



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions



European Union  
European  
Social Fund

## England European Social Fund Programme 2014 - 2020



## Supporting Local Growth 2018

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# European Social Fund Investment – an introduction

Welcome to the 2018 edition of “Supporting Local Growth” for the European Social Fund (ESF) programme in England. ESF in England contributes to local growth by increasing labour market participation, promoting social inclusion and developing the skills of the potential and existing workforce. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is the Managing Authority for the programme.

Since March 2015 the current ESF programme has been supporting projects across the country. At the end of September 2018 £1.59 billion of EU funding had been allocated to over 350 projects.

As part of the Government’s overall growth activity, ESF is delivered with a range of partners, including other Government Departments and bodies across public, private and third sectors. EU funds require national co-financing from either public or private sources. ESF in England works with four Co-financing Organisations (CFOs):

- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS)
- Big Lottery Fund through their Building Better Opportunities programme (BBO).

Each of England’s 38 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas has developed strategies to ensure funding focuses on local needs. These strategies inform the calls for funding in each area that are published on GOV.UK by the Managing Authority and all ESF CFO tendering opportunities in each area.

ESF must only be used where there is a demonstrable need; for example where there is market failure or where ESF will add value to and not duplicate existing nationally funded provision.

The programme contributes to policies to increase the employment rate by increasing the numbers of unemployed and economically inactive people entering sustainable jobs. Ensuring a strong focus on those at a disadvantage in the labour market helps increase social inclusion. It also supports efforts to reduce the gender employment gap by ensuring an appropriate proportion of participants are women, and tackles youth unemployment in areas where the rate is particularly high. Where an activity isn’t covered by national funding, an ESF-funded project can provide valuable support to these groups.

The programme also aims to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce and to increase productivity. By improving access to lifelong learning for all, ESF support ranges from helping people tackle basic skills needs through to developing intermediate and higher levels skills that they and their employers need.

Within this booklet we showcase a range of projects to highlight the wide range of activities the programme delivers to people across England and what is being achieved. These are referenced by LEP area. Because of the Government's guarantee for ESF funding to continue for the whole of the programme period, projects can continue to be agreed in local areas through to the end of 2020 and individuals can continue to benefit from the support they need.

A full list of projects funded can be found on the ESIF useful resources page of the programme website on GOV.UK.

ESF funding opportunities are published on GOV.UK through an interactive and fully searchable 'funding finder' tool; or through tendering opportunities published by ESF CFOs.

## Working with Partners

ESF can add value to local areas by bringing together partners and services, allowing project participants to access valuable advice and support that meets their needs. The two projects below are examples of how by working through a range of partners and agencies, participants are being supported to overcome barriers to the labour market and gain new skills and confidence to move them closer to and into employment.

New Leaf

£10.6 million ESF & BBO

Cheshire and Warrington

**New Leaf** brings together a diverse range of 30 partners from across Warrington and Cheshire, including local authorities, learning providers, charities, social landlords and disability support networks. New Leaf project clients have their own professional mentor, trained to build positive relationships that are focused on the client's needs and strengths. Bespoke plans support clients to explore and identify personal barriers to enable them to achieve agreed goals, re-engage with mainstream services, and ultimately secure and maintain employment.

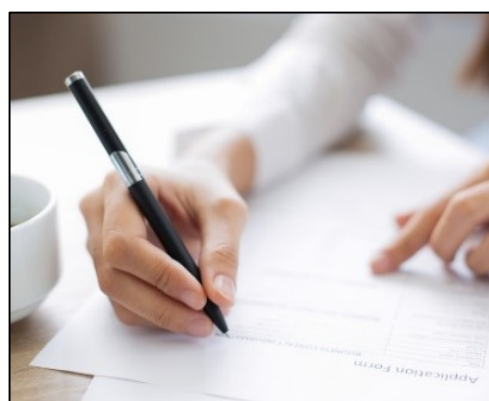


Evolve

£3.2 million ESF & BBO

Stoke and Staffordshire

**Evolve** comprises 18 Partner organisations, which support a variety of projects across the Lichfield, Cannock, Tamworth and East Staffordshire areas. The project assists participants with multiple barriers to regain their confidence and move closer to the job market. Evolve also delivers employment support training such as CV, Application Form and Job Search support and volunteering opportunities to increase work experience, as well as through one-to-one mentoring and information, advice and guidance to increase confidence and motivation.



