

AGENDA ITEM No. 6

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL REPORT

To: YOUTH AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE	Subject: European Social Fund Horizontal Themes - Equalities
From: Head of Education (Skills, Lifelong Learning and Youth Employment)	
Date: 8 August 2016	Ref: LMCM/PK/EW

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee regarding the equalities commitments within the Council's European Social Fund employability projects.

2. Background

2.1 Two applications seeking European Social Fund (ESF) support for large scale employability services within North Lanarkshire were submitted in March 2015. Since then, the Council has been in negotiation with the Scottish Government to secure its share of these funds. These services are North Lanarkshire's Youth Employment Initiative (NLYEI) aimed at 16-29 year olds and North Lanarkshire's Working Employability Pipeline (NLWEP) aimed at those unemployed residents who are over 29 years of age. In April 2016 the Council received notification that these projects, total cost £11.75 million, had been approved by the Scottish Government with a contribution of £6.05 million coming from ESF.

2.2 The table below summarises the targets for each project from 2016-2018:

Programme	Engaged on programme	Gaining Qualifications	Leaving into Employment, Training or Education	In Employment, Training or Education 6 months after leaving
NLYEI 16-29 year olds	2400	768	1800	1260
Employability Pipeline 30+	4860	1556	2104	1362
Totals	7260	2324	3904	2622

2.3 Alongside delivering the targets within the budgets agreed, ESF also requires applicants to integrate across their projects particular commitments to social inclusion, equalities and environmental sustainability and these are known as horizontal themes. There is a requirement to report on the implementation of the horizontal themes on a regular basis.

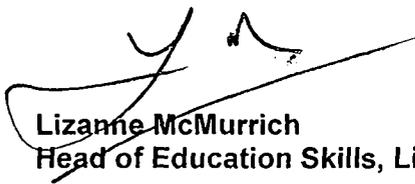
3. Considerations

3.1 Horizontal Theme - Equalities

- 3.1.1** There is a requirement to report on the implementation of the horizontal themes within the Council's ESF employability projects on a regular basis and the commitment made within the ESF applications to Equalities is outlined in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.2** Fundamentally the commitment that the Council has made is to ensure that equal opportunities policies are implemented, providing support that is flexible and meets the needs of those North Lanarkshire residents that the projects engage with, as well as ensuring under-represented groups are appropriately supported and accommodated. In addition, evidence of this needs to be gathered and monitored using the project management information system which gathers together the data necessary for reporting.
- 3.1.3** Evidence of the commitment to these horizontal themes is required by the Scottish Government and this is rigorously checked during the regular verification and compliance meetings that occur throughout the life of the project.
- 3.1.4** Briefings on the equalities requirements of the project are delivered to all staff and partners along with other requirements related to social inclusion and environmental sustainability and the first report to the Scottish Government on the progress on these will be submitted towards the end of 2016.
- 3.1.5** Given the significance of the equalities theme to the project and the Council's commitment to equalities, examples of good practice will be highlighted across the project and to other Council services.

4. Recommendations

The Youth and Equalities Committee is requested to note the equalities commitments within the Council's European Social Fund employability projects.



Lizanne McMurrich
Head of Education Skills, Lifelong Learning and Youth Employment

Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact Paul Kane, Employability Services on 01236 632867.

North Lanarkshire Council ESF Applications – Equalities Commitments

1. North Lanarkshire Council as lead partner and all partners the Pipeline and YEI intervention and operations are committed to ensuring that services, delivery, facilities and recruitment are accessible and relevant to the needs of all individuals. Throughout the development of the Intervention and operations, steps will be taken to identify and remove potential barriers, inequalities and discrimination to improve and ensure access for all.
2. The interventions are focused on supporting the delivery of activity which encourages and promotes equitable access to employment. In doing so, ESF will be used specifically to provide a range of tailored activities to those furthest removed from the labour market, undertaking needs assessment and linking individuals to supported interventions within the projects where these may address specific equality issues (such as flexible childcare provision) or promote specific under-represented groups into employment. Added to this, all partners within the interventions are committed to ensuring that the services which they deliver are accessible and relevant to the needs of all individuals (and as such have in place relevant equal opportunity policies and procedures) and will implement appropriate systems across all project activity to monitor progress against equal opportunity targets. All staff recruitment has or will be undertaken in line with Equal Opportunity Policies.
3. The provision of support will be individualised to each person who engages in any stage of the intervention. Given the nature of the target groups a range of support will be available including support with childcare, literacy and numeracy, health and learning issues. Given the imbalance in North Lanarkshire related to the increased numbers of women who are inactive specific measures will be taken to engage with that group.
4. In recent years the employability service has recorded a higher proportion of engagement with the area's black and minority ethnic community than the proportion of the working age population accounted for by BME people at the 2011 Census (1.26%) suggesting the positive engagement of this group. Good practice in engaging with BME communities has been established and will be built on within this intervention.
5. The groups which will be delivering the operations within this intervention include North Lanarkshire Council, the Third Sector and Routes to Work. Each of these organisations has established and robust equality policies and monitoring procedures which, when used in conjunction with the Management Information System for the interventions, will ensure regular reporting and monitoring of all equality strands within the pipeline.