

Orkney Local Employability Partnership



Orkney Local
Employability Partnership
Annual Report
2022-2023

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Foreword

As Chair of the Orkney Local Employability Partnership (LEP), it is a great pleasure to present the Local Employability Partnership's Annual Report for 2022-2023, which outlines just some of the amazing achievements and work that partners have been involved in over this past year.

With the introduction of No One Left Behind (NOLB), Community Learning, Development and Employability (CLDE) took over responsibility for employability support within Orkney Islands Council in early 2020. Working closely with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), it was agreed to declutter the employability landscape and merge various groups including, the Positive Destinations Group, the Orkney Skills and Employability Strategic Group, and its Equality and Diversity Subgroup, into a more streamlined and effective group. The LEP was formed in December 2020 to ensure a coordinated and effective response to employability support requirements in Orkney through the No One Left Behind agenda.

The Partnership is focused on supporting the implementation of [No One Left Behind](#).

Since its inception, Orkney's LEP has established robust governance procedures, effective planning, monitoring and review systems and has developed clear and effective links to many local strategic plans, including the Community Learning and Development Plan, the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, and the Child Poverty Action Plan.

This Annual Report demonstrates that during April 2022 – March 2023, although a relatively new partnership the group has achieved an amazing amount. It has co-ordinated all age employability provision and support and works effectively to ensure the needs of those targeted under NOLB are met. Key to this success has been the relentless focus on using person centred approaches to support people to overcome challenges, fulfil their potential and achieve positive outcomes.

As we continue to face economic challenges and a cost-of-living crisis, an additional factor which restricts the progress of the LEP is the lack of core funding and consistently late notification and allocation of annual grant funding from the Scottish Government. Despite these significant challenges it is the determined focus of our LEP partners to continue the great work we have started by supporting both employers and individuals to make positive changes and boost the local economy.

It is a privilege to be part of such a genuine and committed partnership, and I look forward to continuing the great work over the next 12 months.

Kerry Spence, Service Manager Community Learning, Development and Employability

Chair of Orkney Local Employability Partnership

The Local Employability Partnership

Our Vision

- Build on and embed the strengths and effectiveness of the LEP and existing local and national services, to better align funding and improve integration of employability services with wider support services to ensure that services are designed and delivered around the needs and aspirations of the individuals we work with and our local communities.
- Establish, promote and increase awareness of the local employability services/provision and co-ordinated information sharing and action between strategic and delivery partners to meet the needs of the individuals we work with and local communities.
- Improve employment/career opportunities and outcomes for individuals we work with, challenging work-based inequalities, through equal access to education, training, learning and fair work, reducing unemployment and inactivity rates and increasing the skills of the workforce within the Orkney Islands Council area.
- Increase income from employment for (low income) parents. This is one of the three key drivers of Child Poverty and one that the Orkney LEP will lead on.

Aims and Objectives

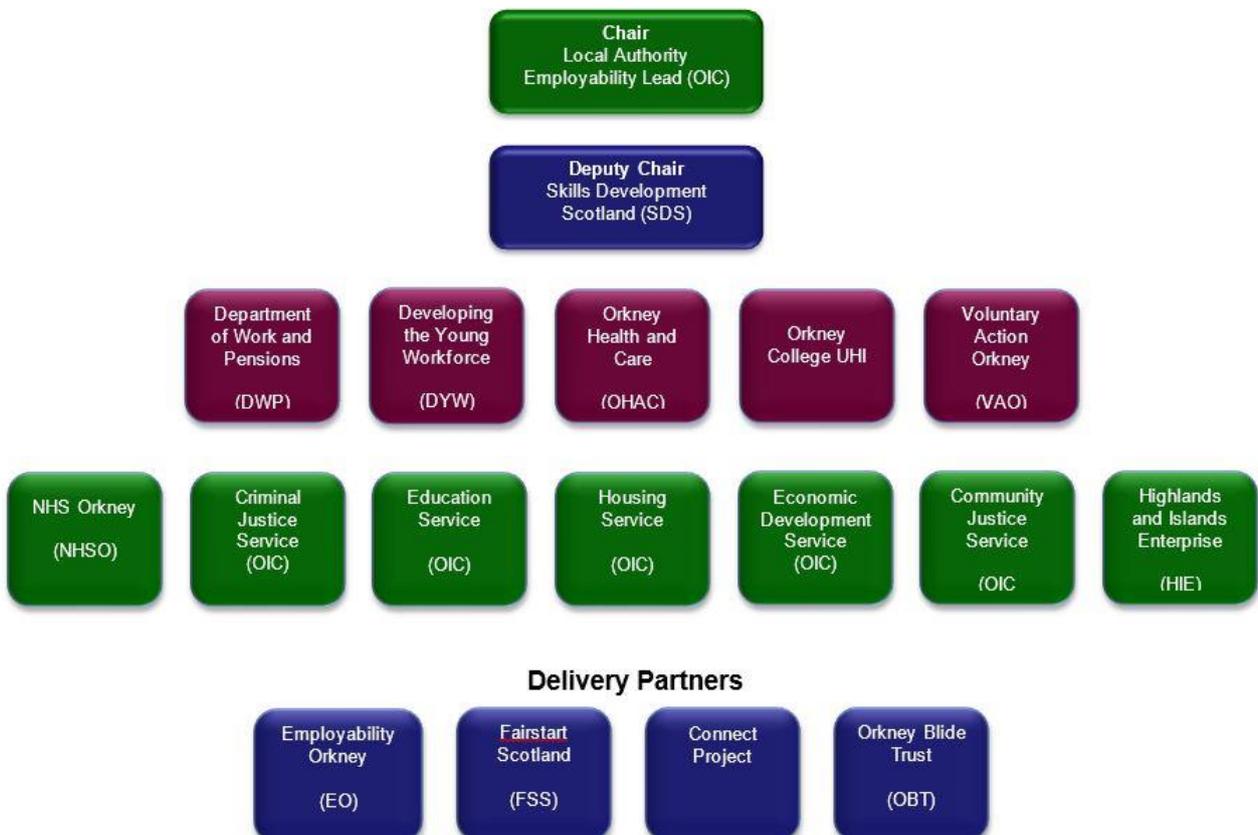
The Orkney LEP will plan, coordinate, and deliver employability provision which supports individuals to progress towards fair and sustainable employment that suits their needs and that of the local community. Employability services are pivotal to avoiding the widening of social and economic inequalities and the LEP will work collaboratively by supporting those who are most vulnerable (please see priority groups) and ensuring that the right support is put into place at the right time for those who rely on 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 those using our services.

