Local Employability Partnership Self-Assessment

National Overview

Contents

1. Purpose of Report and Methodology

No One Left Behind (NOLB) is a programme of transformation which aims to change the employability system in Scotland to make it more adaptable, responsive and person-centred. Transforming the system will require collaborative leadership across all partners and a culture change in how we design, deliver and fund services as in the move from national to increased local governance arrangements through Local Employability Partnerships.

Recognising the degree of variability of Local Employability Partnerships across Scotland a new Framework was developed to provide some consensus around structure and remit of employability partnerships, whilst allowing flexibility reflective of local circumstances. The framework aims to provide a starting point in developing enhanced local partnership working for both strategic and delivery partners. The framework has also been adopted for use in delivering elements of the Young Person's Guarantee.

In recognition that NOLB is more than just about money, it is about an increasing a sustained shift towards user engagement, collaboration in service design, more effective and improved partnership working through increased local governance and a move to shared measurement there is a commitment to strengthen local partnerships. With person-centred principles at the forefront and thinking beyond organisational boundaries, LEPs are the vehicles for place based approaches that deliver improved outcomes for those who face inequalities and remain furthest from Scotland's labour market.

It was thus agreed in early 2021 that a self-assessment survey would be undertaken with Local Employability Partnerships (LEPs) in order to strengthen the work of the partners at a local level. The self-assessment was to be undertaken with all 32 LEPs and would provide each of them with a detailed LEP Checklist Report for LEPs to use as the basis for improvement activity and to develop an Improvement Plan. As such, the Local Employability Partnership Checklist was developed and distributed in March 2021 with the findings collated by the Improvement Service into 32 LEP checklists available to those LEPs who would wish to use these for improvement planning.

The checklist asked partnerships to explore the following nine areas (see Appendix 1):

1. Leadership & Relationships

2. Governance

3. Use of Evidence

4. Community Engagement & Participation

5. Focus on Outcomes

6. Use of Resources

7. Accountability

8. Performance Management and Reporting

9. Impact

The Checklist was issued as an electronic survey to all members of LEPs across Scotland, with over 200 responses received.

1.2 Purpose of Report and Process

As part of supporting LEPs, this national report has been developed to collate the findings from the 32 Local Employability Partnership Checklists at a national level in order to develop an overview of LEP activity in these key nine checklist areas across Scotland. It is hoped that this report will not only be useful in itself as an indication of progress by LEPs across Scotland, but for LEPs themselves, to be able to judge their own strengths and areas for improvement against the national picture.
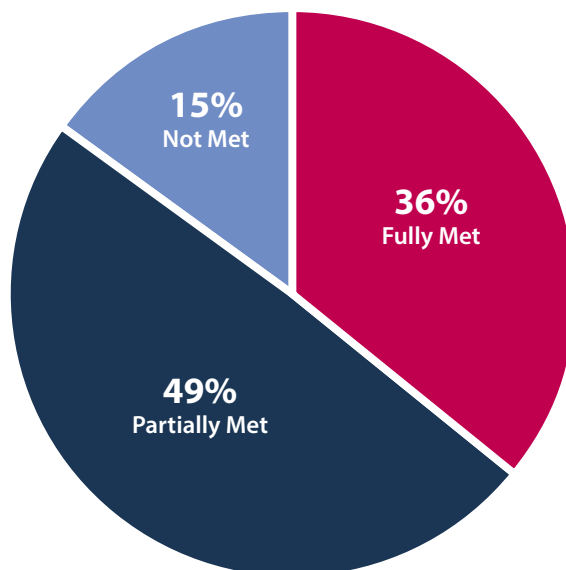
2. Summary of Main Findings from the National Checklist Report

2.1 Overview of the Findings

When we examine the responses from respondents to all the statements in the checklist, we can see from the pie chart below that some 36% felt that these were 'fully met', with 49% saying 'partially met' and 15% felt that these were 'not met'.

Chart 1: Overall Results for Checklist

With over a third of those responding noting that they felt a number of statements were 'fully met', alongside nearly a half describing these as 'partially met', then these figures suggest progress is being made by LEPs across many areas. However, with 15% of statements described as 'not met', there are clearly areas where support and advice can be targeted for LEPs going forward and this will form part of the local improvement action plans.

This section will now look to provide some detail across the nine sections in order to highlight the perceptions of those in LEPs around where performance has been strong, alongside consideration to be given to areas highlighted that demonstrate where improvement work may be needed.

2.2 Leadership and Relationships

2.2a Strengths

In this section, respondents were asked to reflect upon how the LEP operated in terms of leadership and relationships. As we can see from the Pie Chart below, respondents agreed that some 49% of all the statements in this section had been 'fully met', with 43% 'partially met' and 8% 'not met'. When compared to the overall figures across all statements in chart 1 (49% here for 'fully met' compared to 35.8% overall for 'fully met'), the 'fully met' figures in leadership and relationships are the most positive of all the nine sections in the checklist. These, the report will argue, are strong indicators about how well partners are working together to achieve the aims of the LEP.

Chart 2: Leadership and Relations
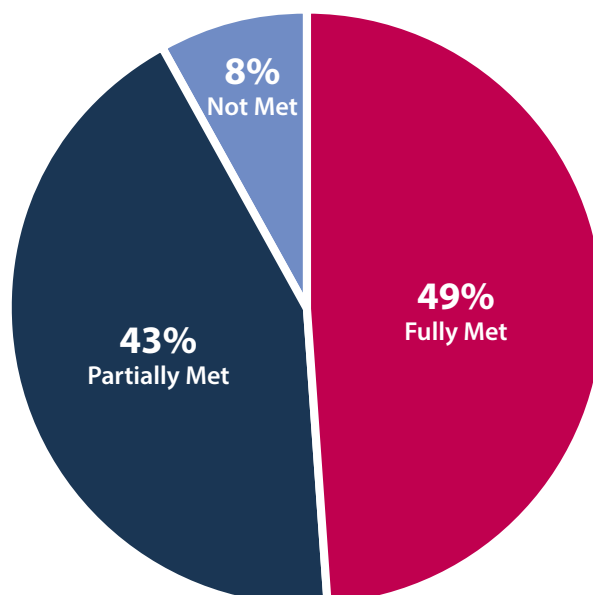
In particular, it is worth noting that the statement that scored the highest level of 'fully met' (74%) was **1.3 LEP meetings take place within a positive spirit of transparency, openness and trust**. This is clearly a very positive indicator, given the importance of good relationships in any endeavour that depends upon partners working together. Some of the comments from respondents taken from the gathered qualitative text provide some details around this positive response.

"The current partnership group meets regularly and partners engage well together."

"Good open and honest dialogue. Key actions and discussions, fully aware of activities and plans."

"Meetings are open, constructive and helpful. There isn't yet a strong, shared understanding of what different partners can contribute."

The final comment perhaps is reflective of what might be described as a running theme in the findings, that while relationships between partners in the LEP are deemed to be positive, there nevertheless remains some work to do around clarifying the specifics and structures around the work of some LEPs.