## Working with Employers

Other ESF projects work with local industry and employers, to determine skills gaps and offer provision that fills those gaps. Employers are also able to highlight where opportunities exist for employment and work experience. The projects below show examples of how this approach is bringing together the needs of the local economy with the local workforce who are able to fill those gaps.

Step Forward	£8.9 million ESF & BBO	Tees Valley
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**Step Forward Tees Valley** comprises 28 cross-sector organisations. The project provides bespoke support to participants with multiple and complex needs to build on their strengths and aspirations, using the skills and expertise of partners and local employers to achieve employment focused goals. The project aims to support 2,500 people to take advantage of voluntary or employment possibilities, as well as working with local employers to create new opportunities.



Access to Employment	£5.9 million ESF	Lancashire
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**Access to Employment** provides bespoke pre-employment training packages designed in response to specific employers' recruitment needs, as well as vocational and employability skills, advice on job searching, CV and interview techniques, basic skills training, self-employment advice and programmes for learners with special educational needs. More than 2,000 people have received support which has helped them to gain the skills needed by local employers and therefore progress into employment, apprenticeships or further training.

## Individualised job preparation support

Individualised support, including one to one mentoring or information, advice and guidance, is used effectively to help people navigate the services already available to them, and to gain job-searching skills like interview techniques and CV-writing. This type of personalised support helps to remove barriers to gaining employment or accessing domestic programmes and can continue to help sustain employment after that person has been hired. The following projects demonstrate how ESF is making a difference to people with a whole range of support needs and the difference that support is making.

In to Work

£1 million ESF

South East Midlands

**In to Work** works with clients who are 16+ and have had long term difficulties finding work, for reasons including skills needs, or their personal circumstances. In to Work is a tailored programme designed to help these people secure a role and succeed at work by gaining additional work-ready skills.



Building Futures £1.1 million ESF & BBO Buckinghamshire and Thames Valley

**Building Futures** aim is to increase confidence and skills in participants, and also provide a link between participants and employers to facilitate work experience. The project also provides support with CV writing and interview techniques, English language, childcare and advice on financial management. The project has a particular focus on the long-term unemployed, people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, the over 50s, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and people with disabilities or long-term physical or mental health issues.

Removing Barriers, Rebuilding Lives

£1.1 million ESF & BBO

Oxfordshire

**Removing Barriers, Rebuilding Lives** provides tailored support to people who have been out of work for six months or more who may face multiple and complex barriers, including single parents, homeless people, ex-offenders, over 50's, people with substance misuse issues, or those who live in rural areas. One-to-one coaching helps participants to make the most of training and employment opportunities, as well as improving their life skills and work readiness. Participants are able to access help with other barriers to training and employment, such as travel and childcare costs.

Right Steps to Work

£2.2 million ESF

York, North Yorkshire and East Riding

**Right Steps to Work** can help participants to make contact with local employers across West Yorkshire. The project enables participants to access work experience opportunities and provides help with CV writing and interviews. Support also includes personal development, advice on housing, benefits and money management, condition management and training. Advisors also stay in regular contact once a person has secured employment.



Exceed Coventry

£1.3 million ESF

Coventry and Warwickshire

**Exceed Coventry** provides a support service tailored to the individual to reduce their barriers to entering employment. Participants are allocated a key worker who helps to refine a 'menu' of interventions that include pre-employment training and work experience. The project adds value by focussing on engaging and identifying individuals who need additional support that is not available or suitable through other local programmes. This includes working with Coventry University, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre and other project partners to recruit BME communities onto the project. Uptake by BME participants has been especially high, and to continue to build on this in the future, the project is planning to hold further recruitment and training sessions with Community Organisations such as the Refugee and Migrant Centre.



