

28th March 2024

Neil Grant, Chair of the Shetland Local Employability Partnership

ANNUAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2024-2025

Planning document.

Scope

The following document sets out the 2024-2025 investment plan in Shetland in accordance with the Shetland Local Employability Partnership [SLEP] 3-year delivery plan 2022-25, the Shetland Partnership Plan 2018-2028, The Shetland Child Poverty Action Plan and the Scottish Government's Best Start Bright Future policy, and the No One Left Behind Delivery [NOLB] plan. Each of these documents share commonality underpinning the decisions for direction. The latest grant offer from Scottish Government focuses on 'Tackling Child Poverty' and 'All Age Employability Support'.

National Context

SLEP consists of a variety of public partners who all contribute to the success of the three-year delivery plan. Each has a responsibility to drive strategic change through the offer of funding and interventions. Formed in 2020, the SLEP has mainly seen funding from Scottish Government being the main source discussed and disseminated across providers. It is the aspiration of this new investment plan to include funding from all partners where possible in light of current challenges with public budgets. At time of writing, indicative allocations for local authorities from Scottish Government in relation to the NOLB have yet to be received. However, the overall budget for employability in the national budget investment reads to be in excess of £90m. This is a real-term 10% reduction from last financial year.

2024 marks the beginning of 'phase-3' for the NOLB delivery plan. Most noticeably, the cessation of Fair Start Scotland programme – a national programme operated in the third sector in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions. Although a three-year legacy, contingent liability period will exist to provide continuity to existing customers of the programme. Phase-3 will see the responsibility of supporting individuals with disabilities and those claiming reserved benefits who are at risk of long-term unemployment to select, obtain and retain employment: Part 2 of Schedule 5 to the [Scotland Act 1998](#). This compliments the legislative requirements of the grant offer letter including Section 2 of the [Employment and Training Act 1973](#), and Section 126 of the [Housing Grants, construction and Regeneration Act 1996](#).

2023 grant offer letter included a [Fair Work Framework](#) conditionality with an expectation for the policy intent to be included in LEP activity from April 2024. Finally, discussions between local authorities and Scottish Government via the Scottish Local Authority Economic Development [SLAED] employability peoples group have indicated that an expectation all LEPs will have a plan to tackle inequalities in disability with an in-work support lens by the end of 2024-2025 delivery period.

Local context

Shetland boasts some of the lowest claimant rates across Scotland, falling for three financial quarters consecutively. Our employment rate stands at 84.2% of the working population in the year ending June 2023, an increase compared with year ending June 2022 when the local rate was 77.6%. However, Economic Inactivity or those aged 16 to 64 sits as 15.8% (ONS, 2023). This is a drop on published figures for last year (23.9%), however remains at unsustainable levels. Our Participation Measure, those aged 16 to 19 participating in employment, education or training stood at 97.45 for 2023. (SDS, 2023) A clear correlation of those not in a positive destination is linked as our young people move closer to 19, furthermore, the highest number of individuals who are classed as 'unconfirmed' lies with 17 year olds (0.8%) (SDS, 2023). The Office for National Statistics state that "Unemployment rate in Shetland Islands was 2.0%, a slight decrease from the previous year when unemployment rate was 2.1%" (ONS, 2023).

FIGURE 1

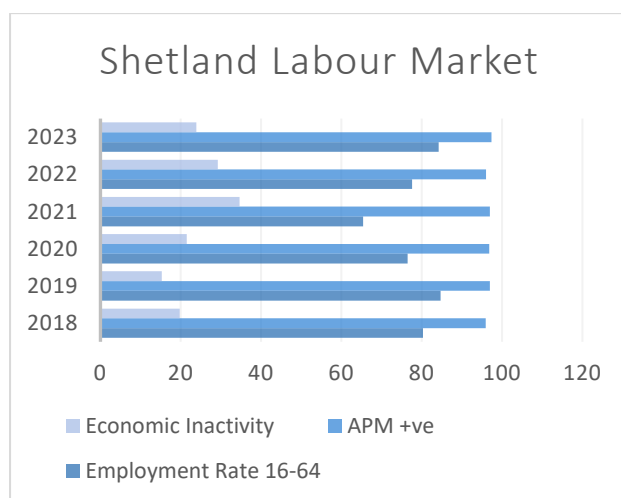
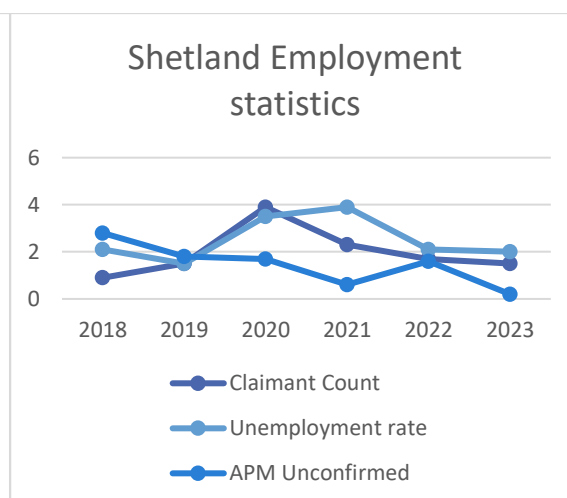