Nevertheless, there are several comments that illustrated the commitment from partners to work together in the LEP with partners contributing to a 'culture of collegiality working towards improving outcomes in relation to employability.' An example of this commitment to work together from one participant notes:

"Great partnership working, both at LEP level and sub groups within the LEP where DWP are represented. A strong example of this is close working with the employability team across our 3 DWP sites, supporting all Customers in the Youth, 25+, LP's and health and disabilities agenda. This working partnership give us the opportunity to develop programmes to fill gaps in provision and support customers in their employability journey."

It was also noted that there was a constant reviewing of membership to continually improve the LEP, with all partners encouraged to participate and have the opportunity to express themselves.

2.2b Areas for Improvement

While, as noted, the percentage of responses that were 'not met' was 8%, there was one statement where this figure was a 1/5 (20.5%). This statement (1.5) was well above the average for this section:

1.5 The CPP board are engaged in the leadership of the LEP and scrutinise performance.

In terms of explanation of this level of 'not met', the following comments from respondents provide some explanation of this high level of 'not met'.

"The CPP needs to settle and see the relevance and linkages with the work that the LEP undertake. This has been very sporadic of late and hopeful that this will move in a more positive direction going forward as the Falkirk plan is developed."

"Think due to local CPP structures changing, the LEP have not had an obvious structure to report in to, and so have been in limbo a little strategically."

"Clear structure in place in relation to how the LEP aligns to the CPP but the meetings have not yet taken place where the LEP work has been fed into the appropriate CPP meeting for scrutiny. It would be beneficial to have more scrutiny from the CPP, and tangible actions."

"There is currently no strategic link between the CPP and the LEP (this wasn't always the case). There is a plan to resolve that through a review of CPP partnership structures taking place this year. We are keen to involve other partners who are currently not attending the LEP, i.e. Education, Community Justice, possibly a representative from the Clackmannanshire Business Support Partnership."

While statement 1.1 on collective leadership was relatively positive at 35.5%, close to the overall average, a number of comments from respondents noted that this required some 'strengthening' and encourage members to take on roles on chairing, secretariat, development areas and data reporting, etc. Another respondent commented that there was still a perception that the local authority 'leads' the partnership and that they are looked at to set the agenda at meetings. It was also noted that a better understanding in the LEP about the contribution of the Third Sector would help, in addition to having private sector representation on the LEP.

2.3 Governance

2.3a Strengths

The second section of the checklist asked respondents to reflect upon the governance of the LEP. The pie chart below shows that 41% of respondents agreed that the statements in this section had been 'fully met', with 46% 'partially met' and 13% 'not met'. These figures compare similarly with the overall figures for all of the statements in the checklist which can be seen in chart 1. With only 13% of responses scoring 'not met' for the statements in this section, the majority of respondents are satisfied that the governance of the LEPs is an area in which progress has been made.

Chart 3: Governance
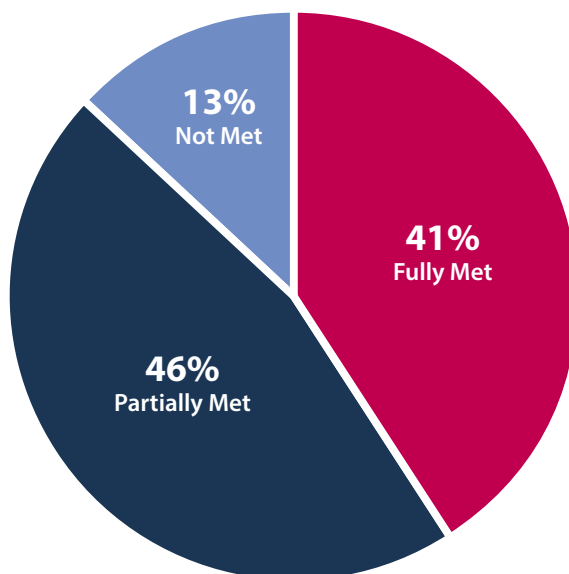
The statement which scored the highest level of 'fully met' (63%) in this section was **2.1 The LEP includes members drawn from across the public, third and private sector, based on the Framework for Local Employability Partnerships**. This was the second highest scoring statement across the whole checklist and in referring to this statement, respondents made the following comments.

"ER LEP is well covered in terms of membership - public, private and 3rd sector."

"The majority of partners at the LEP are the right people. We continue to encourage key partners to consider whether attendees are empowered to make strategic decisions."

"The LEP has a good spread of members from across the public & third sectors but does not as yet have anyone explicitly representing the private sector; however this has been recognised."

Whilst this statement was the highest scoring in the section, the final comment highlights an area that a number of respondents identified for improvement. The lack of private and third sector representation was mentioned by several respondents as a gap in their LEP's membership and consideration should be given to how this can be resolved moving forward.

Within this section, respondents also noted that LEP members had a shared vision and direction to support the aims and objectives of the partnership. The comments below are some of the examples from respondents that illustrate the member's commitment to shared outcomes.

> *"The LEP has been in place for a number of years and had a shared vision with agreed objectives."*
>
> *"The partnership has vision and work collectively to ensure all members are kept informed of policy, process, local and national updates."*
>
> *"LEP members understand the strategic direction, aims and objectives."*

2.3b Areas for Improvement

Despite the low collated score of 13% for "not met" responses in the governance section, when the statements were analysed individually, this section contained two of the highest "not met" scoring statements from respondents.

Statement 2.5 - The LEP has an effective mechanism in place for managing collective risks, which is regularly reviewed. (35.5% 'not met')

Statement 2.7 - The LEP membership have agreed means by which the partnership resolves issues/conflict. (30.5% 'not met')

Respondents were clear in the scoring of these statements, and in the qualitative text, that the management of risk and processes for conflict resolution were two areas for improvement that need to be addressed. Below are some examples of the comments from respondents.

> *"I have never seen a risk register. I am not familiar with a conflict resolution process either."*
>
> *"The risks and process to resolve conflicts are not as clear as they could be but through strong partnership relationships, a formal system has not been required to date."*
>
> *"We need to have a process to resolve conflict, though we have never had conflict to date and work very well but this would help."*

The clarification of roles and responsibilities of partners was also highlighted by a number of respondents in the qualitative text as an area for improvement within the governance section. It is worth noting that some of the responses did explain that their LEP was still in its early stages of development and that the roles and responsibilities of partners may become clearer as the partnership becomes more established.

2.4 Use of Evidence

2.4a Strengths

In this section, respondents considered how the LEP was performing in terms of the use of evidence. From the pie chart below, we can see that 38% of respondents said that they had 'fully met' the statements, with 50% 'partially met' and some 12% 'not met'. These figures are relatively close to the overall average from all statements (36% 'fully met', 49% 'partially met' and 15% 'not met').