Objectives

- To drive forward and implement the shared ambitions and actions of No One Left Behind and the response to COVID-19 and Brexit to ensure the right support is available in the right way at the right time.
- To use the [Scottish Approach to Service Design](#) to co-produce an all-age employability support service that is person-centred, more joined up, flexible and responsive to individual needs.
- To involve service users throughout the process.
- To co-ordinate information-sharing and action between strategic and delivery partners.
- To utilise labour market statistics and available data to inform decisions, identify priorities and support an effective partnership response.
- To co-ordinate resources to improve opportunities and outcomes.
- To align as appropriate with regional and national approaches.
- To align the delivery of various NOLB workstreams.
- To support and engage employers in the development of employment provision and support.

Structure



In 2022 the LEP produced and published the Local Employability Partnership No One Left Behind Operational Delivery Plan 2022-2025 which set out our ambitious targets working towards the vision, aims and objectives of the partnership. The full plan can be accessed by clicking on the following link - [Orkney Employability Partnership](#).

Budget 2022-23

At the time of writing this report it is important to highlight that despite planning, writing, working towards and reporting on a three-year delivery plan, NOLB funding is allocated on an annual basis. The amount allocated in 2022-23 was £102,289 less than 2021-22. In addition, the funding remains ringfenced which exacerbates the challenges associated with effective provision planning and service delivery across the LEP.

Investment	National Allocation 2022-23	OIC Allocation 2022-23
No One Left Behind	£15.64 million	£54,000
Parent Employability Support	£8.79 million	£82,000
Long Term Unemployed	£20 million	£50,000
Young Persons Guarantee	£15 million	£59,000
Total	£59.43 million	£245,000

Progress

In 2022-23 OIC Community Learning Development and Employability (CLDE) employed staffing below through NOLB funding.

- 1 X 1.0 FTE Employability Team Manager
- 1 X 0.68 FTE Employability Keyworker
- 1 X 0.5 FTE Youth and Family Support Worker
- 1 X 0.68 FTE Administration Assistant
- 1 X 1.0 FTE Community Learning Officer (April – July)

The CLD Employability team **worked with 91 individuals** during this reporting period across the various strands of NOLB through a range of one to one and group work support.

Each person was supported to co-produce a holistic Individual Development Plan detailing personal goals, aspirations and targets to make positive steps towards future positive progressions to training, education and sustainable and fair work.

Regular review sessions with a designated Employability Keyworkers ensures effective monitoring and reviewing of progress towards these and the opportunity to reflect on future support requirements and to gather feedback about support and provisions. This allows Employability Keyworkers to explore good practice and also areas for improvement for future service delivery.

In addition to the one-to-one support, the CLDE Employability team planned, resourced and delivered a variety of group work sessions to meet the needs of the individuals and communities we work with.

Weekly Youth Work sessions delivered with WhoCares? Scotland and The Blide Trust for Care Experienced young people and friends. These included a range of session to support the development of confidence, self-esteem, and transferable skills to support positive transitions towards learning, training and employment. The group is continually well attended with up to 10 young people attending each week.

Five young people have gained employment during 2022-23 and **one young person has applied to study at Orkney College.**

In addition, **two young people have completed studies at night-time** in addition to their employment.

A weekly young parents' group has been established and is delivered in partnership with CLDE Youth Services. This group has **four parents** who regularly attend along with **four children**. Sessions are co-designed with parents and cover a range of sessions to promote health and wellbeing, getting involved with the local community and developing knowledge, skills and networks to make informed future choices and progress towards employment.

Weekly driving theory sessions in collaboration with a local driving instructor have enabled five individuals to work toward their driving theory test. **Four individuals** have sat their test and **three have passed**. In addition, funding has been allocated to support attendees to gain practical lessons.