Changing Lives

£840,000 ESF

D2N2

**Changing Lives** offers tailored support to vulnerable women whilst on license in custody or in the community. Participants receive 1-2-1 support and group self-development courses. By working closely with multiple organisations, participants have access to a range of services including housing and financial advice. Specialist programmes are enhanced by expert therapeutic interventions, as well as help with practical issues like dealing with a drug or alcohol addiction or managing benefits. Access to specialist women-only accommodation projects for women at risk of homelessness and domestic violence is also available.

Working for Carers

£1 million ESF & BBO

London

**Working for Carers** works with 24 partners across London to move unpaid carers and ex-carers over 25 closer to employment. One-to-one advice and support is provided to prepare carers for employment, volunteering and training opportunities. This includes CV and interview technique training, help with job searching, group activities and training workshops to build employability skills.



Work Routes

£3 million ESF

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

**Work Routes** offers one-to-one employment support to move people towards employment. This includes in-house skills training and interview practice, plus access to financial assistance with childcare, travel, and interview clothing. Each person's barriers to employment are assessed, before a plan is agreed to overcome these. Where appropriate a support worker can also signpost an individual to other services to complement the support that they offer.

## Disadvantaged groups in need of practical support

Motiv8

£9.7 million ESF & BBO

Greater Manchester

**Motiv8** works with people who need support to get their lives back on track - whether they are experiencing issues with health, alcohol, drugs, domestic violence, debt, homelessness or other challenges. Support is targeted at people who are under-represented in the labour market, such as ex-offenders, ethnic minorities, migrant communities and the over 50s. Motiv8 help their clients to compile a support plan, facilitating access to services and helping to improve self-confidence, self-esteem, health and wellbeing, their capacity to manage finances and to gain employability skills. The aim is to move project participants closer towards job search, training and employment.



Works Better

£2.9 million ESF

Leeds City Region

The **Works Better** project recognises that barriers to work are specific to individuals and include, for example, childcare issues, low confidence or a lack of basic IT skills. To overcome these barriers, the Works Better team puts together uniquely tailored programmes with an allocated Transition Support Worker to build confidence, help people cope with challenges and learn about finances. The final stage of the programme involves structured job matching, work experience and job application support to help participants progress into sustainable employment.



## Young people and the Youth Employment Initiative

ESF is being used to fund support which prepares young people for working life, in particular by reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. Young people are also a priority as whilst youth unemployment is at a record low, they can lack the basic skills needed to enter the workforce. ESF also aims to contribute to continuing efforts to reduce child poverty in low income households.

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) provides a separate European funding source that complements ESF funding in areas where there is higher youth unemployment. The following six projects demonstrate the positive impact ESF is having in supporting young people from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds to overcome multiple barriers, gain new skills and move into or closer to employment and training.

Springboard

£4.3 million ESF & £3.3 million YEI

Humber

**Springboard** works with 20 delivery partners in a number of sectors in the city of Hull and across the Humber. Participants receive help with barriers to work such as travel, childcare costs and mental health issues, as well as training when required. Strong working relationships with Jobcentre Plus, alongside their partners' own recruitment activities, has resulted in a high level of referrals for this programme. Of the 2,750 young people supported in the initial phase of the project to July 2018, 848 have progressed into work, further education or apprenticeships and 2,214 qualifications have been achieved.



Black Country Impact

£17 million ESF & £17 million YEI

Black Country

**Black Country Impact** provides a tailored approach, designed to help each young adult build a future in a way that suits their specific circumstances. Specialist commissioned provision is available for key groups such as care leavers, teenage mothers, offenders, homeless people and substance misusers, and those furthest away from the labour market who are in need of additional support to access national provision.