Chart 4: Use of Evidence
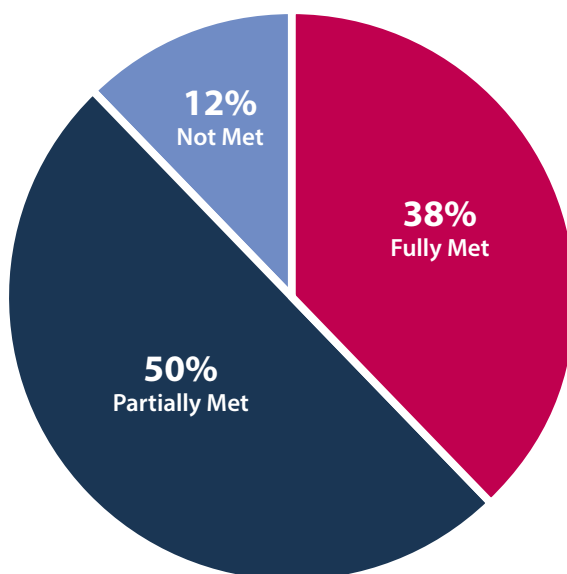
Within the statement group, statement **3.3 The LEP has a good understanding of the distribution of positive and negative outcomes across its area, including information relating both to inequalities (e.g. education, income, health) and the range of equalities groupings (e.g. age, race, gender, disability),** 46.2% of respondents regarded this as 'fully met'. Also scoring strongly in this section at 43.7% was statement **3.1 The LEP has developed and agreed a common understanding of local user needs and opportunities**. Both of these positive scores reflect a confidence within the LEPs that the use and understanding of socio-economic data across its area. The following comments from respondents illustrate some of the strengths in the use of use of data for the LEP.

"The LEP has a long standing commitment to the use of data to inform plans. Data is shared to build capacity across membership of the LEP."

"There is good sharing of information across partners with documents & publications such as the monthly Economic update produced by the council and SDS Regional Skills Assessments widely distributed & discussed."

2.4b Areas for Improvement

In the use of evidence section of the Checklist, the percentage of responses that were 'not met' was 12%. However, there were two statements in this section that had markedly higher levels of 'not met'. The first was statement **3.5 The Local Delivery Plan demonstrates the impact of the agreed actions on delivery and represents good value for money.** In this statement the % of 'not met' was at 21.1%. Comments on this point were very limited, however one participant noted that they were 'unaware of an exchange/record for reviewing value for money.'

The second statement that scored higher than average on 'not met' for this section at 18.1% was **3.4 The Local Delivery Plan draws on the key priorities of the area through the use of data analysis, research, evaluation work, and user engagement activity**. This may reflect that there is a way to go for some LEPs to demonstrating how data is impacting upon the LDP. It may also reflect that for a number of LEPs the LDP remains to be developed or is only recently developed. There is also a recognition that some data is not yet available at local Authority level in a usable format.

Despite the positive responses to the LEP having a good understanding positive and negative outcomes across its area and having developed a common understanding of local user needs, there were however a number of comments focussed upon further improving how data is used and shared by those on the LEP.

"Sharing of information has been one of the positives of the Employability Group, but this needs to be more structured and formalized."

"I believe further improvements can be made around how the available data & analysis can be put to best use around informing future activities that will have impact and this in turn will lead to discussions around governance & procurement/commissioning plans."

"Data sharing agreement may be required.

Other comments around the use of data included one noting that it wasn't that LEP partners did not share data, but more that this simply needed to be 'de-cluttered'. However, the majority of comments around why 'not met' was selected in this section referred to the fact that the Local Delivery Plan has yet to be 'formally agreed'/'still to be developed'/'develop a Local Delivery Plan'/'At the moment we do not have a delivery plan'. As such, many of the comments felt that demonstrating the use of evidence before the Local Development Plan was developed may be too early in the cycle.

2.5 Community Engagement and Participation

2.5a Strengths

In this section, the statements asked how the LEP has engaged with individuals and communities and how this has influenced the activities of the LEP. As we can see in the pie chart below, 31% of responses felt the areas in the statements were 'fully met', with 58% 'partially met' and some 11% 'not met'. In terms of 'fully met', the community engagement section has the second lowest percentage, with only the Performance Management and Reporting section being lower, at 27%. However, with many of the activities described as 'partially met' (58%), suggests that progress is being made in this area and is borne out in the checklist data, with 58% of statements described as 'partially met' the highest of all the nine sections in the checklist.

Chart 5: Community Engagement and Participation
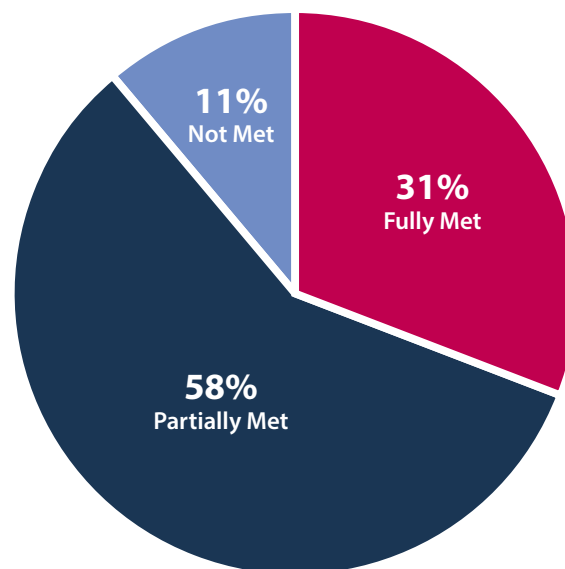
Within this statement group, the highest score in terms of 'fully met' at 40.7% is for statement **4.7 The LEP has aligned and integrated with other local services and community connectivity e.g. Money Advice, Housing support, welfare, education.** Similarly, another statement scored high for this category at 39.7%, namely, **4.4 Each LEP member has made a strong and clear commitment to how it will work with other LEP partners in further strengthening community engagement in employability**. This was illustrated in a number of positive comments by respondents, such as:

"Good cross section of LEP membership, all understand and actively engage with individuals, community and employers. All are committed to continue to strengthen community engagement and employability."

"The LEP has effective engagement and communication mechanisms for understanding the needs of individuals, communities and employers - via LEP strategic, operational groups plus Business gateway and ER Chamber of Commerce."

2.5b Areas for Improvement

In the community engagement and participation section of the Checklist the percentage of responses that were 'not met' was 11%. While this is less than the average across all sections for this category, there is one statement that has a high level of 'not met' at 20.1%, that is, **4.5 Each LEP member has articulated how it will use its resources in support of strengthening community engagement in employability**. In addition, statement **4.6 The LEP is committed to designing services directly with users, involving them at the earliest stages, in line with the Scottish Approach to Service Design** had 13.6% of respondents saying this was 'not met' (see comment below).

A number of comments note that further work needs to be done by the LEP to involve communities and that this approach should be 'structured' by the LEP to coordinate activity.

"Further work could be done in line with all of the above by the LEP to involve communities. I am sure within individual organisations this is covered but not aware that we are doing it is a collective group of practitioners at the LEP."

"Individual members of the LEP do feed-in and share information on user needs, however this isn't a structured process and could benefit from the development of a structured service user/engagement/design/ review process."

