

European Social Fund - Supplementary Guidance (v2 Feb 16)

1) Introduction

The Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership has been awarded funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to support employability and poverty/social inclusion projects. Applications are to be submitted to the Tackling Poverty and Inequalities Group. Please contact Mhairi Greig (Mhairi.greig@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) for further information on the application process.

This document provides supplementary guidance to potential applicants and project sponsors. Primary guidance should be referred to by all project applicants/sponsors is available from the Scottish Government at:

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Business-Industry/support/17404/EuropeanStructuralFunds/ProgrammeDocumentation/ProgrammeGuidanceandApplications>

Of particular importance are the following documents:

- **Role & Responsibilities (project sponsors are classed as ‘Delivery Agents’)**
- **National Rules**
- **Definitions & Acronyms**
- **Publicity Requirements**
- **Document Retention Guidance**
- **ESF Participant Records**
- **Final Recipient Organisation Records**
- **ESF Beneficiary Guidance - Version 2**

2) Background

There are two different ESF Programmes in Aberdeenshire known as ‘Strategic Interventions’:

Inclusive Aberdeenshire

In order to address poverty and inclusion issues in Aberdeenshire, the Inclusive Aberdeenshire Strategic Intervention will deliver an integrated approach through the delivery of Financial Inclusion services. Community Planning Partners have identified that accessing services, information, advice and opportunities for the most vulnerable has been challenging which has resulted in reduction of positive life choices. There is limited access to accredited advice & information services and a need to increase access to digital skills. To ensure individuals and families have the skills and support to meet the future challenges of the Welfare Reform these gaps in services are required to be addresses ensuring an increase in positive life choices.

The client groups that will benefit from this proposal are:

- Families & individuals who have low wages including lone parents.



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- Individuals who do not have access to financial services or products.
- Individuals who are seeking employment with a focus on 16-25 and those who require additional support due to a medical condition including disability and addiction
- Individuals, families and communities affected by poverty and social exclusion.

The intervention will aim to reduce poverty across Aberdeenshire through the provision of a range of services which will address a range of matters such as money management, debt, welfare benefits, digital inclusion and affordable childcare, By working together with third sector bodies to improve services we will enable more people in Aberdeenshire to access advice and support when they need it, increasing income, reduce people living in poverty and improving health and wellbeing.

The intervention will aim to support:

- 525 disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving;
- 580 disadvantaged participants in workless, lone parent or low income households with improved money management skills;
- 90 additional volunteering opportunities within community based projects.
- 5 Community based skills & advice hubs will be delivered ensuring an increase in positive life choices for 300 participants. These hubs will support an integrated approach to delivering services to address rural isolation and to reduce stigma associated with accessing support services
- 315 participants who will no longer be affected by debt as a barrier to social inclusion;
- 610 disadvantaged participants in workless, lone parent or low income households.

Aberdeenshire Employability Partnership

The intervention will provide all stages of a seamless 5-stage employability pipeline in the Aberdeenshire local authority area, providing a 'one-stop-shop' of employability support. The project will be managed by Aberdeenshire Council who will also deliver activity alongside other Delivery Agents.

Activity will be tailored to the needs of individuals facing multiple barriers to entering and/or progressing into and through the labour market. Whilst all participants will receive an action plan, some may not require support from all stages of the pipeline. Supply and demand for employment will be taken into account throughout the project, using mechanisms such as employer engagement and regional skills plans to assist in the identification of employment opportunities which meet the needs of individuals, employers and the local economy. This will result in a trained workforce that is sector ready for employment e.g. on the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (Bypass), it will enhance the language skills of many who are currently facing unemployment in the fish processing sector (75% have English as a second language).

The intervention will target individuals facing multiple barriers to enter employment, particularly those facing barriers such as alcohol/drug dependency and recovery, learning disability and health related issues such as depression over age ranges 16-64. A range of projects will be supported,



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addressing barriers to employment which may include the provision of wrap-around childcare; the development of dedicated employability training (particularly focusing on sector-relevant skills); activity agreements; work place-based language skills where we see a growing number of interventions required; and targeted support for people with learning disabilities. It is estimated that 3,751 people will be supported.

Only individuals with multiple barriers to employment may be supported. Please see the Scottish Government's [ESF Beneficiary Guidance - Version 2](#) for a list of agreed barriers.

3) Funding

ESF can provide a contribution of up to 40% of direct staff costs for projects supporting the Strategic Interventions, plus provide a 'flat rate' allowance to cover other project costs. Direct staff costs are those which relate to employees who are spending 100% of their contracted hours on the delivery of projects but excludes salaries/travel and subsistence. The 'flat rate' allowance is intended to cover other project costs and is calculated at either 15% or 40% of the ESF grant towards direct staff costs. Applications must justify whether 15% or 40% is required. Projects which mainly involve staff salaries would usually be allocated 15% and those with more non-staff costs (e.g. training, participant expenses etc.) could justify a 40% rate.

Example:

Description	Total Cost	ESF	Match Funding*
Direct staff costs	£100,000	£40,000	£60,000
Flat rate @ £15%	£15,000	£6,000	£9,000
TOTALS	£115,000	£46,000	£69,000

*Match funding must be 'clean' (e.g. not from another source of EU funding) and can include Fairer Scotland Fund money for Poverty and Social Inclusion bids. Further information is available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00456314.pdf>

4) Evidence and supporting documentation

Copies of supporting documentation must be provided as evidence for grant claims. Originals must be maintained as per the requirements in Scottish Government document retention guidance and be made available on request to Aberdeenshire Council/Scottish Government/European Union staff.

Evidence for Direct Staff Costs

Evidence of all direct staff costs must be provided to support grant claims. This includes evidence of payment and a clear audit trail all the way through to the bank statement for all costs being claimed, including employers' national insurance and pension contributions. Receipt/allocation of match funding must also be evidenced for direct staff costs.

Evidence for Other Costs



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It is understood from present Scottish Government guidance that for ESF purposes no evidence is required for other costs covered by the 'Flat Rate' or match funding related to this.

Evidence of Outcomes/Outputs:

Projects must deliver against one or more of the following outcomes/outputs:

Poverty/Social Inclusion:

- Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- Disadvantaged participants in workless, lone parent or low income households with improved money management skills
- Participants no longer affected by debt as a barrier to social inclusion
- Disadvantaged participants in workless, lone parent or low income households
- Additional volunteering opportunities in community-based projects
- Community-based skills and advice hubs

Employability:

- Unemployed and inactive participants with multiple barriers entering education or training
- Unemployed and inactive participants with multiple barriers gaining a qualification
- Unemployed and inactive participants with multiple barriers in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- Unemployed and inactive with multiple barriers in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving
- Employed participants with multiple barriers gaining a qualification upon leaving
- Employed participants with multiple barriers with an improved labour market situation six months after leaving
- Unemployed and inactive participants with multiple barriers to employment supported
- Employed participants with multiple barriers to progressing in the labour market supported.

Evidence must be provided to support claimed outcomes and outputs, including records of project activity and supported participants. All participant data for employability projects must be recorded in the Hanlon system. Further guidance on the Hanlon system can be provided by the Aberdeenshire Employment Support Team (<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/business/support-and-advice/communities/working-for-families>).

5) Publicity

Project sponsors must adhere to the Scottish Government **Publicity Requirements**, acknowledging ESF support through the use of logos/press releases etc. All people supported through the project must be made aware of the ESF support as well.

If you have any queries on any points in this document, please contact:

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