage offer

D.97 Under the '**Developing the local arts, culture and heritage offer**' intervention type, £5.2m was invested across 17 projects. Of these, 11 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **GRID: Creating a Cultural Place and a Net Zero Innovation District** (Glasgow City Council) – the project sought to spearhead cultural generation across the Glasgow Riverside Innovation District (GRID) through a programme of street art and exploring the potential for a "circular village" to accelerate the transformation of the area.
- **Gateshead Riverside Partnership** (Gateshead Council) – the project commissioned a range of studies to explore the opportunities to reimagine Gateshead Riverside Park and the Staithes Ancient Monument to be the impetus for further housing development, enhance the visitor economy, and enhance access to culture, heritage, and the natural environment.
- **The Role of Digital Museums & Archives in Culture-led Regeneration: A Feasibility Study** (Blackpool Council) – the project focuses on online development in the museum sector to research non-in-person access, reducing travel and 'carbon miles'. Online-only techniques were used throughout the project, rather than relying on in-person research and the associated need for travel and more 'carbon miles'.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Arts and culture engagement activities - Investments in new infrastructure - Research and feasibility testing for new projects - Workshops, group events, and information sessions	- SMEs - General community - Voluntary sector organisations

Output and Outcome Performance

D.98 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	14,343	25,956	181%
	Unemployed	12,934	5,568	43%
	Employed	111,095	132,327	119%
Businesses	Small	940	487	52%
	Medium	88	66	75%
	Large	41	7	17%
Organisations	Public	168	162	96%
	Private	164	116	71%
	Voluntary sector	140	192	137%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		487	1,155	237%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		0	165	-
Number of people supported to gain employment		5	160	3,200%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		537	6,022	1,121%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		93	174	187%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		8	70	875%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		343	809	236%
People gaining a qualification following support		100	143	143%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		25	123	492%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		657	5,910	900%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		41	22	54%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		182	215	118%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		37	30	81%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		12	14	117%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.99 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **Key outcomes under this intervention type included organisations engaged in knowledge transfer as well as innovation plans and feasibility studies developed**, linked to future investments, against which the projects met or came close to meeting targets.

- **Other output and outcome indicators showed mixed performance**, with support for individuals and the associated outcomes largely meeting targets, but support for businesses fell short of targets.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.100 Key outcomes related to new partnerships forming and creating new working relationships, for example, between key strategic stakeholders within the project. This was also the case on an individual level, where artists and other practitioners were able to extend their networks.

D.101 Outcomes were also reported for individuals where projects sought to develop skills through providing qualifications, life skills, and supporting people into jobs. For example, one project helped artists to develop new skills in engaging with young people and in art programming; one provided training in stone masonry, while others created employment opportunities.

D.102 Some projects reported outcomes for the community, for example, through the increased presence of a creative community in the place, enhancing previously underused spaces, and promoting local heritage.

D.103 Two projects reported satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), which were 90 per cent and 95 per cent, respectively.

York Street Life Case Study Summary

York Street Life sought to overcome the challenges associated with the decline of the high street and to incentivise activity to engage people, businesses and organisations creatively with York's heritage.

The programme delivered four work packages: mapping and developing a digital portal; music and heritage experiences; heritage workshops; and heritage research. The evaluation modelled the gross and net benefit values associated with preserving heritage at £1.56m and £1.26m, respectively. In addition, it estimated the gross and net increase in GVA resulting from a skills uplift to be £0.24m and £0.12m, respectively.

Delivery and What Worked

D.104 A range of client engagement strategies were used, including promotional activities, cold calling, community engagement, and social media and digital marketing. Some projects utilised a physical space to deliver community engagement activities, including within premises on the project site. These approaches were seen to be very effective with the exception of cold calling (which was moderately effective).

D.105 Seven projects provided information on the extent to which their delivery reflected the original project plans. One project had deviated substantially from the designed approach, and one had changed to some extent. The rest had remained consistent with the original plan. Reasons for changes among

the two projects which deviated related to shifts in output and outcome targets as well as changes to engagement approaches.

D.106 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Importance of the focus on community engagement** – the quality of community engagement was key to generating knowledge and insight as to community needs and developing the best approaches to delivering projects.
- **Importance of high-quality project design and connections between activities** – some projects noted the importance of project design and ensuring a clear project vision and line of sight between the activities delivered and their contribution to aims. Examples include where projects had developed innovative, interactive and informative activities for communities and stakeholders and where multiple activities/workstreams complemented one another.
- **Importance of clear management of projects and partnerships** – project management issues were commonly highlighted as an area for improvement, related to decision-making and approval processes not being agreed prior to project commencement, as well as ineffective relationships between partners.