There was also a call for better awareness of what partner organisations and the CPP were doing around community engagement, in order to ensure that 'we are not bombarding the same people all the time' and to avoid duplication of effort.

It was also noted that there is commitment to 'designing services directly with users, involving them at the earliest stages, in line with the Scottish Approach to Service Design'. However, one LEP noted that no work had been undertaken at a 'strategic level' as of yet.

The majority of comments of those who answered 'not met' in this section, noted that it was too early in the process to have seen much progress around community engagement, as some of the following comments show.

"The whole area of community engagement and co-design is an area for development. It is a priority for the CPP Board and associated thematic groups and a variety of working groups have been created around this topic. The LEP should/will interact with these developments in community engagement/lived experience inputs."

"Engagement and data collection work with individuals and community hasn't yet been undertaken by the LEP, although individual partners engage consistently and can feed in information in the early stages."

"This is going to be the start of a journey for the LEP and we are keen to receive guidance and support to achieve improvement in these areas."

2.6 Focus on Outcomes

2.6a Strengths

This section of the checklist asked respondents to focus on the outcomes the LEPs are aiming to achieve and evaluate the progress that has been made in identifying and agreeing these. The pie chart below shows that 34% of responses agreed that the statements in this section had been 'fully met', with a further 46% agreeing that the statements had been 'partially met'. However, 20% of responses scored the statements within this section as 'not met', which makes this section the second lowest in the checklist. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents did identify strengths in this area whilst noting that further progress had to be made.

Chart 6: Focus on Outcomes

20% Not Met
34% Fully Met
46% Partially Met
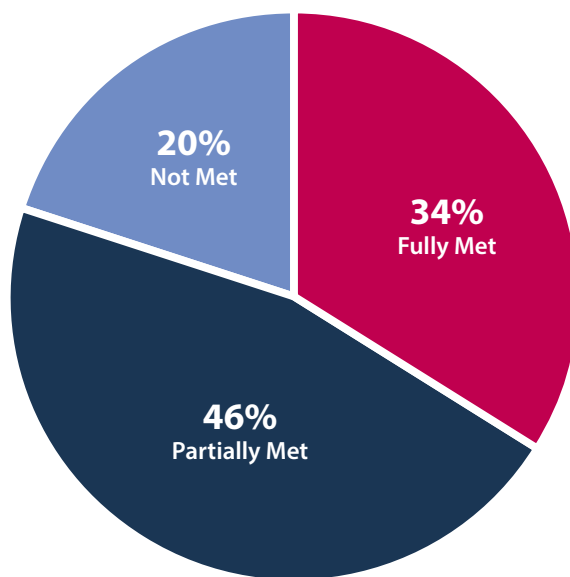
Analysis of the individual statements within this section identified statement **5.1 The LEP has a clear statement in the Local Delivery Plan of the outcomes it is focusing upon (i.e. the difference that it ultimately aims to make in the community),** as the highest scoring statement with 42.7% of respondents scoring it as 'fully met'. Respondents that scored this statement 'partially met' or ''not met', noted in the qualitative text that their LEP was either in the process of developing their Local Delivery Plan or that no plan had been developed as of yet.

To support the prioritisation of areas for the LEPs to target their work, respondents highlighted the value of the knowledge that partners bring to the partnership, as well as the use of different data sources as an evidence base for decision making. The comments below are examples from respondents on the value that both these areas bring to the partnership.

"As a small local authority, the partners involved within the LEP are very knowledgeable of the needs of the community and will generate activity to meet needs very quickly."

"Strong evidence base locally for the groups/communities that form priority areas."

"Vulnerable groups identified and labour market data on wages/SIMD areas etc. in Regional Skills Assessments."

2.6b Areas for Improvement

Of the four statements in the Focus on Outcomes section of the checklist, statement **5.3 The LEP has undertaken some level of contribution analysis/logic modelling to clearly identify the activities/tasks needed to achieve its desired employability outcomes and any related factors likely to influence them highlighted in the Delivery Plan,** scored the weakest with 23.1% of respondents selecting 'not met' and only 25.1% 'fully met'. Respondents also highlighted this as an area for improvement in the qualitative text with some examples below.

"The use of logic modelling would be useful and also to enable partners to understand their responsibilities to the LEP."

"Contribution analysis/logic modelling not taken place to date - further area of focus."

"Require further analysis and logic modelling as well as a LDP to be created and fully implemented."

The formalising of outcome reporting processes was also identified by respondents as a possible area in which improvements could be made. A number of responses highlighted that whilst partners are working towards shared outcomes, work was required to ensure that this was captured and reported systematically.

2.7 Use of Resources

2.7a Strengths

The use of resources section of the checklist asked respondents to consider how resources were deployed across the partnership and also, if they were aligned to best support the agreed outcomes identified by the LEP. The collated figures for this section can be seen in the pie chart below, with 34% of respondents agreeing that the statements were 'fully met', 49% scoring 'partially met' and 17% 'not met'.

Chart 7: Use of Resources
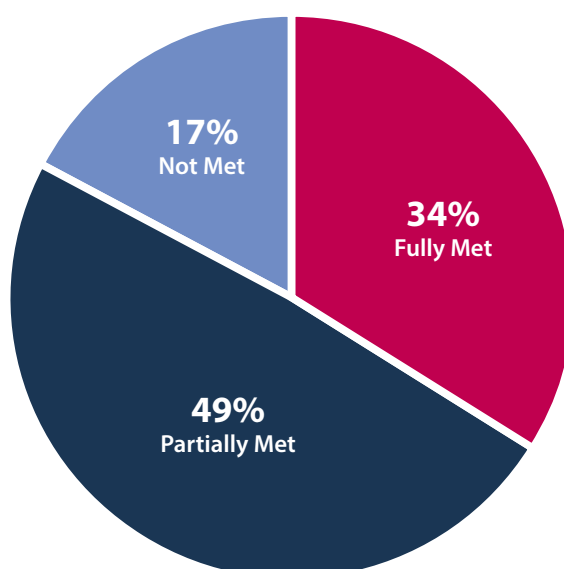
In terms of the individual statements in this section, the statement with the highest level of 'fully met' was statement **6.5 All employability key workers are fully aware of the supports on offer within the locality and the labour market opportunities available for their clients**, with 48.2%. This statement further supports the strength highlighted in other areas of the checklist regarding the strong local knowledge and how this is used to achieve outcomes for clients. In particular, one participant commented,

> *"All existing employability key workers have an excellent knowledge of service provision available across the area and have good quality learning & development opportunities supported by partners."*

This comment also makes reference to the learning and development opportunities

that LEP partners supported. This was identified by a number of respondents as a strength in the use of resources section, with many commenting that partners offered training opportunities across the partnership.

2.7b Areas for Improvement

The collated figure of 17% 'not met' responses in the use of resources section was the third most negative scoring section across all nine sections in the checklist and as such, respondents identified a number of areas in which they felt improvements could be made. In particular, statement **6.8 The LEP adheres to and implements delivery based on the agreed Minimum Delivery Standards and Customer Charter developed nationally using Lived Experience Panels**, was the weakest statement across the full checklist, with 40.7% of respondents scoring 'not met'. However, the majority of responses in the qualitative text, in reference to this statement, mentioned that they were not aware of the Minimum Delivery Standards and Customer Charter. This is understandable as the national frameworks have still to be concluded and published.