FIGURE 2



Key Performance Indicators

Scottish Government stipulate a number of policy indicators (1-5), a list that SLEP decided to add three local needs to for the last financial year. These are as follows:

1. Number of participants engaged in employability support services;
2. Number of participants progressing towards employment, education or training;
3. Number of employer-funded opportunities;
4. Number of participants sustaining outcomes;
5. Number of parents achieving in-work progression;
6. Claimant count;
7. Participation Rate – specifically rate of unconfirmed;
8. Economic Inactivity

How have we done so far?

1. Number of participants engaged in employability support services

This has remained a measure of operational comparison with current and historic funded employability interventions. It relies on an individual consenting to their information being collected, stored and shared with our colleagues in Scottish Government via the [Shared Measurement Framework](#).

Action

To measure the full impact of the employability providers in Shetland a mechanism for providing this data for all service users must become a priority for the coming year.

2. Number of participants progressing towards employment, education or training

The employability pipeline divided into 5-stages sees an individual through initial engagement, barrier removal and training into work experience and education. Finally, into initial and sustained employment. The first four stages contribute to KPI 2. Measuring progression is a contested point with the Data and Reporting sub group of SLAED. Assessments including the Warwick assessment and My Journey have been used to map progress of soft skills. Hard outputs are easier to report.

Action

Gain a matrix of measurement tools used in Shetland and establish a unified method with central recording and reporting.

3. Number of employer-funded opportunities

Since the Young Person Guarantee employer recruitment incentive (ERI), vast investment has seen the young people of Shetland gain paid work experience for 6-12 months. Last year's AIP saw investment in third sector providers with £100,000 of investment into the Shetland Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI). Up take was mixed between the two providers. Private sector became reliant on the investment to bridge short-term recruitment gaps. The Scottish Employer Recruitment Incentive framework offers a much lower level of remuneration for the employer with an expectation of at least 12 months placement. As such, this may be a hard sell in our local market. However, discussions could be had to investigate a more person-centred approach, limiting the number of placements, but ensuring they full fit the needs of the individual.

Action

To research the impact and costs of the last 12 months with a potential forecast for investment.

4. Number of participants sustaining outcomes

NOLB Shared measurement framework prescribes a 12-month recording and reporting window for each outcome achieved by a participant. This is double that of previous external funds. The Scotland ACT and closure of Fair Start Scotland brings a new light onto in-work support here in the isles. Currently we have a Project SEARCH model within the Youth & Employability Service [Y&ES], Shetland Community Bike Project [SCBP] and Moving On Employment Project [MOEP] all delivering some form of in-work support. The expectation for the next phase of NOLB is for Individual Placement and Support (ISP) model to be planned and implemented within the next 18 months. MEOP commissioned a research paper into the state of supported employment in Shetland. The LEP are expecting this report to be presented before the beginning of April 2024.

Action

Reflect on MOEP research paper. Analyses employer's perceptions of reasonable adjustments and in-work support. Research how a centrally administered Access to Work programme could operate in Shetland. The research paper is being launched on Friday 19th April 2024.

5. Number of parents achieving in-work progression

2023 marked the change from the Parental Employability Support Fund to the Child Poverty Plan. 2023/24 has witnessed challenges with this substantial budget. Shetland, like all local authorities, were tasked with tackling poverty in children through employment of parents. Within Shetland, we have some of the lowest rates of unemployment and a job density above 1. Equally, evidence suggests that the greatest barriers to progression for parents stem from systematic roots. E.g. housing costs, cost of living, childcare availability and flexible contracts. Shetland Y&ES planned a sector-leading intervention to increase the reach of our service. At time of writing, these remains uncertain of it will be granted concession to continue.

Action

Based on final decision by Scottish Government, review how to tackle parental registrations and engagement to facilitate in-work progression. Short-term project?