Investment in community engagement schemes

D.107 Under the '**Investment in community engagement schemes**' intervention type, £14.2m was invested across 35 projects. Of these, 23 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Reconnect** (North Lincolnshire Council) – Reconnect was a short-term post-pandemic programme which aimed to re-engage members of the community with their pre-COVID-19 energy, plans and ambitions. It aimed to improve resilience, reduce fear of COVID-19, tackle digital and social isolation as well as mental and physical health, and get people talking, accessing services, and developing themselves again.
- **The VCSE Futureproofing Initiative (Building Community Connections)** (East Sussex County Council) – the project aimed to reform service delivery and community involvement by creating a whole-system approach to volunteering and service access, resulting in a borough-wide model for volunteering, increasing accredited training, and creating a comprehensive workforce offer, a joined-up system to access funding alongside digital, and organisational solutions in order to respond to individual needs.
- **North Somerset Community Hubs** (North Somerset Council) – the project aimed to create a network of community hubs testing locally designed approaches. The three project strands included research and outreach, participatory action research, and location-specific feasibility studies.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Support for community organisations - Development of community spaces - Activities and events to promote community participation - Workshops, group events, and information sessions - Small-scale grant schemes - Training course provision - Local community initiatives	- Economically inactive and unemployed people - Voluntary sector - SMEs - Public sector organisations - General community

Output and Outcome Performance

D.108 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	6,783	7,395	109%
	Unemployed	4,635	11,436	247%
	Employed	5,243	10,494	200%
Businesses	Small	1,680	1,144	68%
	Medium	183	54	30%
	Large	30	29	97%
Organisations	Public	883	997	113%
	Private	74	286	386%
	Voluntary sector	1,153	1,501	130%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		484	1,236	255%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		410	962	235%
Number of people supported to gain employment		296	154	52%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		1,402	5,002	357%
Number of businesses receiving financial support other than grants		52	31	60%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		216	428	198%
Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants		21	23	110%
Number of organisations receiving grants		55	146	265%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		276	394	143%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People gaining a qualification following support		1,442	1,360	94%
People engaged in job searching following support		815	372	46%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		280	423	151%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		4,212	5,908	140%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		50	60	120%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		184	193	105%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		795	1,051	132%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		132	219	166%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		161	120	75%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		51	98	192%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.109 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- The main output and outcome targets for this intervention type were related to supporting individuals as well as the associated outcomes for those individuals supported. Most output and outcome targets for this intervention type were achieved or exceeded, with notable exceptions regarding the number of people supported to gain employment and of those engaged in job searching.
- Other key targets included innovation plans, decarbonisation plans, and feasibility studies completed, against which targets were met or close to being met.

D.110 Reasons stated in project evaluations for underperformance with regard to outcomes for individuals were commonly that beneficiaries were not ready to progress towards job searching immediately following the support. In other cases, challenges were also reported in monitoring information collected and definitions used by projects, which may have led to some outcomes not being captured.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.111 Outcomes related to community engagement programmes focused on benefits to individuals' personal development, including areas such as life skills, confidence, and physical and mental health, accessing work, and community empowerment. These outcomes were often difficult to quantify and in project evaluations were often explored through qualitative methods.

D.112 There were also outcomes generated for communities, which included the development and improvement of community spaces for the delivery of services and activities, as well as supporting community-based organisations.

D.113 The strengthening of partnerships and collaborative working was also a commonly reported outcome, which included both the sharing of new knowledge and insight generated and the forming of new strategic relationships between organisations and stakeholders.

Delivery and What Worked

D.114 The most common engagement approach was that of social media and digital marketing, and the effectiveness of this approach ranged from being moderately effective (two projects) to highly effective (two projects) where this information was available.

D.115 Promotional events and activities also constituted a common engagement approach, including workshops, approaching people in busy public spaces, attending schools, and community events. This approach was moderately effective for both projects where this information could be discerned. Cold calling was also used (six out of 23 projects), which tended to relate to

sending information, newsletters and leaflets to relevant organisations and stakeholders which informed them of project information, events and activities.

D.116 Several projects deviated slightly from their originally planned delivery. The main changes were related to changes in timelines, output/outcome indicators, and aspects of delivery that were altered or not carried out. The reasons for changes typically related to changing project timeframes, changes to scope required in light of further project implementation, delivery challenges, and overambitious applications, meaning that some aspects of projects were not deliverable.