Durham Works

£11.2 million ESF & £5.8 million YEI

North East

**DurhamWorks** is a partnership project between Durham County Council and 16 organisations working together to support unemployed 16-24 year olds NEET. The focus is on providing one-to one support that helps young people identify their employment goals; and through access to education, training and work experience opportunities develop their skills and capacity to achieve them. Support is also provided to removing other barriers to work such as help with childcare and benefits.



Positive Futures

£550,000 ESF

Coventry and Warwickshire

**Positive Futures** supports members of gangs, young lone parents, ex-offenders, people with learning difficulties and disabilities, drug and alcohol abusers and young people trapped in the cycle of deprivation associated with 3rd generational worklessness. The project helps young people through a bespoke 5-step programme, moving them into employment, including self-employment, and into education and apprenticeships. Activities are delivered in the most deprived areas of North Warwickshire, sometimes on individual housing estates to ease any transport issues for learners.



WOOP

£665,000 ESF

Thames Valley Berkshire

The **Worlds of Opportunity Programme (WOOP)** aims to inspire students from Year 9 upwards (aged 15-24) to make subject and career choices within the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) field. WOOP hopes to address the national skills shortages within the wider STEM industry. The project has organised a number of large events to enable young people to network with STEM experts and to find out more about STEM industries. Over 13,300 young people have visited these events so far. The project also facilitates work experience placements for young people to gain experience in STEM industries.



Aspire Higher

£2.2 million ESF

London

**Aspire Higher** is a gang prevention project in London that engages with potential and ex-gang members to prevent individuals from joining gangs and committing gang related crimes. Funding is being used for tailored interventions for individuals, including parental support and trauma support. During regular one-to-one sessions with an Achievement Coach, participants create an action plan which includes voluntary work experience, and motivational sessions and activities. The Coach will also advocate and mediate to be the protective factor for the young person.



## Support to improve mental health

Poor mental health can often be a barrier to successful employment due to the day-to-day side effects of a condition. ESF is funding projects that work with participants with mental health issues to help them manage and overcome their condition. Using a variety of approaches and activities that engage and motivate people, the following projects show how ESF is tackling the impacts of mental health issues and recognising the impact of isolation for people living in rural parts of the country.

The Bike Project	£111,000 ESF	Greater Manchester
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The **Bike Project** works with high risk male offenders to help overcome mental health issues and improve independent living skills. Through 1-1 tuition and practical training, the project helps participants to work as part of a team and develop problem solving skills. Participants are trained to repair and recycle broken and disrepaired bicycles back to working order. Uniquely the first bike repaired is given to a disadvantaged child or adult in Africa or Europe, which often has a profound effect on the participant as they see their hard work helping someone in need. Participants are able to keep the second bike they repair, which has led to the development of cycle groups and has improved physical fitness and emotional wellbeing.

Positive People	£9.1 million ESF & BBO	Dorset
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**Positive People** employs change coaches to deliver one-to-one support and offer a range of activities to suit individual needs. These include help with anxiety and isolation, access to benefits or housing and financial advice, along with preparations for entering employment. Participants benefit from confidence building activities such as a 'tech savvy' digital support group, volunteering opportunities to build skills and meeting new people, and even taking up a hobby or mountain biking to improve mental health. The framework is delivered by many specialist delivery partners and continuously developed to meet emerging needs.



Essex Rural Skills	£483,000 ESF & BBO	South East
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**Essex Rural Skills** helps economically inactive, isolated people who live in rural areas and market towns, with a focus on the over 45s. The project teaches rural skills alongside employability and life skills courses, in order to build motivation, capabilities and employability. The project has a strong focus on wellbeing and mental health and promotes the benefits of outdoor activity for mental health. All participants gain a UK Rural Skills qualification, which encourages further learning. Where needed, participants in rurally isolated areas are offered help with transport arrangements.



## Innovative approaches

ESF funding provides the opportunity for projects to deliver support using new and different approaches. This might be in the form of maximising technology to engage and train participants or developing innovative solutions to solving problems and improving services, like in the examples below.