6. Claimant Count.

A locally highlighted indicator. The initial target was to sustain the claimant count for those in the work-ready category below 2%. Linked to the Child Poverty indicator, in-work benefits should be fought for to ensure adequate better off calculations are achieved to ensure the best financial and home-based balance sought to enable the best early-intervention for partners to raise their children and access part-time employment. Equally this situation can be beneficial for those transitioning back into work.

Action

Raise awareness around stigma of benefits and the rights each individual has to these to enable a healthier work/life balance?

7. Participation rate – specifically rate of unconfirmed

A new KPI for Shetland's Y&ES from 2023. The emphasis to concentrate on the unconfirmed rather than fixation on the positive destination rate is around reach and communication. Informed choice on an individual's path can only be made if we know who requires the support. Shetland has around a small population compared to the rest of mainland Scotland. It is the responsibility of the education and economic development sectors to ensure we harbour the best opportunities for your young people to ensure sustainability of the Shetland Economy. With additional pressures on housing, transport and cost of living it is paramount, in accordance with our Shetland Partnership Plan, to future proof our community and services. This begins at the grass route.

Action

Work with corporate legal services to achieve data sharing mechanisms between all partners to enable a fuller picture of the young people in Shetland. Utilising SEEMIS and the 16+ DataHub.

8. Economic Inactivity

Defined as "the proportion of people who are neither working nor looking for work" (UK gov't, 2023) The UK as a whole has seen a marked increase in the levels of inactivity since Covid-19 pandemic. Shetland has witnessed similar trends – see figure 1.

Action

Design series to suppose inactivity within our community, supporting engagement and reducing national levels of inactivity. This is a major indicator for UK Shared Prosperity funding.

Service Design

The NOLB policy and subsequent grant offer has an expectation for all local employability partnerships [LEP] to use the [Scottish Approach to Service Design](#) [SAtdSD] when creating and reviewing interventions in their constituency. “The principles of the Scottish Approach to Service Design means that organisations responsible for services work together in the problem space to define the problems (engaging fully with users) before moving to solutions.” (Scot Gov’t, 2019)

The Scottish Government pose a series of questions for the LEP to answer each financial year as part of the Appendix 1.1 of the annual investment plan making up part of the acceptance of grant. These are expected to be as follows:

- What activity do you intend to deliver within this financial year via the Local authority, Other Public Sector bodies, Third Sector and Private Sector;
 - To support people under the All-Age Employability Service – broken down into specific groups
 - To support tackling child Poverty using NOLB funding
 - To support disabled people and others with protected characteristics.
- Describe any local Employer Recruitment Incentives being delivered.
- Describe plans for the provision of training allowances.

To inform activity eligible under the terms of the grant a detailed description of eligible cost. These are:

- Support provided by Employability Key Workers, including: direct management and administration; workforce capacity in providing support to those for whom this intervention has been identified as appropriate, and engaging with young people no earlier than six months prior to the school leaving date.
- Beneficiary led Employer Recruitment Incentives in line with the Employer Recruitment Framework.
- Employer engagement and job brokering costs, for example, recruitment events and Job Fairs.
- Providing appropriate opportunities and/or provision to participants.
- Providing funding for the achievement of accredited training, industry recognised certification and Vocational Qualifications.
- Travelling expenses and related costs for participants to enable them to attend external training sessions and relevant interviews.
- Travelling expenses and related costs for key workers in connection with providing support to participants.
- Capacity building within the local partnership to improve local partnership working to ensure delivery of objectives and milestones for the programme.
- The administration and co-ordination costs associated with delivering the Programme.
- Training and development of key workers to ensure they are trauma informed, gender and diversity competent and equipped to support all participants, particularly those with additional support needs.
- Specialist support required for participants facing structural inequalities in the labour market.
- Investment in both national and local Third Sector and Private Sector providers to deliver employability support.
- A Training Allowance towards support for participants whilst undertaking employability training, where there is no alternative financial support available.

Service Delivery Requirements and Approach 2023/24

Focusing on appendix 1.2 of the 2023/24 SLEP funding brief. The table below demonstrates the planned actions and budgets with feedback on actuals achieved. Some of these figures will include a level of addition adjustment* for the final quarter of delivery is not fully complete.