D.117 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Projects designed to respond to known community needs** – key to the projects under this intervention type was an understanding of local community needs as well as ensuring the appropriateness of project design and activities to respond to these. Evaluations reported that projects were well aligned with community needs, focused on community development, trialled new and innovative approaches, and focused resource towards areas and organisations where it was needed.
- **Prioritising community engagement** – underpinning the first point, effective projects were commonly those which had effectively engaged communities and prioritised community input in the design and delivery of activities. Examples include engaging communities in the development of physical spaces and activity programming, as well as engaging communities in the ownership and maintenance of assets. In some cases, more engagement was recognised as having been needed, but timescales for project development and delivery had constrained this.
- **Joined-up approaches added value** – where strategic partnerships had been created or where a diverse range of organisations and services were colocated in community hubs to enable beneficiaries to address multiple needs in the same location, this was commonly seen to be enhancing effectiveness.
- **Importance of marketing** – the need for enhanced marketing was highlighted as a common lesson in particular for community hubs to enable better visibility and awareness of hub activities and services. Communicating projects more widely to stakeholders and relevant services could also have helped to embed projects in the wider community support offer.

Actions to support decarbonisation and net zero

D.118 Under the '**Actions to support decarbonisation and net zero**' intervention type, £8.1m was invested across 29 projects. Of these, 17 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Climate Clever Communities** – the project focused on the need to educate and prepare local communities and businesses on the impacts and consequences of climate change and empower them to take positive practical individual and collective action through the rollout of a region-wide accredited carbon literacy training programme, a Climate Challenge Fund competition, and a new pilot approach to community-based climate action.
- **Tees Valley Energy Transition** (Tees Valley Combined Authority) – the project aimed to enhance the capacity of Tees Valley to transition to a net zero housing sector with four key elements: 1) an urban retrofit project, 2) a comprehensive customer and stakeholder engagement programme, 3) an assessment of Tees Valley residents' opinions and experiences regarding low-carbon technologies and behaviours, and 4) a sectoral analysis of skills training and economic opportunity.
- **Delivering a Carbon-Negative Energy System in North Yorkshire** (North Yorkshire County Council) – production of a suite of three Local Area Energy Plans to provide a long-term strategic approach to decarbonising North Yorkshire, as well as delivering a package of innovative feasibility studies that address local decarbonisation challenges, focusing on transport, renewable energy generation, and energy use in buildings.

D.119 The following sections take each of the four intervention types in turn and draw out insights into performance against targets, outcomes and impacts achieved and what worked in delivery.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Research projects and feasibility studies related to net zero investments - Training courses and skills development regarding decarbonisation - Workshops/group events/information sessions - Community engagement activities - Developing online resources/toolkits	- SMEs - Public sector organisations - General community - Voluntary sector organisations

Output and Outcome Performance

D.120 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	564	180	32%
	Unemployed	420	51	12%
	Employed	1,389	4,922	354%
Businesses	Small	334	320	96%
	Medium	7,263	7,278	100%
	Large	37	33	89%
Organisations	Public	253	398	157%
	Private	787	1,036	132%
	Voluntary sector	329	354	108%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		83	161	194%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		622	1,333	214%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		1,060	1,538	145%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People gaining a qualification following support		159	171	108%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		33	34	103%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support		154	156	101%
Organisations engaged in knowledge transfer activity following support		1,505	2,252	150%
Innovation plans developed as a result of support		29	29	100%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support		148	280	189%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support		15	28	187%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.121 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **The key outcome under this intervention type was in relation to decarbonisation plans developed that could lead to later investments**, for which the achievement exceeded the target set. Beyond this, projects supported individuals, businesses and organisations, and projects exceeded the target levels across the majority of indicators.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.122 The most prevalent outcomes reported were concerned with enhanced environmental sustainability, including reducing carbon emissions, increases in the amount of land that was rewilded, operational changes in order to reduce risks associated with climate change, and reducing domestic emissions through retrofitting or energy efficiency.

D.123 The development of new strategies was also a common outcome. For example, some local authorities had developed a more strategic approach to climate adaptation and put new processes in place. Other projects reported outcomes relating to better insight with which to support priority setting and advance schemes and approaches for accelerating towards net zero.

D.124 Increased community, partner and stakeholder engagement was reported to be a common outcome. This included increases in the understanding of how different stakeholders can play their role in supporting decarbonisation, creating local networks, and encouraging cooperation.

North Northamptonshire to Net Zero Case Study Summary

The 'North Northamptonshire to Net Zero' project aimed to devise a holistic strategy to introduce localised green energy, housing, and transport initiatives to achieve net zero status for North Northamptonshire ahead of 2050 targets.