Help to Work	£1.5 million ESF	Coast to Capital
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All participants are given access to the **Help to Work** e-Circle of Support; a highly innovative digital platform designed to enable individuals to purchase wellbeing and employment services to support them towards work. Each participant is given £100 to potentially spend on services including work clothes, skills classes and qualifications. The project also offers more traditional support like CV writing and condition management. Support workers stay in touch with participants once they have gained employment, offering support as required to sustain the employment. The project's target groups include lone parents, those with language barriers and individuals with disabilities and complex health conditions.

Industry Educator

£930,000 ESF

Greater Lincolnshire

The **Industry Educator** Programme has so far recruited over 180 local 'industry experts' through an accredited 4-day intensive 'train to teach' course. This course equips business people to deliver masterclasses to students at local Further Education (FE) and independent training provider (ITP) courses, to improve their labour-market relevance. Over 200 participating Greater Lincolnshire employers have signed up to be part of the programme. Some are offering industry visits to FE and ITP staff to update their knowledge, and others support with activities such as curriculum development.



## People with disabilities and health conditions

The effects of a disability or health condition can often make it harder for a person to find and sustain employment. The following three projects show how ESF is able to fund tailored support to help people address these additional barriers to finding work and to support them in entering the labour market.

Genius Within

£170,000 ESF

Cambridgeshire

**Genius Within** supports adults with Specific Learning Difficulties / Neuro-differences to maximize their potential by working to their strengths. The project also ensures that people with problems at work or in custody receive the diagnosis, coaching and support that they need. Participants receive an additional range of specialist interventions from Genius Within, including the 'Memory Genius' course. The course is a short programme recognising the different types of memory: long and short-term, working, visual, verbal and more.





Building Bridges

£3.8 million ESF & BBO

Swindon and Wiltshire

**Building Bridges** brings together a partnership of 40 cross-sector organisations. Each participant is assigned a mentor, helping them to access support from across the partnership and who works with family members, carers, and key workers to support them to attain the benefits they are entitled to. Working with people on a one-to-one basis allows the development of a personal plan to create achievable targets the participant believes attainable, and working towards them at a pace that they are comfortable with. The project also works with employers to identify how participants could meet business requirements with agreed reasonable adjustments, and provides the link for work experience and specialist support to employer and employee at the introduction stage. Participants who enter employment, including self-employment, are offered in-work support during the early stage of their employment.

Solent Jobs Programme

£2 million ESF

Solent

**Solent Jobs Programme** provides intensive case management, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and health support, employment support and work experience opportunities. A localised and strategic response links a range of specialist agencies to provide personalised holistic support. The project is focused on moving clients into the business growth sectors where permanent jobs are expected to be more likely.



## Community level funding opportunities

ESF supports projects that are working directly within local communities to meet specific needs, and often working with marginalised and socially excluded people. This approach also gives small, locally based organisations access to funding to provide support in the areas they are familiar with, as demonstrated in the following projects.

LIFT Jobs	£353,000 ESF	New Anglia
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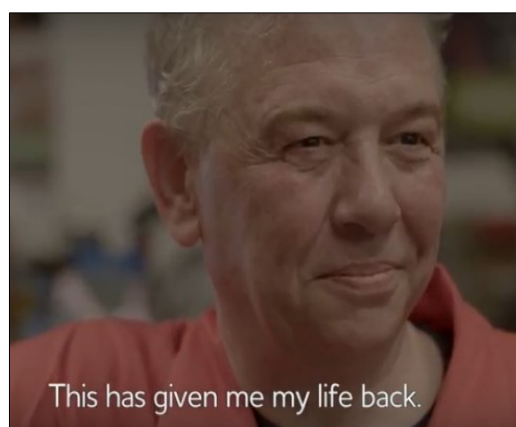
**LIFT Jobs** enables organisations already embedded in their local communities and with a track record of success, to deliver tailored and personalised support that responds to the needs of local unemployed people. The project invites Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises and other relevant organisations to apply for smaller funding amounts. The Harleston Jobs Club is one of the organisations which receives funding from the project to help jobseekers address a range of subjects including writing CVs and applications, interview techniques, business start-ups and more. With the funding received from LIFT Jobs, the club will now be able to extend their services to the surrounding areas to reach more jobseekers, and especially those who are rurally isolated. LIFT Jobs is part of a triage of projects and offers the opportunity to link into the ESF funded LIFT Trials and LIFT Skills projects which offer support that complements LIFT Jobs.