"We are unaware of minimum delivery standards or customer charters being part of any developments within the NOLB agenda."

"We are not aware of minimum delivery standards or customer charters for service developments."

Therefore, the low scoring of this statement may be simply down to the lack of awareness around the standards and charter, that being the case, an awareness raising exercise should resolve this issue.

The second lowest scoring statement in this section was statement **6.3 The LEP's Delivery Plan is reflected clearly in the resource allocation processes/ decisions made by other partner organisations (including decision making about resource reductions)**, with 28.1% of respondents scoring 'not met'. A number of respondents noted that whilst partners 'work in a spirit of collaboration', no formal arrangements to resource allocation had been developed.

"Requirement to develop mapping of employability resources across the partnership and identify which resources can be utilised by the partnership."

"LEP needs to know what resources (financial, staff, assets) are deployed locally."

2.8 Accountability

2.8a Strengths

Respondents were asked a number of statement about accountability arrangements within the LEP. As we can see from the pie chart below 37% felt these were 'fully met', 52% 'partially met and some 11% 'not met'. These figures are very close to the overall average across all statements in the checklist (36% 'fully met', 49% 'partially met' and 15% 'not met'). These figures would suggest that processes for accountability in the LEPs are under way to be being fully established, with some respondents noting that there is still work to be done in this area. It is recognised that some of this may be due to the previous variation in responsibilities and investment.

Chart 8: Accountability
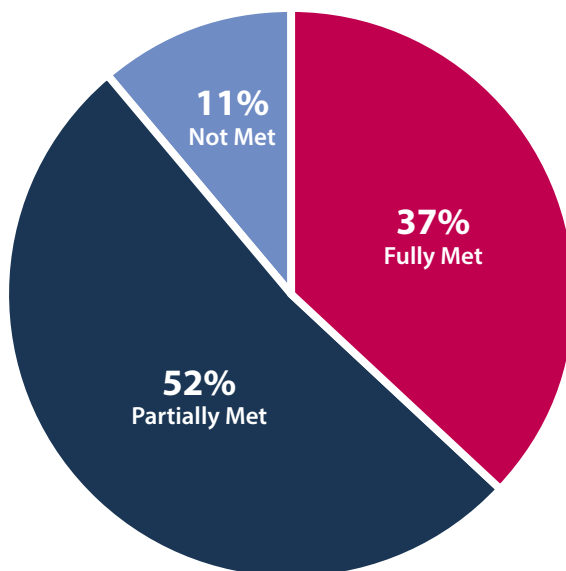
The statement with the highest level of 'fully met' at 43.2% in this section is 7.3 The LEP members effectively communicate decisions of the LEP within their organisations. This is a good indication of LEP decisions and activity as the following comments show.

"The partners within the LEP provide examples of activity on offer and share this information through the administrative service provided by the College."

"We have positive working relationships and communicate well with each other, although we have no formal communications strategy."

"Communication channels and information / idea sharing are good but not evidenced. Good communication and relationships within the LEP facilitate this."

> *"The group established really early on a positive and constructive culture and this is the most important factor in all of the above and previous questions. Community Education took a positive approach from the start and populated most of the documents to give a head start to seeking partner contributions."*

These comments around communicating decisions of the LEP while demonstrating a 'positive and constructive culture', still note that these could be improved with a 'formal communications strategy' to enable this to be better evidenced.

2.8b Areas for Improvement

The statement with the highest level of 'not met' at 16.1% in terms of accountability is **7.1 The LEP's Delivery Plan will reflect the strategic and operational plans of all partner organisations**. The majority of comments in this area reflect a common theme in the checklist findings, that is, for a number of LEPs the Local Delivery Plan remains to be developed and it is at this point that areas such as accountability will be considered by them, as the following comments illustrate.

> *"7.3 (Communicating decisions of the LEP) and 7.4 (LEPs accountability arrangements are clear and understood by all partners) is currently on an informal basis, implementation of the LDP will support this requirement to be fully met."*
>
> *"LDP requires to be fully implemented."*
>
> *"Perhaps an agreed memorandum of understanding. There is a need for clear responsibilities to be identified which will then enable the LEP to know where the accountability lies."*
>
> *"More structure, and actions allocated to specific partners."*
>
> *"LEP to be fully established and these issues will be addressed at that point."*

2.9 Performance Management and Reporting

2.9a Strengths

In this section, respondents were asked to reflect on the performance arrangements in place, how this performance information was used and how it linked into national performance frameworks such as Scotland's National Performance Framework and Economic Strategy. In terms of the collated figures for this section, 27% agreed that the statements had been 'fully met', 48% selected 'partially met' and 25% 'not met' which

was the most negative 'fully met' and 'not met' score across the checklist. As such, the qualitative responses for identifying strengths within this section was limited, with most responses commenting that this area was a work in progress.

Chart 9: Performance Management and Reporting
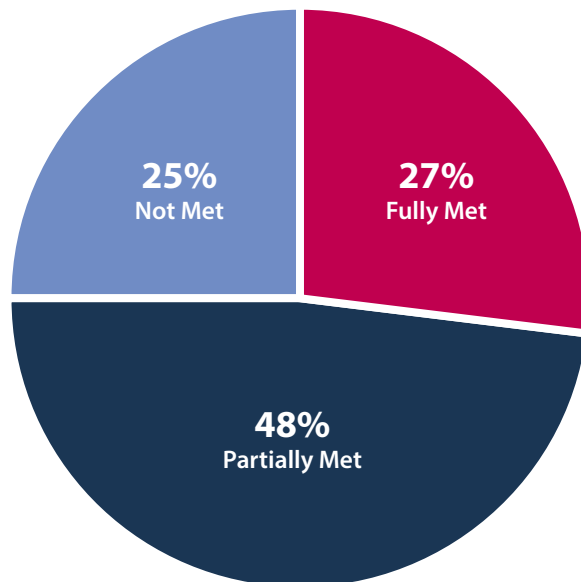
Within this section, the highest 'fully met' response at 35.2% was for statement **8.4 The Delivery Plan clearly expresses what the partnership understands improvement will look like locally and is ambitious in driving effective service/partnership working to achieve its ambitions**. As has been highlighted in other sections of this report, not all LEPs have developed their Delivery Plan as of yet, but for those that have, they believe that this clearly expresses what improvement will look like locally.

2.9b Areas for Improvement

Through analysis of the individual statements within this section, statement **8.7 The LEP actively use performance information to facilitate constructive strategic discussion and, where required, to instigate corrective action in order to address under-performance**, was identified as the lowest scoring statement with 29.7% of respondents scoring 'not met'. A number of respondents went on to comment that they didn't believe their LEP had appropriate performance indicators and for those that did, some noted that they weren't effectively used to target improvement. It is also worth noting that the management of some programmes and services which impact on the local areas are out with the scope of the LEP.