The project's evaluation found that it had positively contributed towards the development of a route map for North Northamptonshire's net zero strategy, which is likely to be implemented due to its joining-up with pre-existing green and decarbonisation strategies.

Delivery and What Worked

D.125 Engagement approaches depended on the types of activities that projects delivered, and the effectiveness of each varied in each project. The most common were:

- **promotional events** (which included both attendance at conferences and the planning and delivery of specific project events).
- **community engagement** and partner relationships, for example, through exploiting existing network contacts with both professionals and communities.
- **cold marketing** (including social media, leaflets and flyers, and door-to-door knocking).

D.126 Six projects were identified in which activities had adapted quite substantially from what was initially planned. The main changes related to the scope of projects (in some cases expanding and in others narrowing), shifts in project activities to focus on certain groups (one to respond to the increasing cost-of-living priority), and a reduction of certain activities (due to planned activities being less relevant than anticipated or initial targets being too ambitious).

D.127 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Stakeholder-led design was well received** – this included methods that adopted stakeholder-led designs, were explorative in nature, and engaged a broad range of delivery partners with experience and expertise.
- **Bespoke strategic approaches to decarbonisation for each area** – projects which built on previous schemes or initiatives in an area and

responded to specific local priorities or demand (including a specific local issue or relevant issue for households — energy bill reductions) were found to be important for project success.

- **Need for better knowledge sharing** – common areas for improvement related to knowledge sharing to better exploit the opportunities and learning resulting from projects, facilitating better collaboration between project partners as well as better engagement planning and approaches. Examples included the need for community projects to engage with more community assets, to reduce the reliance on existing networks to engage new audiences, and for language used to be less technical so as to make engagement more accessible.

Supporting People into Employment

Overview of the Investment Priority

D.128 A total of £54.8m was spent under the CRF programme on the Supporting People into Employment investment priority, with 269 projects having this as part of their overall intervention.

D.129 For the purposes of this evaluation, the Supporting People into Employment projects have been divided into four types to enable a more insightful analysis of findings from project evaluations. These include:

- Removing barriers to employment
- Support for young people NEET
- Support for those with disabilities
- Support for employers

D.130 The following sections set out for each intervention type:

- Types of activities and beneficiaries supported
- Example projects
- Achievements against output and outcome targets
- Types of outcomes and impacts realised
- Findings regarding project delivery and what worked

Removing barriers to employment

D.131 Under the '**Removing barriers to employment**' intervention type, £39.9m was invested across 95 projects. Of these, 73 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Minding the Gaps** (East Sussex) – support for those who struggle to engage with mainstream services. The programme provided highly personalised support, covering employability, skills, confidence, and occupational therapist assistance.
- **Time to Learn and Work** (Swansea) – the project supported BAME individuals to enter education, employment or self-employment, reduce barriers, and tackle loneliness and isolation. The project focused on groups who face additional barriers, i.e. refugees, asylum seekers, ex-offenders, disengaged young people and women, those with language barriers, and those with mental health challenges.
- **Life Off and Accelerate** (North Lanarkshire Council) – the project offered two alternative learning models for young people aged 15–18 years with additional support needs, which included activity-based learning aimed at developing core, personal, practical and digital skills.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Skills and qualification training - Functional skills support covering creation of CVs, interview skills, filling out applications - Support for financial and digital inclusion - Workshops on decision making, time management, confidence, motivation, resilience, healthy eating, mental health, and well-being - Individualised mentoring - Mental health support and training, as well as general health, drugs and alcohol support	Unemployed and economically inactive people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.132 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	18,337	20,233	110%
	Unemployed	21,924	18,010	82%
	Employed	10,838	12,936	119%
Businesses	Small	1,756	2,633	150%
	Medium	741	490	66%
	Large	206	292	142%
Organisations	Public	222	305	137%
	Private	596	545	91%
	Voluntary sector	734	901	123%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		5,718	7,906	138%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		2,731	5,008	183%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		6,941	5,681	82%
Number of people supported to gain employment		1,820	2,729	150%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		7,808	16,656	213%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefit system		1,445	1,661	115%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be business-ready		458	913	199%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		8,443	8,257	98%
People gaining a qualification following support		5,307	5,196	98%
People engaged in job searching following support		9,789	5,872	60%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		2,021	1,892	94%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		12,008	14,967	125%
Economically inactive individuals engaging with benefit system following support		1,863	1,491	80%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		529	569	108%
Number of new businesses created as a result of support		198	326	165%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.133 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- Key output targets for this intervention type concerned individuals supported, particularly economically inactive and unemployed individuals. For the former, the target was exceeded, while for the latter, the numbers achieved fell slightly short of the target.
- Achievement against outcome targets for individuals was mostly at least at 80 per cent of target levels, with the only exception being the number of people engaged in job searching after the support.