Humber Learning Consortium	£1.5 million ESF	Humber
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**Humber Learning Consortium** manage an ESF Community Grants Programme, which distributes small grants in the Humber. The aim of the fund is to help unemployed people progress towards employment through access to learning and training opportunities.

One such organisation is R-evolution in Hull, which runs an ESF project that focuses on bicycle maintenance skills for ex-offenders and people with mental health issues.

Through life coaching, increasing employability skills and work opportunities the project aims to reduce re-offending and to help those experiencing mental health problems. This programme is the first step towards becoming rehabilitated by increasing self-esteem and developing basic work-based skills such as communication and teamwork. One project participant, Neil, said that the project had “given [him his] life back” after suffering with mental health issues for years.



## Upskilling unemployed people

Sometimes a person's barrier to work is a lack of relevant skills for the workplace. For example, they might lack digital skills, basic English and Maths qualifications or more industry-specific skills needed for the local area. The following three projects are providing this type of support and removing barriers to employment faced by people.

Skills Support for the Unemployed    £613,000 ESF    Leicester and Leicestershire

### Skills Support for the Unemployed projects

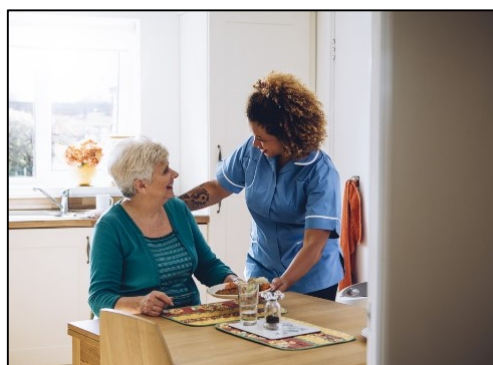
have run across the country. This project supports unemployed people over the age of 16 with education and training that enables them to enter sustained employment. Using a tailored package of, confidence building, work experience and skills training, the project is helping it's participants to move towards and into employment across local key sectors including railway, construction, administration



and hospitality. The project has already enabled 657 qualifications to be achieved by participants, which equates to a 95.2% achievement rate. Of the participants that have successfully progressed as a result of the project, 84% have sustained and built on their progress.

Skills Support for the Unemployed    £2 million ESF    Sheffield City Region

**Skills Support for the Unemployed** has supported unemployed and newly redundant individuals back into employment. The project addressed the needs of the local labour market by encouraging training in the local priority areas such as healthcare, logistics and manufacturing. Participants benefited from support with job applications and interviews, and training opportunities to develop their skills.



Include IT Mersey

£1.6 million ESF & BBO

Liverpool City Region

**Include IT Mersey** provides targeted, personalised digital skills development and employment support to digitally excluded, unemployed and economically inactive residents of the Liverpool City Region. This support aims to improve basic ICT and online skills, leading to increased confidence and improved access to digital technologies. It also seeks to remove barriers to employment and inclusion linked to a lack of digital skills. The project has a targeted focus on those aged 45+ and others for whom digital inclusion is a key barrier to progression.

**Include-IT Mersey**

Do you know a Merseyside or Halton resident aged 30+ and out of work? Include-IT Mersey can help!

Include-IT Mersey offers FREE digital skills training to residents across Merseyside & Halton. Since the project began last year, Include-IT Mersey has helped hundreds of people like you!

- 500 people have improved their IT skills
- Over 10 people have found work and 80 others have started to look for jobs
- 150 have moved into further training

For full details of the include-IT Mersey programme, please contact one of the providers in our area (see right).