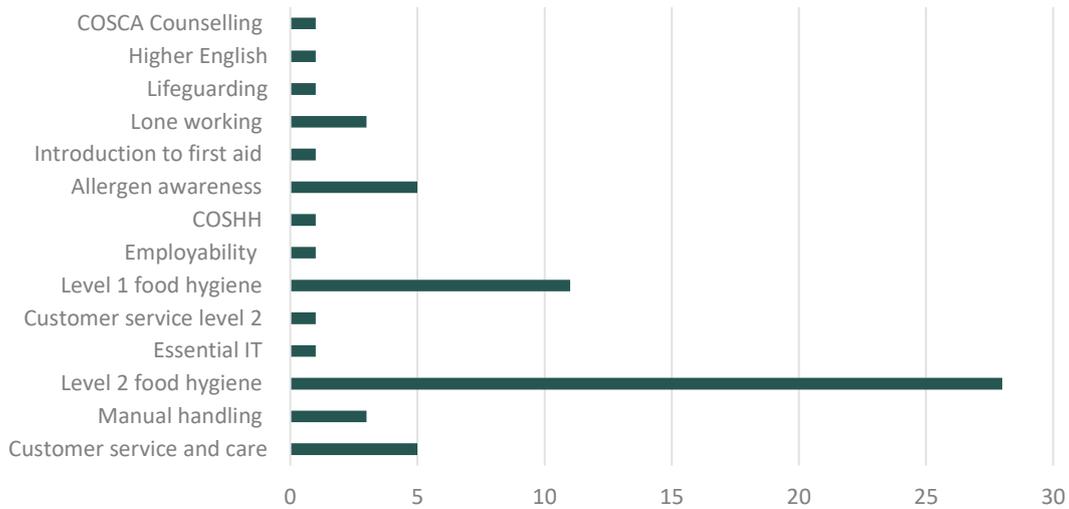
Four young people have received lessons and **one individual has passed their practical test**.

The CLDE Employability team worked with the local Homestart service delivering a programme for parents accessing the service. This has included parents planning and making lower cost healthy meals and **four parents have gained their Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate**. Four parents engaged with Keyworkers out with the group sessions to look at more focused employability support and job search.

A weekly employability drop-in session was established at The Blide Trust allowing members access to an Employability Keyworker. The Employability Keyworker was available to support individuals to gain information, advice and practical support on a range of topics including local training opportunities, CVs, applying for jobs and interview preparation. In addition, the Employability Keyworker worked with staff and members to plan and deliver a bespoke Food Hygiene course accredited through the Digital college resulting in **four individuals completing and passing their level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate**.

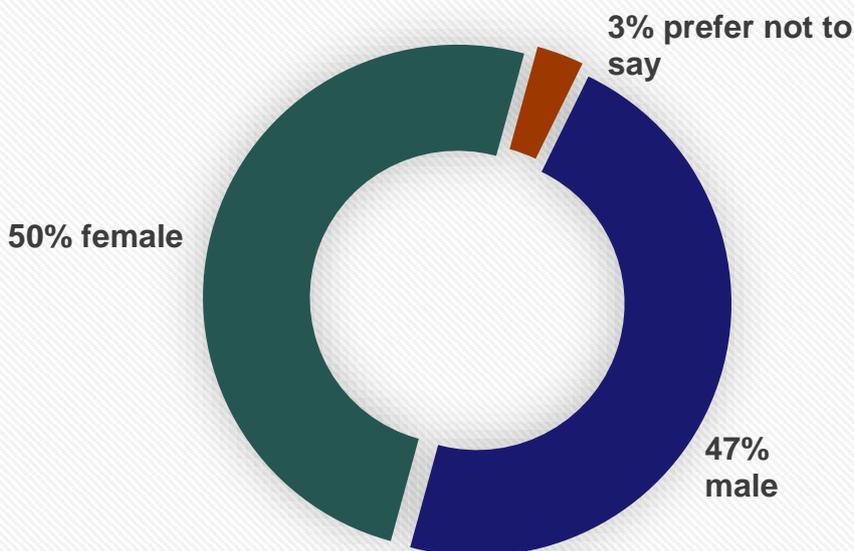
In 2022-23, **36 individuals** were supported by the CLDE Employability team to work towards and gain a variety of accredited qualifications, resulting in a total of **63 accredited courses being achieved**. Topics included Food Hygiene, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, Lifeguarding, COSCA Counselling Skills, Customer Care, Allergen Awareness, Manual Handling and Higher English.

Participation numbers by course

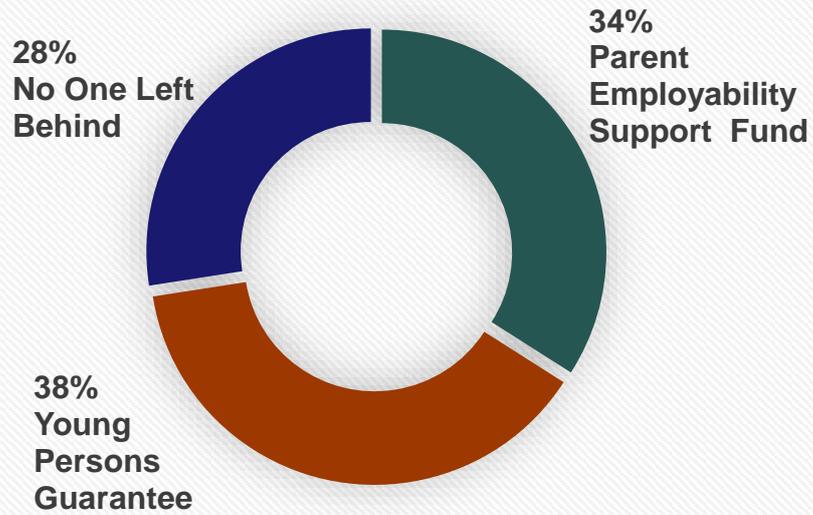


Forty-two individuals progressed from the CLDE Employability service and **49 continue to access support**. Of those who progressed, **39 progressed to employment/self-employment**. Two of these opportunities were Modern Apprenticeship opportunities for young people. This equates to a **92% positive progression rate**.