D.134 Where there was underperformance, project evaluations commonly highlighted that competition for participants between multiple funded programmes as well as challenges that support provided did not always translate to outcome achievement, such as the willingness to move into employment post-pandemic or engage in job searching.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.135 Many of the projects focused on beneficiaries re-engaging with the workforce, although evaluations often focused on the softer impacts regarding confidence, resilience, and mental health improvements (amongst others) observed in the participants. Many projects reported positive changes in behaviours, communication and other social skills, mental and physical health improvements, and other social and emotional capabilities. This often then translated into increased employability and confidence to continue to move towards employment or training for a specific job. Beneficiaries reported feeling more empowered, independent and confident in taking up opportunities.

D.136 Of the 72 projects within this intervention type, six reported beneficiary satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), which averaged 80 per cent and ranged from 48–100 per cent. All but the lowest project engaged with beneficiaries via community organisations or Jobcentre Plus.

Community Jobs Scotland Intergenerational Pilot Case Study Summary

This project delivered 31 paid work placements in third sector organisations to young people living in the Highlands. The programme was successful in boosting participants' confidence and employability, with 20 having moved into employment after completing the placement, and the remainder entering training or job searching.

While the project was viewed positively by both the participants and businesses, its delivery was narrower than originally planned in terms of the target segments that it reached. In particular, no people aged above 50 participated in the project, reflecting changes to the economic landscape (more over-50s becoming economically inactive during the pandemic), constraining impacts for this target group.

SWITCH Case Study Summary

This project worked with people who were economically inactive, unemployed, ex-offenders, and those with mental health issues to improve their confidence, raise their ability to carry out day-to-day tasks, and increase the motivation needed to take steps towards employment. It provided participants with cognitive remediation training over an intense four-week period.

Participants reported benefits including being able to get out of the house, being more efficient and more effective in everyday tasks, being able to take on previous

personal barriers, and having the confidence to start a training course or to apply for a job that they would never have previously considered. Most felt strongly that they would not have made such progress without SWITCH.

Women Breaking Barriers Case Study Summary

This project sought to equip women across Northern Ireland with the skills necessary to overcome personal barriers to employment and education and secure improved progression in their future careers. It delivered 61 support sessions via workshops and group sessions, which focused not only on employability skills, but also on coaching for greater success in life, alongside a clear plan towards long-term meaningful employment.

Five hundred and fifty-one women attended a programme against a target of 350 and commonly reported feeling well supported by the programme. The programme exceeded its expected impacts relating to participants entering employment (40 actual vs. 20 target), engaging in job searching (169 actual vs. 150 target), and engaging in additional life skills support (393 actual vs. 120 target).

Enterprise Cardiff Case Study Summary

This project aimed to upskill individuals, reduce unemployment, and support the recovery of local businesses after COVID-19. It did so by providing pre-employment training to economically inactive, unemployed, and young people, as well as by providing business support.

The project had a strong impact on individuals' economic activity status, with the number of people unemployed and searching for work reducing, and the number of people employed increasing. Of the businesses supported, 15 of the 20 which responded in the evaluation had made progress against their ambitions.

Delivery and What Worked

D.137 The projects used a wide range of client engagement methods; however, referrals from community coordinators and connectors were often cited as a particularly successful means of engagement. These came from partnerships with other organisations acting locally, such as the DWP, Communities for Work, Carers Network, and Parenting Networks. The effectiveness of referrals reflects the fact that they were aiming to reach some of the hardest-to-reach beneficiaries who are not currently engaged with the labour market, so taking a referral from a local organisation that had established relationships with the individual proved to be most effective.

D.138 Most projects reported that what was delivered matched what was planned, with any minor changes attributed to delays in getting the project started as well as adjustments that had to be made. Where projects changed more substantially, it was commonly related to the initial project design being found

to be insufficient to meet the contracted output targets, thus necessitating changes to the delivery approach.