Alternatively, if you are interested in finding out more, please come along to one of our Digital Drop-Ins (see right).

Include-IT Mersey is proudly funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and Big Lottery Fund as part of the £1.25 billion Investing Better Opportunities programme.

**Digital Drop-Ins**  
Come along to one of our Digital Drop-Ins to find out more information about the program and meet our Digital Champions volunteer!

<b>BIRKENHEAD</b> Friday 24th September Rock Ferry Library Tuesday 19th September Birkenhead Central Library Call Age 50+ Mersey on 0151 853 8000	<b>HALTOWOOD</b> Call 0151 486 4955	<b>BURTON</b> Monday 20th September Acorn Learning Learning Centre Call Halton Borough Council on 0151 511 7788
<b>CROXTON &amp; SCROBE GREEN</b> Call 0151 449 5614	<b>HOXTON</b> Call WEA on 0151 243 5340	<b>SEFTON</b> Call 0151 525 6440
<b>EVESHAM &amp; DUNFORD</b> Call 0151 282 2678	<b>ROBINSON</b> Tuesday 20th October Community Learning Centre Call Coseley College on 0746228242	<b>STOCKBRIDGE VILLAGE</b> Call the Help Project on 0151 461 5555
<b>WARRINGTON &amp; DUNFORD</b> Call 0151 282 2678	<b>WIDNES</b> Tuesday 20th September Kingstone Learning Centre Call Halton Borough Council on 0151 511 7788	

**Digital Drop-Ins**  
Come along to one of our Digital Drop-Ins to find out more information about the program and meet our Digital Champions volunteer!

<b>Monday 12pm-3pm</b> Widnes Library	<b>Monday 12pm-3pm</b> The Millman (Dunfords) Library
<b>Wednesday 10am-12pm</b> St Paul's Church, Dunfords	<b>Thursday 10am-12pm</b> Reach at Parklands Library, Speke
<b>Wednesday 12pm</b> Tomson's Welfare Workshop	<b>Thursday 2-4pm</b> The Millman (Dunfords) Library

Include-IT Mersey is a program jointly funded by Merseyside Region (ESF) and Big Lottery Fund. © 2018. Company limited by guarantee no. 1032801.

## Upskilling the Workforce

Across England ESF projects are providing support to upskill existing employees. The aim of this support is to increase the knowledge and capabilities of the workforce, which encourages business growth. The following projects are working with business to assess skills gaps and to offer training solutions to their staff.

Go>Grow

£21.4 million ESF

North East

Gateshead College delivers funded training to North East based Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) through their **Go>Grow** project. The training offer helps to develop the workforce and grow the SME's businesses, in turn supporting local growth. Go>Grow funding is also available to provide people with skills to find work and for the self-employed.



To deliver the Go>Grow project, a delivery partnership comprising 30 partners and 20 College departments has been built. This has enabled the project to provide a menu of training and support covering all sectors. In 2018 many businesses have benefited, including: a self-employed plumber securing additional work and growing his business after completing a business booster course; and an automotive firm securing training for their staff to repair and restore electric and hybrid vehicles, allowing their business to grow in this emerging sector.

Skills Hub

£1.5 million ESF

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

The **Skills Hub** aims to raise business productivity by helping businesses to work smarter and find the right training and skills development opportunities for their team. Through an independent skills review, skills gaps are defined and cost-effective development solutions to boost efficiency and improve staff engagement are identified. The project is also aiming to grow capacity within the business community through embedding a culture of skills investment and development.



Employee Support in Skills

£5.7 million ESF

Hertfordshire

**Employee Support in Skills** focuses on developing the local workforce by upskilling staff in SMEs. The project supported ASTS Rail Ltd in upskilling 184 of their staff by providing on-the-job training which will enable them to progress in the rail industry. Support was delivered to accommodate various working patterns. This has enabled employees who undertake weekend shifts, such as trackmen to undertake fully funded learning they would otherwise not have had the opportunity to undertake. Without the project, such development activities would need to have been self-funded.