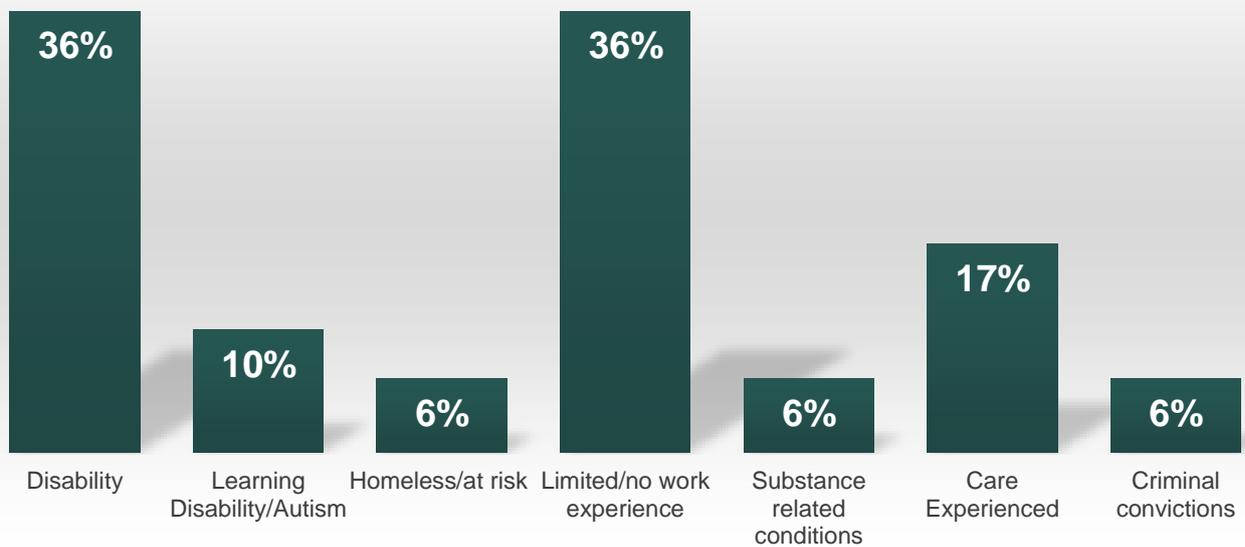
Participation by Gender



Programme Breakdown by funding



Identified barriers to progression



Partnership Work

In addition to the independent work of the CLDE Employability team, there has been a variety of innovative partnership projects throughout the year to support both the strategic direction of the LEP and provision planning and delivery for individuals identified under NOLB.

Pathway Planning Meetings and Co-ordination

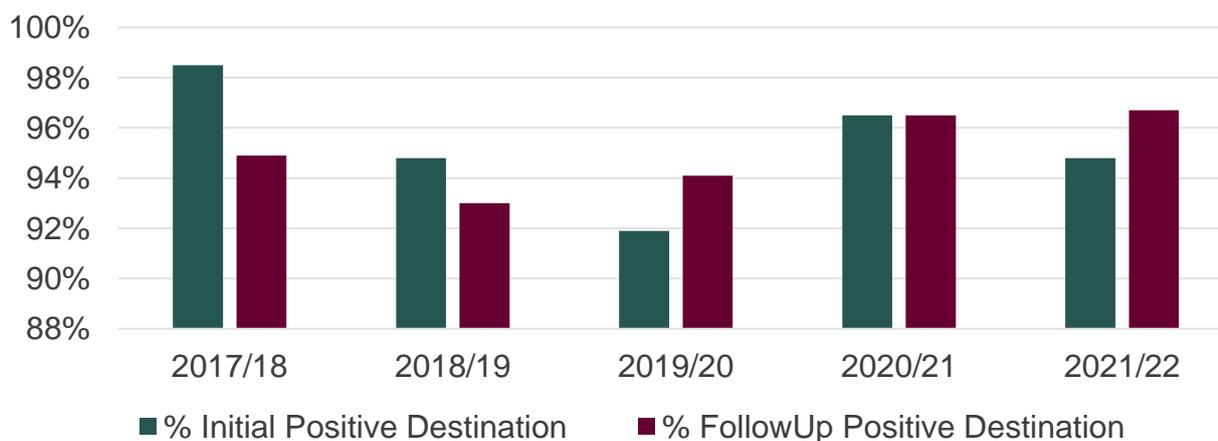
Pathway planning was implemented in 2020/2021. It is a series of meetings (held termly or when required), pulling key partners together to identify those young people that need support through their transitions to post-school destinations. It is a supportive tool to plan and review the needs of our young people. Partners can identify the most appropriate lead to support each young person through their transition from school.

It is also an opportunity to work with young people to support them to make informed autonomous decisions about their future and ensure they have the right support at the right time to achieve their goals and aspirations.

Objective:

- To identify those most at risk of not entering a positive destination and ensure that they have the support to make the right decisions for themselves.
- It will ensure that partners work together in a planned and responsive way to ensure that no one is left behind.
- It also enables the LEP to ensure that the employability provision in Orkney meets the needs of the young people who face difficulty in securing and sustaining a positive destination.

% Initial Positive Destinations, by Year



In 2021/22 Orkney has **increased by 1.9%** since the initial leaver destinations and we now have **96.7% of pupils in a positive destination**. This is 3.3% above the Scottish figures of 93.5%.

It is evident with the data available that the introduction of Pathway Planning meetings has been positive with an increase of young people sustaining positive destinations once they have left school.