D.139 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Need for a flexible delivery model to enable bespoke support** – a flexible delivery model was the most widely cited success factor amongst projects aiming to address barriers to employment. This approach enabled more personalised and more tailored support in comparison to other employability offers. The "softer" approach adopted was seen to be impacting on underlying challenges such as mental health concerns and individuals' confidence and self-worth. This led to support that was centred on the individual and tailored to each person's unique starting points and aspirations.
- **Importance of building personal connections** – particularly for those projects with a focus on supporting young people, a commonly cited success factor was that of the personal connections forged with participants in a way which saw them being treated with respect as an 'adult' by people who showed a genuine commitment to helping them.
- **Local network support underpinned project effectiveness** – given the nature of the hard-to-reach target beneficiaries, many projects noted that the existing networks of locally rooted community-based organisations (predominantly from the voluntary sector) were key. These relationships allowed delivery partners to not only reach people quickly, but also build on the existing relationships and meaningfully engage with participants.
- **Additional resourcing needs to engage with more rurally based and isolated individuals** – one area for improvement identified in some cases was concerned with the need for greater resources and timescales when engaging harder-to-reach participants in more rural or more isolated locations, particularly where there was a lack of digital access or skills in digital communication.

Support for young people NEET

D.140 Under the '**Support for young people NEET**' intervention type, £4.7m was invested across 21 projects. Of these, 15 project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Hidden Talent** (Greater Manchester) – this programme worked one-to-one with young people, providing individual holistic support and life skills to help them to move towards the labour market, using a range of trusted and experienced local delivery partners. It engaged residents aged 16–24 who are NEET/not claiming benefits (or at risk of such).
- **Archaeology on Prescription** (City of York) – a project to support young people who are NEET, adults with mental health issues, people who have left the Armed Forces, and people referred by GPs to develop practical skills together with confidence and transferable skills through involvement in archaeological excavations.
- **The ReVerb** (Ceredigion) – the programme was offered to economically inactive and unemployed young people, enabling them to gain skills and experience within a safe and supportive environment. This training was delivered by employing six part-time baristas in the Youth Café. Alongside this the project offered support with resilience, self-esteem, employability skills, and other identified training needs.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Employability support as well as advice and guidance on suitable career paths, qualification requirements, and local opportunities - Financial support for expenses related to job searching - Entry-level qualifications for young people - Emotional well-being and mental health support - Social activities and fun-based engagement to promote mental well-being and complement the employment-related skill-building work	- Young people - Economically inactive and unemployed people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.141 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	1,295	1,603	124%
	Unemployed	962	1,980	206%
	Employed	254	734	289%
Businesses	Small	515	1,812	352%
	Medium	158	599	379%
	Large	89	217	244%
Organisations	Public	70	721	1,030%
	Private	324	1,088	336%
	Voluntary sector	102	2,617	2,566%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		24	639	2,663%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		92	1,186	1,289%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		125	1,524	1,219%
Number of people supported to gain employment		52	433	833%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		80	949	1,186%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefit system		80	273	341%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		331	595	180%
People gaining a qualification following support		485	1,183	244%
People engaged in job searching following support		596	1,469	246%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		259	335	129%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		1,127	1,754	156%
Economically inactive individuals engaging with benefit system following support		171	235	137%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.142 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **Key indicators for this intervention type included unemployed and economically inactive individuals supported** and the associated outcomes for those individuals following support. Against all of these outputs and outcomes, as well as many of the less core indicators for this intervention type, the programme met or exceeded targets.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.143 Outcomes for this intervention type largely focused on the improved confidence, well-being, and mental health noted by participants. This was achieved through traditional training programmes as well as some of the

softer group activity and mentorship-based projects. Some of the projects also led to an increase in financial literacy and money management skills.

D.144 Four of the 15 projects in this intervention category reported on beneficiary satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), which ranged from 77 per cent to 100 per cent. All but one of these projects focused on delivering one-to-one employability and/or well-being support.

Hidden Talent Case Study Summary

This project was a youth employment project that provided one-to-one support for young people NEET delivered by talent coaches with an embedded mental health support dimension. The project successfully worked with 142 young people aged 16–24, against an original target of 124.

A positive impact of the project was that of the strong trusting relationships between the coaches and the young people, contributing to cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of the supported young people. Participants' negative associations and stigmas associated with the benefit system limited the project's ability to achieve outputs in this area, even though many participants were eligible.

Delivery and What Worked

D.145 **The most used forms of engagement were referrals and community engagement or partner relationships**, which were each used by the majority of projects that provided support for young people NEET. Since the beneficiaries were not currently engaged in any education, training or employment, considerable effort was needed to identify whom they were and how they could be reached. For this reason, many projects found success in relying on organisations that had knowledge of (and relationships with) some of the target beneficiaries.

D.146 Eleven out of 15 project evaluations reviewed indicated that what was delivered matched the project plan to a great extent. Where there were deviations, this typically involved adjustments to approaches that sought to better meet the challenging circumstances of participants in relation to mental and physical health, disability, caring responsibilities, and other barriers.