Target Group	Rational for Intervention	Delivery Partner	Budget Forecast	Budget Actual	Budget Variance	Volumes Forecast	Volume Actual	Performance Target (10%par)	Funding Source
All-Age REACH	NOLB SMF REACH	CLD / Y&ES - Public	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,948.46	-£ 948.46	982	1163	↑	SG - NOLB
All-Age 5 stage operational	Univrsal Offer - 8 KPIs of SLEP.	Y&ES - Public	£ 60,000.00	£ 60,000.00	£ -	230	223	→	SG - NOLB
15-18 at risk of NEET	SLDR + Participation Measure.	Bridge - Public	£ 5,000.00	£ 4,476.00	£ 524.00	6	8	↑	SG - NOLB
Professionals	Customer Charter, SLEP CPD	SIC/SLEP	£ 8,000.00	£ 7,016.26	£ 983.74	20	33	↑	SG - NOLB
PESF/CPP	SLEP KPI 5 + Child Poverty Stretch Aims 2030. Shetland Child Poverty Plan	Y&ES,Anchor for Families	£ 20,000.00	£ 16,186.07	£ 3,813.93	20	29	↑	SG - CPP
aged <25 with disabilities - progressing towards EET	SG KPIs v's Local Evidence	MOEP - TSO	£ 25,000.00	£ 25,000.00	£ -	5	4	↓	SG - NOLB
Criminal convictions and Substance Misuse	National Outcome 6 of the Criminal Justice annual report (OAAR)	SCBP - TSO	£ 25,000.00	£ 25,000.00	£ -	5	19	↑	SG - NOLB
Parents in Poverty	Increase REACH of CPP	Y&ES , Anchor for Families	£ 167,000.00	£ -	£ 167,000.00	265	0	↓	SG - CPP
			£ 313,000.00	£ 141,626.79	£ 171,373.21	1533	1479		

Service Delivery Requirements and Approach 2024/25

Based off the narrative given in the earlier pages of this report and the indicative allocation published by Scottish Government, the table below sets out the proposed Annual Investment Plan for the financial year 2024/25. These figures are subject to change and require sign off by the SLEP. To increase flexibility of spend, Scottish Government have approved a 15% respective virement between budgets for this financial year. As such, you will see this reflected in the tables.

NOLB	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Management	£ 7,173.75	£ 7,173.75	£ 7,173.75	£ 7,173.75	£ 28,695.00
TSI / Comissioning	£ -	£ 50,000.00	£ -		£ 50,000.00
Transport/ other part costs	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 10,000.00
Driving Lessons	£ 900.00	£ 900.00	£ 900.00	£ 900.00	£ 3,600.00
Classes/workshop	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 10,000.00
Qualification and accreditations	£ 750.00	£ 750.00	£ 750.00	£ 750.00	£ 3,000.00
Roadshow/Employability event / Employer Engagement	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 10,000.00
Petty Cash	£ 600.00	£ 600.00	£ 600.00	£ 600.00	£ 2,400.00
Licences	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
Conference Fees	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 3,000.00
Contingency	£ 650.00	£ 650.00	£ 650.00	£ 650.00	£ 2,600.00
Cross budget spend	£ 1,021.25	£ 1,021.25	£ 1,021.25	£ 1,021.25	£ 4,085.00
CPD	£ -	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 5,000.00
	£ 21,595.00	£ 71,095.00	£ 21,095.00	£ 19,095.00	£ 132,880.00
	Variance				£ 6,120.00

CPP	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
CPP Coordinator contingency	£ 625.00	£ 625.00	£ 625.00	£ 625.00	£ 2,500.00
LEP Development	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 10,000.00
Management	£ 5,733.75	£ 5,733.75	£ 5,733.75	£ 5,733.75	£ 22,935.00
Transport/ other part' costs	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 10,000.00
Driving Lessons	£ 437.50	£ 437.50	£ 437.50	£ 437.50	£ 1,750.00
Mark Brown		£ 4,000.00	£ 5,000.00		£ 9,000.00
Qualification and accreditations	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	£ 250.00	£ 1,000.00
TGITS	£ 675.00	£ 675.00	£ 675.00	£ 675.00	£ 2,700.00
PEEP (Parenting programmes)		£ 8,335.00	£ 8,333.00	£ 8,332.00	£ 25,000.00
Coms story telling	£ 875.00	£ 875.00	£ 875.00	£ 875.00	£ 3,500.00
Parentl Transition Fund	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 2,500.00	£ 10,000.00
Contingency/ PTF	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 8,000.00
Test of Change ERI		£ 1,166.67	£ 8,333.33	£ 8,333.34	£ 25,000.00
Dds Group	£ 675.00	£ 675.00	£ 675.00	£ 675.00	£ 2,700.00
Cross budget Spend	-£ 1,021.25	-£ 1,021.25	-£ 1,021.25	-£ 1,021.25	-£ 4,085.00
CPD	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 5,000.00
	£ 19,000.00	£ 32,501.67	£ 40,666.33	£ 35,665.34	£ 135,000.00
	Variance				£ -