School Leavers Programme

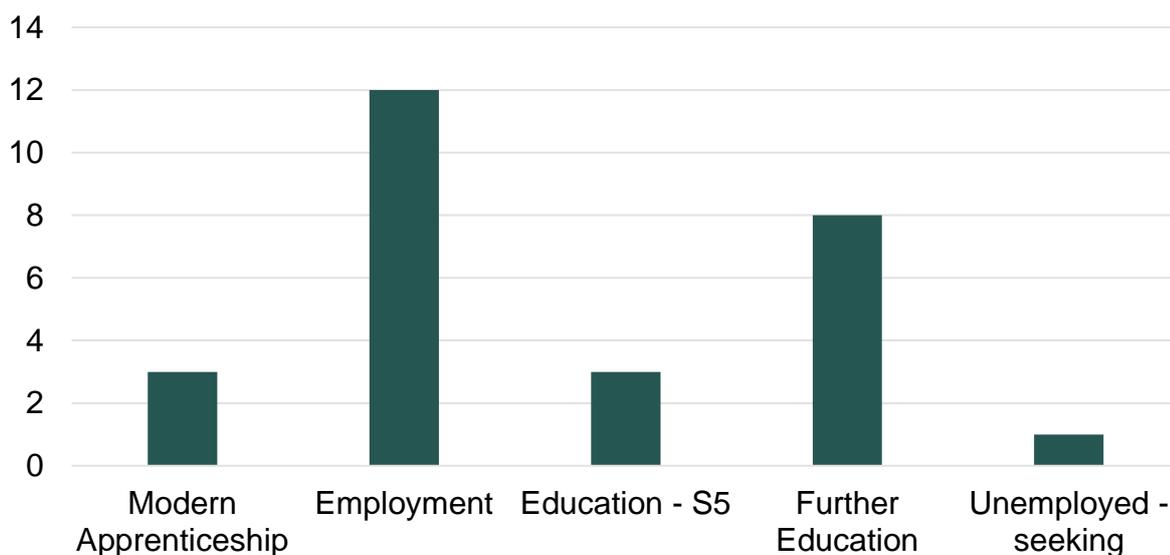
'Planning for the Future' is a school leavers' programme which was developed and is delivered in partnership by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Orkney. It is aimed at pupils who will be leaving school at the end of the academic year and need support to take their next step. Held in February with sessions in Kirkwall and Stromness, it is delivered as a two-day, intensive programme. **This year a total of 27 pupils attended.**

The programme helps young people to plan what they want to do when they leave school and develop the skills they need to write a CV, apply for a job, complete an application form and prepare for a job or college interview.

The programme concludes with mock interviews, where pupils are given the chance to speak to local employers about their skills and answer questions which may come up in an interview. Where possible, pupils are matched to be interviewed by an employer from a business or sector they are interested in working in.

Following this year's mock interviews, one pupil was offered a work placement with one of the employers, with the view to it leading to an apprenticeship. A second employer invited another pupil in for an informal discussion, which resulted in them being offered a job and an apprenticeship.

Current Status



School Leaver Programme - 2022/23

YPG transition programme (Education, CLDE, SDS, DYW)

In early 2023 it was identified through a Pathway Planning meeting with Kirkwall Grammar School that a number of young people may struggle to achieve a positive post 16 transition and needed some additional support to gain confidence, skills and knowledge to do this. Working collaboratively with the school, SDS and DYW Orkney, the CLDE Employability team planned and delivered an eight-week youth work intervention programme.

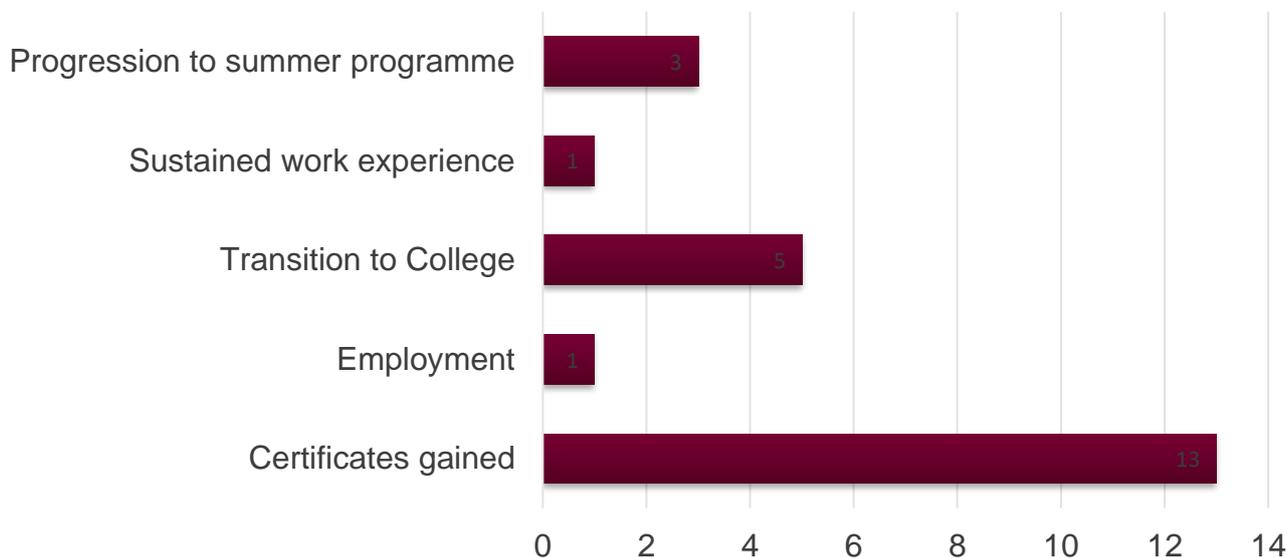
The programme was put together to include a variety of activities, sessions and opportunities for young people to get involved with, which would support the development of the soft skills such as teamwork, reliability, timekeeping, communication skills, budgeting, problem solving and transferable employability skills.

Ten young people were referred to the group, and **six attended regularly** over the programme.