D.147 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Paid work placements were an effective way in which to reduce barriers between young people and prospective employers** – this approach helped to encourage participation and had high retention levels while reducing the challenge of recruitment from the employer's perspective.
- **One-to-one relationships between young people and their engagement worker were a key underpinning of effective projects** – many projects noted the success of a person-centred delivery approach, which gave delivery partners autonomy in responding to the unique challenges facing each young

person. One-to-one sessions and a strong relationship with the support provider led to confidence building and an increase in well-being. Moreover, these relationships helped to repair the negative experiences of formal education that many of the young people had experienced in the past.

- The opportunity to obtain a qualification was an important motivating factor for young people to engage with the programmes.
- **Value of more personalised and more intensive support** – a main area of improvement identified by projects was the need for smaller groups to provide more intensive, personalised and one-to-one support to the participants. It was often found that the resource required to support young people was greater than initially anticipated.

Support for those with disabilities (neurodiverse, physical, sensory and learning)

D.148 Under the '**Support for those with disabilities**' intervention type, £3.9m was invested across 10 projects. Of these, two project evaluations were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Frontier** (NOW Group) – this project focused on people with learning difficulties and neurodiverse conditions. It delivered specialised pre-employment academies, support by means of on-the-job mentoring, and opportunities for sustained employment for people who would not engage with traditional learning or job-seeking establishments.
- **Inclusive Workforce** (Leonard Cheshire) – a pan-disability supported-employment intervention model that supported young disabled people aged 19–24 in Belfast who were recent graduates from university or higher education, NEET, and furthest from the labour market. Support included bespoke academic and employability workshops, followed by participants being matched to a business to undertake a five-month paid internship with a guaranteed interview at the end of the period.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Pre-employment academies - On-the-job mentoring - Academic and employability workshops - Paid internships - Disability awareness training for employers	- Young people - People with disabilities - Unemployed and economically inactive people

Output and Outcome Performance

D.149 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	161	239	148%
	Unemployed	74	58	78%
	Employed	2,609	2,536	97%
Businesses	Small	2,054	2,276	111%
	Medium	76	76	100%
	Large	15	45	300%
Organisations	Public	41	31	76%
	Private	779	284	36%
	Voluntary sector	500	179	36%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		4	2,560	64,000%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		10	99	990%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		60	111	185%
Number of people supported to gain employment		56	63	113%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		60	221	368%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		0	2,480	-
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		67	85	127%
People gaining a qualification following support		540	605	112%
People engaged in job searching following support		90	92	102%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		92	79	86%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		86	221	257%
Businesses introducing new products to the market as a result of support		800	819	102%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.150 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- **Key outputs and outcomes under this intervention type were employed individuals, small businesses, and other organisations.** Targets for individuals and small businesses were met or close to being met, although the numbers of organisations supported fell short of targets.
- Similarly, the main outcomes relating to individuals and businesses supported were fully met.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.151 Although there were only a small number of project evaluations reviewed, those reports highlighted key outcomes including increased self-confidence and self-esteem, increased experience in the world of work, widening professional and social networks, and improving employability prospects.

Delivery and What Worked

D.152 Key approaches to engaging beneficiaries included the use of social media and referrals via the Jobs and Benefits Office, word of mouth, and online job advertisements. These were all found to be at least moderately effective.

D.153 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Importance of ICT to help tackle barriers** – one of the projects particularly noted that access to industry-recognised information and communication technology (ICT) hardware and software facilitated by the project lead was a key enabler of delivery success.
- **Value of longer placements to enhance benefits for the participant** – one area for improvement identified in one of the projects was the length of placements, suggesting that these could be longer in the future and hosted during less busy periods. In addition, hosting an introductory in-person meeting between the graduate and placement host in advance of the placement starting would be beneficial.

Support for employers

D.154 Under the '**Support for employers**' intervention type, £8.3m was invested across 15 projects. All 15 of these projects had evaluations that were reviewed. Project examples from this intervention type include:

- **Newstart** (Nottingham) – a 100-person wage subsidy employment programme that ring-fenced opportunities for individuals aged 25 years or above from disadvantaged groups (BAME communities, women, people with disabilities, etc.) in priority wards.
- **Made In Worcester Creative Collective** (Worcestershire) – a private sector collaboration between independent film companies to provide immediate employment opportunities to support a thriving film industry sector. The project focused on accelerating film production as well as upskilling and reskilling young people to develop a pool of creative and entrepreneurial talent.