Skills Support for the Workforce

£9 million ESF

Greater Lincolnshire

**Skills Support for the Workforce** gives companies, including SMEs and sole traders, the opportunity to offer their employees professional training across a range of skills and sectors. The training aims to upskill employees and improve productivity to create business growth. Each employer receives a bespoke training programme, taking into account what works for them and their business in terms of training locations and timings. The courses offer wide-ranging employability skills sought by employers, as well as specific courses across six priority sectors: Agri-Food, Health and Care, Manufacturing, Visitor Economy, Ports and Logistics, and Low Carbon.



Higher Level Skills Match

£1.3 million ESF

Birmingham and Solihull

**Higher Level Skills Match** tackles the skills gaps faced by SMEs in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area. An Account Manager from one of the partner universities (Birmingham City University, Aston University and Newman University) visits a business to learn about their needs and any gaps in talent which they may have. The project works across all sectors, however support targets five priority growth sectors: Low Carbon & Environmental Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, Life and Health Sciences, Digital & Creative Industries and Business, Professional & Financial Services.



Apprenticeship Service	£2.5 million ESF	Heart of the South West
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The **Heart of the South West Apprenticeship Service** provides support for people in employment to undertake an apprenticeship. The service they provide enhances employees' skills and helps them continue on to higher level qualifications and apprenticeships, and ultimately take on more responsibility, helping businesses to grow. A Business Adviser will work with the business to provide a bespoke training programme relevant to business needs. Employees can then benefit from a wide variety of recognised accredited qualifications and bespoke training courses like leadership and management, technical skills training and higher level skills.

The Edge	£8.5 million ESF	Cumbria
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**The EDGE** supports workforce development within Cumbrian SME's with the objective of growing the local economy. A main focus is identifying skills gaps for businesses and then sourcing and funding appropriate training for their staff.

One business that has benefitted from the funding is Cartmel Grange Nursing Home, which provides 24 hour nursing and dementia care for the elderly across South Cumbria. Over the last two years the nursing home has been making improvements to its quality service by providing external upskilling opportunities for its staff. In partnership with Furness College, employees are encouraged to expand their existing knowledge base by attaining further qualifications in a variety of relevant subjects, including dementia care, safeguarding, infection control, end-of-life care, nutrition and health. The 12-week course takes the form of distance learning, enabling staff to fit their studies around their shifts and home life. This has improved motivation across the team and increased staff retention, supporting effective care for the nursing home's residents.

## Further Information

 <p><b><u>European Social Fund</u></b></p> <p>The European Social Fund is one of the European Structural and Investment Funds. You can find more information on the <b>ESIF Website</b>.</p>	 <p><b><u>Europa</u></b></p> <p>The Europa website provides information on a wide range of European Union activities including <b>ESF</b>.</p>
 <p><b><u>Twitter</u></b></p> <p>Twitter is used by the Managing Authority to help communicate ESF opportunities and achievements. Follow us on Twitter: <b>@esif1420england</b></p>	 <p><b><u>LEP Network</u></b></p> <p>The <b>Local Enterprise Partnership</b> network helps provide information about ESF and the other national and ESI Funds at the local level.</p>
 <p><b>DWP</b></p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions acts as a Co-financing Organisation for projects that improve people's employability.</p>	 <p><b>ESFA</b></p> <p>The ESFA acts as a Co-financing Organisation for projects that help people improve their skills.</p>
 <p><b>HMPPS</b> HM Prison &amp; Probation Service</p> <p>HMPPS acts as a Co-financing Organisation for projects that help offenders and ex-offenders move towards and into the labour market.</p>	 <p><b>Big Lottery Fund</b></p> <p>Big Lottery Fund acts as a Co-financing Organisation for projects that tackle poverty, promote social inclusion and improve people's employability.</p>

### GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

The Greater London Authority is an Intermediate Body and a Co-Financing Organisation for ESIF projects in London.





**Department  
for Work &  
Pensions**



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