The programme ran weekly from the Youth Café and was co-designed with the young people who attended. Sessions included Confidence to Cook, the I-Lead Money programme which focuses on personal finances and money management, Dynamic Youth Awards, Food Hygiene certificate and targeted careers and employability support delivered by SDS and DYW Orkney.

All young people who attended the programme identified that they had gained confidence, skills, certificates and networks that can support them in their future transitions.

Outcomes



As part of the programme young people were introduced to staff from SDS and DYW Orkney. From these conversations and the programme evaluation, it was identified by staff and the young people that a bespoke 'Planning for the Future' programme would be beneficial for the group and other individuals out with compulsory education. This will be delivered April–June 2023.

Income Maximisation - Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau, (CAB)

During 2022-23, £30,000 was procured to Orkney CAB to provide income maximisation, welfare rights and debt advice and support to individuals identified under NOLB. The LEP agreed this would provide holistic, wrap around support for individuals and families in low-income households to increase household income and support fair and just progressions towards learning, training and sustainable employment. It would also increase local knowledge of the range of local support for individuals looking to progress towards employment.

During 2022-23 **191 individuals were supported** by CAB in identified priority groups, **resulting in client financial gain of £235,107.05** made up of previously unclaimed benefit entitlements. Each person also received information on and support to access employability services to meet their needs.

Case Study:

A client had been struggling financially due to ill health and had found herself in financial difficulty. She had recently received a Summary Warrant for Council Tax arrears and was very upset about this, as she had always tried her best to stay out of debt.

As the client's health problems were significantly affecting her ability to carry out everyday tasks, she was assisted to apply for Personal Independence Payments. Her application was successful, and she received a backdate of £11,000. This enabled the client to pay her Council Tax arrears in full, and also to clear some other small debts she had accrued.

Client is now debt free and is £126.35 better off each week, which has significantly improved her quality of life. The client received information on local employability services and will access these to gain support if required.

The Hub – for learning, skills and work

After considerable collaborative planning, negotiating and resourcing over the previous financial year, a new collective working space was opened in Kirkwall.

The Hub – for Learning, Skills and Work – will provide a key base in Orkney to further enhance partnership working to support local people into employment and other positive routes.





The space has been funded and designed jointly by SDS and the LEP to create an area where everyone feels welcome and can access any of the services provided by the range of employability partners working within the Orkney community.

The Hub officially opened on Tuesday 28 February 2023 with the official ribbon being cut by Jack Woods, a member of the Hub Subgroup.

The Hub Sub-group

Through initial conversations with the LEP about a collective working space it was identified that it would be imperative to have individuals involved who would potentially use and benefit from the space. For this reason, a sub-group of the LEP was established.

The Hub Sub-group is made up of individuals who use services across the LEP and are representative of various groups identified under NOLB. Members are from various parts of Orkney including from the ferry linked isles.

The group, of eight individuals, met weekly and worked with CLDE/SDS staff and various partners to plan, co-ordinate and deliver the official opening of The Hub – for Learning, Skills and Work. This included deciding the name of the space, working with graphic designers to produce the logo, working with a local artist to design exterior artwork, working with the OIC Comms team on the PR for the opening event, naming the rooms for the cloud booking system, inviting guests and preparing the space for the official opening.

The group worked effectively and efficiently together to meet the tight deadlines which resulted in a very successful official opening and the ongoing development of the space. All the individuals involved were able to articulate the importance of the group to them personally and also the confidence, skills and knowledge they had gained that would support them make future transitions.

“This opportunity has allowed me to develop skills for my CV. I particularly like working with the comms team and speaking to a journalist.”

“I have developed my decision-making skills and have liked to have the opportunity to be listened to.”

“I have not really been part of the community before, and I felt on the outside. Being included in the group and not feeling like an ‘outcast’ feels unusual/unfamiliar to me.”

Of the eight original members of the Subgroup, **five have progressed to employment and one continues with school and has a sustained work experience placement.**



Employability Rights Campaign

Feedback from various partners highlighted that a significant number of our target groups did not have a clear idea of what employment rights they have when they are either entering or returning to the workplace.

Identified as an important step to empowering individuals, the LEP produced a number of resources to help raise awareness of some of the main employment rights. These included pay, annual leave, sick pay, flexible working, maternity and paternity, discrimination, health and safety and ending employment.

The resources consisted of a short booklet guide to employment rights outlining some of the main employment rights. These booklets are handed out to individuals at careers events, drop-in sessions and other in-person venues and events. A series of posters highlighting the individual rights were produced and distributed to venues throughout Orkney including GP surgeries, ferry and travel centre waiting rooms, local shops, schools and community halls. Employers were also invited to request poster packs to display in their own premises.

Larger posters highlighting all of the main employment rights were produced and displayed in a variety of venues including the Council Customer Services area and libraries.

Recognising that employment rights can be quite complex and that there is often a need for further explanation and guidance on how to access these rights, the booklets and posters signposted readers to further information hosted on the DYW Orkney website. The webpage has additional information and resources in a variety of formats including short videos, links to annual leave calculators, key steps on how to request specific rights and how to find further support from trusted organisations such as ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service).

Did you know?