"There needs to be agreement of KPIs to monitor performance and effectiveness of LEP."

"We also need to consider how other data and information can support this e.g. via DYW KPI's and use them more effectively."

"Better use of data e.g. labour market insights, regional skills assessment, and local consultation - how do we pull it all together to agree on outcomes/targets/indicators etc."

Similarly to the Focus on Outcomes section, respondents also identified reporting mechanisms as a potential area for improvement in this section. It is worth noting that numerous respondents did mention that as individual partners, there were appropriate mechanisms in place for reporting performance but the issue was how the partnership reports performance as a collective. The comments below are examples from the qualitative responses in reference to reporting mechanisms.

"Action plan and priorities identified at high levels but reporting mechanism needs to be improved to capture activity across the partnership."

"Reporting mechanisms are on an individual basis only."

"A regular reporting mechanism attached to the LEP might ensure that all partners are bringing insight to their priority areas and can be compared to the LEP targets and associated No One Left Behind/Young Person's Guarantee/External Funding performance requirements."

2.10 Impact

2.10a Strengths

The final checklist section asked respondents to consider what impact the LEP arrangements has had within its area. In the pie chart below, just under a third (32%) answered that they had 'fully met' the impact statements, with just over half (53%) stating 'partially met' and some 15% saying these statements are 'not met'. These figures are relatively close to the average across all the checklist statements, again indicating progress towards the demonstration of the impact that LEPs are having across local areas.

Chart 10: Impact
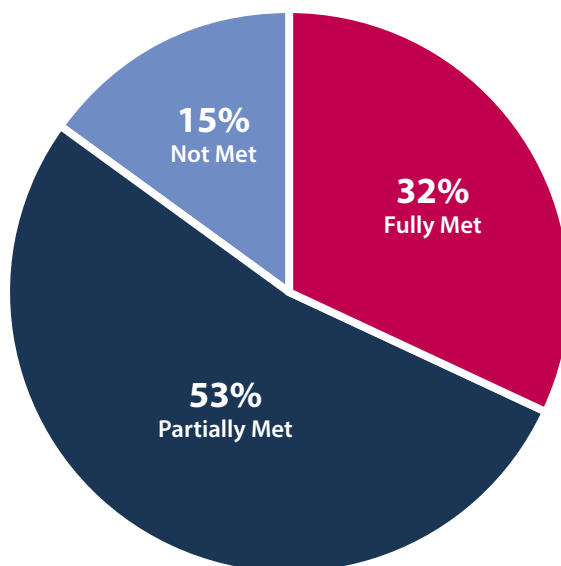
The strongest statement in the impact section is **9.6 Each partner has made a strong and clear commitment to work with other LEP partners to evaluate the impact of using joint resources in supporting the LEP to improve outcomes** (42.7%). As in other sections, there are many LEPS that feel that they are working well together and having a positive impact, with a number of examples cited below.

"Partnership working to align spend and impact on outcomes is developing and resources/programmes are becoming more targeted."

"We have worked extensively with the new Poverty Commission to improve in this area."

"Work across the City Region partnership to identify opportunities/ alignment. Partners work closely together to share resources and have open lines of communication. Ongoing work to close the inequalities gap."

"The City Region Deal Skills & Inclusion Programme has been designed to align with local services and to be flexible enough to respond to policy changes in employability."

"The LEP are key to DWP. They support a wide range of customers to ensure that no one is left behind. Examples of this is the strong partnership within Health and Social Care, Invest in the Area, Link workers, Community Justice and our 3rd Sector Partners, working with DWP unemployed customers."

One respondent noted the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the LEP,

"COVID has got in the way of a lot of this work but as we resume and pick up we can start to drive the local and national priorities forward and link in more with our partners from economic development around the growth deals."

2.10b Areas for Improvement

While it is pleasing to see a number of positive examples of LEP working above, it is perhaps worth noting that two of the highest statements for 'not met' in the impact section were focussed upon the ability to 'evidence' progress. **9.1 The LEP is able to evidence the impact its decisions for employability investment locally have had on local needs and national themes addressing inequalities in the labour market, including the impact of service changes to Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland** (19.6% 'not met') and **9.2 There is evidence that the LEP's actions redesigning service delivery models are facilitating the desired shift to person-centred, flexible support and are having a positive impact on outcomes for local people, business and the community** (20.6% 'not met'). Of course, while it is always difficult to demonstrate 'impact', as noted in other sections of the report, it is clear that for a number of LEPs it is 'too early' to be able to demonstrate evidence of impact at present especially given some elements pf provision and investment are in a transitional phase. The following comments illustrate this point,

"It is too early to say whether the work of the LEP is having a positive impact but this is being monitored."

"Improvement and development is required to evidence and demonstrate impact going forward."

"Good/strong preparations have been laid down."

"Require a LDP to capture actions and monitor progress / impact."

"Some of these questions are frankly impossible to respond to with a degree of assuredness at this early stage of the NOLB roll-out."

It is also worth noting that while a third of respondents feel that the LEP is working together following the No One Left Behind principles, with nearly half agreeing that this is 'partially met', there remains 18.1% who said that this was 'not met'. The following comments suggest where this approach could be improved.

"Each partner could provide evidence of how their institution has addressed the inequalities and leaving no-one behind, but there is a need to plan this together and ensure that all available resources are fully utilised and that the partnership is able to evidence this."

"Having a clear understanding of how partners can contribute to the principles of NOLB and what their limitations may be as an organisation in supporting this, map out what is being delivered and in what way, looking at how we support individuals in more outlying areas who struggle to access services."

3. Conclusion

The Local Employability Partnership Self-Assessment has provided insights from over 200 respondents from 32 LEPs to assess views on current partnership arrangements. This National Checklist Report establishes a baseline on how well the LEPs meets the ambitions of No One Left Behind for developing and implementing flexible, person-centred employability provision that meets the identified needs of both local individuals and employers establishing a well-being economy.

In section 3, the report examined each of the sections in detail, considering both the strengths and also areas for improvement as identified by respondents. The report will now consider what conclusions can be drawn from this first national assessment of the LEPs.

As we can see from the table below, the collated figures provide an overview of how respondents have assessed how the 32 LEPs have met the statements from across the nine sections. As was noted in section 3.1, with over a third of those responding stating statements were 'fully met', and a half describing these as 'partially met', there are grounds for guarded optimism around the progress being made by LEPs. With 15% of statements described as 'not met', however, there is scope for improvement to make progress across a number of areas.

In terms of the **most positive section as rated by respondents, the Leadership and Relationships section**, we can see that nearly half of respondents see the statements as 'fully met'. A number of comments around the positive culture within the LEP with meetings 'open, constructive and helpful' give a strong indication of the strong relationships that have developed with many LEPs.

In fact, of the 57 statements the **most positively scored for 'fully met' was in this section, 1.3 LEP meetings take place within a positive spirit of transparency, openness and trust. (74% fully met)**. This is indicative that partners have developed good working relationships with a positive culture established.