Summary of Funded Activities and Beneficiaries

Types of Activities Funded	Beneficiaries
- Wage subsidy placement opportunities - One-to-one business support services - Business networking events - Training on issues such as staff engagement, recruitment and interviewing - Mental health training for employers - Research on barriers faced by employers in accessing higher-level skills	- Unemployed and economically inactive people - SMEs

Output and Outcome Performance

D.155 The table below sets out a summary of performance against the most relevant indicators for this intervention type.

Progress against Output and Outcome Targets

Output Type	Output	Target	Claimed	% of Target
GFA Outputs				
People	Economically inactive	2,296	180	8%
	Unemployed	1,481	51	3%
	Employed	395	1,389	352%
Businesses	Small	622	463	74%
	Medium	330	107	32%
	Large	93	63	68%
Organisations	Public	42	71	169%
	Private	367	155	42%
	Voluntary sector	115	195	170%
Annex A Outputs				
Number of people supported to participate in education		832	1,764	212%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification		520	700	135%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching		530	675	127%
Number of people supported to gain employment		314	353	112%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills		768	832	108%
Number of businesses receiving grants		193	162	84%
Number of businesses receiving non-financial support		170	235	138%
Number of organisations receiving grants		26	62	238%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support		30	160	533%
GFA Outcomes (following support)				
People in education/training following support		1,228	1,870	152%
People gaining a qualification following support		918	762	83%
People engaged in job searching following support		529	576	109%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support		170	139	82%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions		1,345	675	50%
Businesses introducing new products to the firm as a result of support		153	42	27%
Employment increase in supported businesses as a result of support		443	293	66%

Source: DLUHC Monitoring Data, March 2023. RAG is based on 100% = GREEN, 75–99% = AMBER, <75% = RED.

D.156 Key findings on the review of performance against targets include the following:

- Key outputs for this intervention type included support for individuals as well as for businesses/voluntary sector organisations. Against most of these output indicators the projects under this intervention type fell short of targets.
- There is mixed performance against outcomes for individuals, with most indicators meeting or at least at 80 per cent of target levels achieved. Performance against outcomes for businesses, however, is weaker, with outcome targets such as an employment increase as well as introducing new-to-firm products both falling far short of targets.

D.157 Feedback from project evaluations commonly highlighted that targets set were too ambitious, given the timeframes for delivery, which led to the underperformance of some of these indicators.

Wider Outcomes and Impacts

D.158 Outcomes for this intervention type varied by beneficiary group. For employers, outcomes included enhanced knowledge transfer and creation of new employment. For supported individuals, outcomes included completing training courses and gaining qualifications or employment. Some projects also supported well-being or mental health support, which led to positive outcomes being reported by beneficiaries (including an increased willingness to engage in other activities).

D.159 Only two of the 14 projects provided data on beneficiary satisfaction rates (those reporting that they were very or fairly satisfied with the support), with one reporting a 57 per cent satisfaction rate and the other reporting 85 per cent. The project with lower satisfaction levels cited several issues regarding timescales and a negative contracting experience.

Breaking Barriers Case Study Summary

Breaking Barriers addressed demand- and supply-side issues to tackle the systematic underrepresentation of employment opportunities in Kent for people with disabilities, people from BAME communities, young people NEET, and older people.

The large uptake of support from people who had recently become disabled highlighted that conventional support programmes are not meeting the needs of this segment. The programme focused flexible support towards overcoming barriers that prevented people from being economically active, as well as those with new disabilities, which addressed the initial shock of processing the change in jobs that they were able to perform.

Delivery and What Worked

D.160 Projects reported using community engagement and partner relationships to engage with beneficiaries, as well as referrals from partners such as Jobcentre Plus and local authorities, which, in addition to providing referrals, helped to promote the offer through their channels. These routes were all generally found to be effective.

D.161 Delivery under most projects matched to a large extent what was planned, with changes made mostly reflecting changes to delivery timescales as well as adjustments to management approaches and delivery teams, which in some cases were due to challenges surrounding recruitment and partnership development.

D.162 Key success factors and lessons identified in project evaluations included the following:

- **Importance of understanding needs of specific beneficiary groups** – a common success factor, as cited across projects that targeted both employers and potential employees, was preliminary research early on to identify specific needs of beneficiaries. Understanding the needs of local businesses, for example, was key to building successful relationships with the business base. Similarly, giving careful consideration to how participants were matched with placement opportunities helped to ensure that they were the right fit and had the greatest chance of success.
- **Bespoke support to meet individual needs** – another common success factor highlighted for this type of intervention was the benefit of having a focus on the individual beneficiary's mindset when designing support.