- You must be paid enough**: Your pay must meet minimum wage and be paid on time.
- You must receive a pay slip**: You must be given a pay slip every time you are paid.
- You are entitled to time off for holidays**: If you work for a full year you are entitled to 5.6 weeks of holiday.
- You should receive statutory sick pay**: If you are off work because of illness you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay.
- You can request to work flexibly**: If you have worked full-time for at least one year you can ask for flexible working.
- There are Statutory Maternity and Paternity rights**: Employees have the right to take time off work for maternity and paternity.
- You must not be discriminated against**: This is when you are treated differently because of your race, religion, sex, age, disability, pregnancy or maternity, or sexual orientation.
- Health and Safety laws apply to your working environment**: Employers must provide a safe working environment.
- There is protection against unfair dismissal**: Employees must give a minimum of one year's notice.
- There are minimum notice periods**: Employees must give notice before leaving their job.
- There is Statutory Redundancy pay**: If you are made redundant you may be entitled to redundancy pay.

For more information on your employment rights, visit the link below or scan here

www.dyworkney.co.uk/employment-rights

Orkney Local Employability Partnership

This information has been developed by Orkney's Local Employability Partnership.

Click on the following link to take a look <https://www.dyworkney.co.uk/employment-rights.html>

SCMA Childminding Project

Through working with parents and service providers it was identified that one of the biggest barriers to progressing to or within employment for parents was the lack of affordable childcare provision across Orkney. During 2022-23 the CLDE Employability team have worked in partnership with the Scottish Childminding Association, Business Gateway, the Care Inspectorate and local training providers to plan, coordinate and deliver a bespoke Childminding course for local parents and individuals identified under NOLB. The course was delivered online and covered a range of topics including business set up, how to register with the Care Inspectorate, Practical Child-minding, applying for start-up grants and taking a professional approach. The intention of the programme was twofold, upskilling individuals and increasing local childcare provision.

Running concurrently with the SCMA online course all participants also completed an accredited Paediatric First Aid Course and an Elementary Food Hygiene course with local providers, which supported them to register with the Care Inspectorate and progress towards becoming established child minders in the local community.

Of the **10 individuals who signed up** for the course, **six completed all aspects and are now registered childminders** across the local authority.

Two participants had to pause their study, however, intend to complete the program in the next round delivered through SCMA.

Employer Engagement and Support

Careers Fairs

The second Orkney Careers Fair was held in the Pickaquoy Centre in September. This event is jointly hosted by DYW Orkney and the SDS Orkney team.

The event was **attended by over 900 young people and adults**, including over 700 S3-S6 pupils from Stromness Academy, Kirkwall Grammar School, Stronsay, Sanday and Westray Junior High Schools. Those attending were able to access a wide variety of careers, education and training information, all geared to helping them understand the options available to them locally and further afield.

A **total of 60 exhibitors**, including local employers, education and training providers and local support services were on hand to speak to those visiting the event. Employers spoke about the different careers and jobs available in their sector and gave advice about appropriate training or education routes into these careers.

They were also able to speak to young people more generally about the skills they look for in their employees and help young people learn more about the opportunities available with their organisation including work placements, apprenticeships, or other work-based learning opportunities.



After speaking to employers, those visiting the event were then able to speak to training and further and higher education providers and get tailored advice about the different vocational or academic courses they offered which may suit a career in a particular sector.

Support services were on hand to speak about how they can help individuals take the next step on their career journey.

The event supported everyone in identifying their next steps and helped them choose the right pathway to suit their individual skills and aspirations. More information about the exhibitors can be found [here](#).

Feedback from young people who attended the event highlighted that it was informative, it enabled them to learn more about the options available to them and was helpful in them identifying a future career.

Following the event, Liam McArthur MSP, submitted a Parliamentary motion recognising the success of the event and the contribution of all of the exhibitors, local schools and teams at DYW Orkney and SDS Orkney.



Work Experience

As part of their role, DYW School Co-ordinators work with school senior management teams, guidance staff, curriculum support staff, Careers Advisers and pupils to identify and organise appropriate work placements. This can be a week-long placement, as is undertaken by the Junior High Schools, or a half-day or full-day placement over a longer period of time.

Throughout 2022/23, 75 pupils undertook a work placement, enabling them to develop transferrable and practical skills, raise career awareness and increase confidence.

Some of the positive outcomes include:

- A pupil who was not engaging with school undertook a work placement in a local hotel. This helped them to identify the career they wanted to pursue, leading to them applying to college to undertake hospitality courses and securing a permanent role with the hotel.
- A young person interested in joining the Navy undertook a placement with a local ferry firm, one afternoon a week for five weeks. The placement was extended over the summer holidays with the employer looking into taking the young person on as a trainee when they left school. The employer also recommended courses the pupil could take to enable them to work on different sized vessels.
- A pupil who was interested in a career in the renewables sector was offered a week-long placement in a Laboratory. The employer developed a comprehensive programme to enable them to experience different aspects of the work. They also provided a detailed report at the end of the placement which was beneficial when the young person applied to university. They were also offered a placement over the summer holidays to help them develop more industry experience.
- A pupil with additional support needs undertook a supported placement with a local plant nursery. They were initially supported by a Learning Support Assistant (LSA), however they did so well on placement that when it was extended, it was felt the pupil could continue without support from the LSA. As a reflection on how well they had done, the pupil was invited to work with the team in the preparations for the planting of the 'Royal Rowan' with the Lord-Lieutenant as part of the Queen's Canopy.

The following are quotes from Junior High School pupils after their work placement:

“I really enjoyed the entire week of work experience; it was such a good opportunity to get more experience in a work environment and stay in the hostel for the week. I would recommend work experience to anyone who has the opportunity to go, and to not worry because everyone had really been so nice and easy to ask questions/talk to. Staff were so welcoming and friendly.”

“I felt like my communication skills improved throughout the week and the trip helped give me a taster of the working world. All the workers made me feel at home, and it was a very fun experience.”