Section	Fully Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Overall	36%	49%	15%
Leadership and Relationships	49%	43%	8%
Governance	41%	46%	13%
Use of Evidence	38%	50%	12%
Community Engagement and Participation	31%	58%	11%
Focus on Outcomes	34%	46%	20%
Use of Resources	34%	49%	17%
Accountability	37%	52%	11%
Performance Management and Reporting	27%	48%	25%
Impact	32%	53%	15%

The section on Governance was second highest ranked by respondents in terms of statements being 'fully met' at 41%. In particular, the statements on LEP membership and partners being sufficiently empowered to take actions forward, were the second and third highest ranked statements of all 57 statements.

- **2.1 The LEP includes members drawn from across the public, third and private sector, based on the Framework for Local Employability Partnerships**. (63% Fully Met)

- **2.6 The members of the partnership are sufficiently empowered and influential to significantly advance the key issues**. (55.5% Fully Met).

As such, the National Checklist Report highlights many positives to demonstrate that many LEPs are taking forward actions at the local level from a range of organisations across the employability landscape.

However, it is worth noting that a recurring theme throughout the report, in particular form those **who responded 'not met' to statements, commented that it was 'too early' to assess progress in areas such as performance management, evidence, outcomes and accountability**. In many cases comments noted that Local Delivery Plans (LDP) had yet to be developed, with processes and structures around these areas still to be put into place. **Nevertheless, there was considerable optimism** from those who answered 'not met' that these areas would be in place after LDPs were developed.

As such, the checklist findings show that considerable progress is being made by LEPs across a number of the key areas in the National Checklist Report. However, **potential for improvement remain strongest for those LEPs that have yet to develop their LDPs, as these will provide clarity of direction, purpose and structure for the partners**.

It is hoped that this national overview will not only be useful in itself as an indication of progress by LEPs across Scotland, but for LEPs themselves, to be able to judge their own strengths and areas for improvement against the national story.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Local Employability Partnership Checklist

Supporting people into fair, sustainable jobs is central to delivering many of the ambitions for an inclusive, sustainable economy with well-being at its core. Employability services are pivotal to avoiding the widening of social and economic inequalities by supporting those who are most vulnerable to disadvantage in the labour market which has been further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local Employability Partners recognise the vital role that a range of organisations across the employability landscape play, are committed to protecting a diverse range of provision and ensuring that the right support is put into place for those who require these services. The partnership will build on the strengths of existing national and local services, to better align funding and to improve the integration of employability services with other support to ensure that services are designed and delivered around the needs and aspirations of people using our services.

Through No One Left Behind (which includes the Young Person's Guarantee), Scottish and Local Government have set out their ambitions to implement and embed the No One Left Behind principles, which underpin effective joined up local employability services, meeting both locally evidenced needs at an individual and labour market level.

The Local Employability Partnerships will provide collective leadership and shared commitment across partners to effectively implement the policy intent for a more aligned approach to national and local employability support in Scotland. This will reflect the need to deliver a more coherent employability provision locally, in line with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan aligned to the National performance Framework. The Partnership will take forward at a local level the actions from the No One Left Behind Delivery Plan, implementation of the Young person's Guarantee and associated economic recovery actions based on the principles which underpin the approach contained within the Scottish & Local Government Partnership Working Agreement for Employability[1] and further emphasised in the Framework for Local Employability Partnerships[2] which has been developed to provide some consensus around structure and remit of employability partnerships. The framework aims to provide a starting point in developing enhanced local partnership working for both strategic and delivery partners and has been developed following joint discussions with Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group (SLAED) and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).This ambition will be achieved through effective

1   http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/media/1241453/scottish_and_local_government_partner-ship_working_agreement_for_employability.pdf

2   http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/media/1242559/local_employability_partnership_frame-work__including_delivery_of_young_person_s_guarantee_.pdf

local employability partnerships and oversight provided by Community Planning Partnerships. The Statement of Ambition published by the Scottish Government and COSLA, set out high expectations for community planning and puts the process at the core of public service reform.

Building on the CPP good practice, this Partnership Checklist has been developed to support Local Employability Partnerships to critically review their "fitness for purpose".

Purpose of the Checklist

• Assess views on the current partnership arrangements, establishing a baseline of how well the Local Employability Partnership meets the ambitions of No One Left Behind and Young Person's Guarantee developing and implementing flexible, person-centred employability provision that meets the identified needs of both local individuals and employers establishing a well-being economy;

• Encourage reflection and the recording of progress from that baseline; and

• Identify areas where there may be scope for improving the operation of the partnership and the impact it has and how to take forward improvements.

The checklist acts as a 'can opener' for identifying potential areas for improvement in the operation of the Local Employability Partnership, which are influenced and supported by all partnership members.

Focus of the Checklist

The areas that the checklist focuses on are derived from research evidence and good practice concerning what makes for effective, outcome-focused partnership working, drawing on the CPP checklist developed by the Improvement Service.

The checklist leads partnerships to explore the following nine areas:

1. Leadership & Relationships

2. Governance

3. Use of Evidence

4. Community Engagement & Participation

5. Focus on Outcomes

6. Use of Resources

7. Accountability

8. Performance Management and Reporting

9. Impact

Practical Use of the Checklist

Stage 1

Following a brief awareness session, the checklist will be issued as an electronic survey to all members of the Local Employability Partnership that is being reviewed. The survey should be completed by each individual organisation involved.

The checklist leads respondents through a sequence of statements. Respondents are asked to rate the extent to which they believe each area has been implemented, using the scale set out below:

Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met

At the end of each section there are two comments boxes – one asks you demonstrate your views on how the partnership has implemented and is performing in relation to the issues covered by the section and the second asks you to suggest tasks or support required, by the partnership, to aid full implementation or improve in relation to the areas covered by the section.

All checklist responses are by organisation and will not be shared in public or within the wider partnership.

Stage 2

The checklist findings will be combined into a report, and shared summarising the responses and key points for discussion by local partnerships. The collective findings will be shared with each Local Employability Partnership and discussion will be taken forward in the form of local workshops.

Stage 3

Local Employability Partnerships should develop an Improvement Plan, which should cover the following areas:

- The issues that need to be improved upon

- The actions that will be undertaken to address these issues

- Support required by the Local Employability Partnership and who could provide that support

- Identify a lead person or thematic group responsible for driving the actions

- Timescales for implementing and reviewing progress for each action

- Resources required to drive the improvement

- Overall impact the improvement/s are expected to make

Section 1 - Leadership & Relationships	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
1.1. Within the LEP there is strong collective leadership to facilitate the shift to early intervention and prevention with the partnership encouraging the redesigning of service delivery models and interventions.			
1.2. LEP members work effectively together to achieve and agree a shared purpose.			
1.3 LEP meetings take place within a positive spirit of transparency, openness and trust.			
1.3 The key organisations that can contribute to achieving the LEP's Delivery Plan are involved and contribute appropriately and there is no obvious partner missing.			
1.4. CPP board are engaged in the leadership of the LEP and scrutinise performance.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Local Authority Area: **Organisation:**

Section 1 - Governance	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
2.1. The LEP includes members drawn from across the public, third and private sector, based on the Framework for Local Employability Partnerships.			
2.2. The LEP has a vision and strategic direction which all partners are committed to.			
2.3. The LEP has appropriate structures and processes to support shared and effective decision making.			
2.4. Partners have discussed and formally agreed their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the partnership and delivery of the No One Left Behind Local Delivery Plan.			
2.5. The LEP has an effective mechanism in place for managing collective risks, which is regularly reviewed.			
2.6. The members of the partnership are sufficiently empowered and influential to significantly advance the key issues.			
2.7. The LEP membership have agreed means by which the partnership resolves issues / conflict.			
2.8. The LEP works as an effective mechanism for addressing issues that cut across different thematic areas and for avoiding 'siloed' or duplicated working by thematic groups or partners.			
2.9. The LEP effectively works with Third Sector Interface.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 3 - Use of Evidence	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
3.1. The LEP has developed and agreed a common understanding of local user needs and opportunities.			
3.2. Each LEP member has a strong and unambiguous commitment to how they will work with other Local Employability Partnership members to share data and information to further strengthen the local evidence base that defines their core priorities.			
3.3. The LEP has a good understanding of the distribution of positive and negative outcomes across its area, including information relating both to inequalities (e.g. education, income, health) and the range of equalities groupings (e.g. age, race, gender, disability).			
3.4. The Local Delivery Plan draws on the key priorities of the area through the use of data analysis, research, evaluation work, and user engagement activity.			
3.5. The Local Delivery Plan demonstrates the impact of the agreed actions on delivery and represents good value for money.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 4 - Community Engagement and Participation	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
4.1. The LEP has effective engagement and communication mechanisms for understanding the needs of individuals, communities and employers.			
4.2. Input from individuals and communities influences the No One Left Behind Delivery Plan and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.			
4.3. Input from individuals and communities influences the activities undertaken and the way that activities are delivered.			
4.4. Each LEP member has made a strong and clear commitment to how it will work with other LEP partners in further strengthening community engagement in employability.			
4.5. Each LEP member has articulated how it will use its resources in support of strengthening community engagement in employability.			
4.6. The LEP is committed to designing services directly with users, involving them at the earliest stages, in line with the Scottish Approach to Service Design.			
4.7. The LEP has aligned and integrated with other local services and community connectivity e.g. Money Advice, Housing support, welfare, education.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 5 - Focus on Outcomes	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
5.1. The LEP has a clear statement in the Local Delivery Plan of the outcomes it is focusing upon (i.e. the difference that it ultimately aims to make in the community).			
5.2. Individual LEP partners understand their respective responsibilities for achieving the outcomes detailed in the Local Delivery Plan.			
5.3. The LEP has undertaken some level of contribution analysis/logic modelling to clearly identify the activities/tasks needed to achieve its desired employability outcomes and any related factors likely to influence them highlighted in the Delivery Plan.			
5.4. The LEP has identified and agreed which localities/communities and/or client groups it will prioritise in relation to reducing inequalities in outcomes – it has prioritised priority outcomes.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 6 - Use of Resources	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
6.1. The LEP knows what resources (financial, staff, assets) are deployed locally.			
6.2. The LEP has undertaken an analysis of partnership provision of local services and activities and how this contributes towards its agreed outcomes.			
6.3. The LEP's Delivery Plan is reflected clearly in the resource allocation processes/ decisions made by other partner organisations (including decision making about resource reductions).			
6.4. All Employability Key Workers, employed by any partner have access to relevant training and are encouraged to continually improve their practice and service.			
6.5. All employability key workers are fully aware of the supports on offer within the locality and the labour market opportunities available for their clients.			
6.6. The LEP has in place a robust commissioning and procurement process that enables co-design, co-production, co-delivery and co-commissioning of services to best meet the needs of users, evidenced by the needs of individuals and local/regional geographies.			
6.7. LEP members contribute and align funds, staff and other resources as it considers appropriate to improve local priority outcomes.			
6.8. The LEP adheres to and implements delivery based on the agreed Minimum Delivery Standards and Customer Charter developed nationally using Lived Experience Panels.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 7 - Accountability	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
7.1. The LEP's Delivery Plan will reflect the strategic and operational plans of all partner organisations.			
7.2. All LEP members play an active role in agreeing, monitoring and taking action to improve local employability outcomes, offering constructive criticism and regularly challenge each other and the partnership as a whole to 'do more' in achieving the Delivery Plan outcomes.			
7.3. The LEP members effectively communicate decisions of the LEP within their organisations.			
7.4. The LEPs accountability arrangements are clear, understood and implemented by all partners.			
7.5. The LEP is fully empowering service managers to use collective resources to encourage innovation in service/partnership design to meet outcome improvements.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 8 - Performance Management and Reporting	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
8.1. The LEP can clearly articulate its collective performance expectations on the necessary steps to reduce inequalities in and between local communities and has effective arrangements to evaluate its own performance.			
8.2. Reporting by the LEP follows the agreed reporting framework and feeds into any local and national reporting supporting Scotland's National Performance Framework and Economic Strategy.			
8.3. There is clear performance reporting linkage between individual partner organisations, thematic partnership groups and the CPP board.			
8.4. The Delivery Plan clearly expresses what the partnership understands improvement will look like locally and is ambitious in driving effective service/partnership working to achieve its ambitions.			
8.5. The LEP will adopt an approach to continuous improvement, supported from April 2022 by the National Continuous Improvement Strategy.			
8.6. The LEP has effective arrangements to evaluate its own performance, with an efficient and robust system in place for recording progress made towards the achievement of outcomes.			
8.7. The LEP actively use performance information to facilitate constructive strategic discussion and, where required, to instigate corrective action in order to address under-performance.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

Section 9 - Impact	Fully Met	Partially Met with Some Areas for Improvement	Not Met * please note below actions to address this
9.1. The LEP is able to evidence the impact its decisions for employability investment locally have had on local needs and national themes addressing inequalities in the labour market, including the impact of service changes to Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland.			
9.2. There is evidence that the LEP's actions redesigning service delivery models are facilitating the desired shift to person-centred, flexible support and are having a positive impact on outcomes for local people, business and the community.			
9.3. By working together following the No One Left Behind principles, the LEP has delivered improvements which could not have been delivered by individual organisations.			
9.4. The LEP takes all opportunities to co-align and integrate provision and resources across public, third and private sector delivery, including were appropriate with City/Growth Deal Partnerships.			
9.5. The LEP is progressing the No One Left Behind principles locally reducing duplication and complexity in the employability landscape while ensuring services delivered meet the needs of individuals, local communities and labour market.			
9.6. Each partner has made a strong and clear commitment to work with other LEP partners to evaluate the impact of using joint resources in supporting the LEP to improve outcomes.			
9.7. The partnership is making progress in closing the gap around inequalities in outcomes in its own area.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, please demonstrate how your partnership implemented this / positive examples.			
Based on your responses to the statements above, what tasks and/or support is required to allow this to be fully implemented.			

May 2021

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