A local employer who has offered work placements this year said:

“We have had a number of young people for work placements in both our Engineering test facility and Marine Laboratory. These have all been highly successful, with both our staff and the young people getting a lot out of their visits. I think that our staff were quite surprised by how much mutual benefit there is in offering these placements to school pupils and are very impressed by how they develop over the course of their time with us.”

Sector Specific session in schools

DYW School Co-ordinators have also developed a number of sector specific inputs in the local schools. Over the last academic year some of the sessions include:

- **Lunch with an Employer** – A series of lunchtime speakers at Stromness Academy, giving pupils the chance to access careers information directly from employers. Held every two weeks, Lunch with an Employer lets pupils hear from local employers about the job opportunities available with the businesses, discover some of the pathways into



careers and also learn about the subjects they should study in school or skills they may need to work in the business. During academic year 2022/23, **10 employers have delivered Lunch with an Employer session, attended by 81 young people.** Read more [here](#).

- **Solihull Approach for Young People** – This six-week course was delivered in partnership with the OICs Early Years Team and was offered as an alternative to work placements for pupils interested in working in early years, teaching or midwifery. This course gave an insight into early child development and looked at how babies and teenagers' brains develop, how relationships are built between child and adult and the importance of play as a tool for learning.

All who attended achieved a certificate and knowledge they can use in a college, university or job interview. Ten pupils from Kirkwall Grammar School completed the course. Read more [here](#).



- **Construction Insight** - Pupils at Kirkwall Grammar School who are interested in a career in construction were given an insight into the sector through talks and site visits. Pupils also had a chance to speak to CITB about apprenticeships, while Kirkwall and Stromness Academy pupils who were interested in becoming an Electrician were supported to apply and sit their pre-employment assessment with SECTT. Read more [here](#).



- **Careers Week** - This is an annual event held in early February at Stromness Academy. It was developed to help pupils in S3 who are making their subject choices for fourth year, which can influence where they end up after school. Activities developed include talks from local business people, workplace visits and activities to help them develop transferrable skills. The week concludes with a

careers fair in the school, giving pupils a chance to speak to employers and training providers about opportunities and pathways. In 2023, **61 S3 pupils had the opportunity to interact with over 20 different employers across the week.** Read more [here](#).

Employer Recruitment Incentive/ Long Term Unemployed funded positions

The NOLB Employer Recruitment Incentive helps people of all ages with the greatest barriers to employment get jobs and stay in jobs. It is funded by the Scottish Government and administered by local authorities.

Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs) play an important role in supporting those with the greatest barriers to employment, to enable them to obtain and remain in sustainable employment. The ERI has been developed to integrate and link fully with existing employability and skills programmes and is available to use as a contribution to the additional costs of recruiting and sustaining eligible individuals in employment.

Employers can apply for funding to help with the costs of recruiting and employing someone who fits the eligibility criteria for the fund. It can provide up to £6,000 for newly created jobs or vacancies. Employers who are successful in applying to the fund receive the money direct.

In 2022-23 **the CLDE Employability team negotiated and administered 12 Employer Recruitment Incentives across a range of private and third sector organisations in Orkney.** Six young people (16–24-year-old) were employed through opportunities and six people over 25 + were employed. **Two of the opportunities for young people were Modern Apprenticeships.**

Of the 12 people who were employed through the incentive **11 remain in fair and sustainable work (91%).**

In addition, the CLD Employability team continued to support 21 individuals/employers to sustain ERIs established in 2021-22. Of the 21 ERIs established in this period **17 individuals remained in sustainable and fair employment when the funding ended (80%).**

“My keyworker helped me during and after my transition of leaving school. She helped me make plans and take action on what I wanted to do I’m now currently doing an apprenticeship on a farm which I’m enjoying the challenges of and learning new things.”

“Without this type of funding [ERI], third sector organisations such as ours would find it very difficult to provide meaningful, paid opportunities to those individuals facing the greatest barriers to employment.

The application process is clear and straightforward and the support from OIC staff is invaluable. They talked us through the entire process prior to applying and were always on hand to answer any questions we had. They are also passionate about helping folk reach their full potential and this shows throughout the whole process”.

In response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government awarded funding to every local authority in March 2022 to support provision of paid work placements for those aged over 25 years, over 12 months unemployed and have additional barriers to employment. The funding was available to provide employment opportunities during the 2022-23 reporting period.

The CLD Employability team supported six Long Term Unemployment (LTU) opportunities within 2022-23. All local opportunities were provided by third sector organisations and included retail, warehousing, horticulture and elementary trades positions. **Five (83%) individuals competed their employment opportunity** through the scheme and **three individuals (50%) progressed to and remain in fair and sustainable work** when their LTU opportunity finished.

OIC Kickstart placements and Carved Roles

After working with HR colleagues and managers across OIC during 2021-22, eight internal Kickstart placements were established in various teams within OIC including Marine Services, Community Learning and Development, School Catering, Human Resources and the Chief Executive's Service. In March 2022 seven young people had been offered a six-month Kickstart position for 25 hours per week. Of the initial **seven young people who started their placements five (71%) completed these and four (57%) progressed to sustainable employment**, three within OIC.

Case Study:

"I started my Kickstart placement in March 2022 with the Employability Team under Community Learning, Development and Employability. When I started this placement, I had low confidence as well as low self-esteem due to mental health struggles. I was quiet and shy when I first started, not knowing how I would fit in or if I would even like the job. Through being supported in my role and joining in with running groups and programmes I have been able to come out of my shell and build on my confidence.

"Through this placement I have been given opportunities to improve skills such as teamwork, confidence, lone working, and communication skills, which has not only helped me in the workplace but has helped throughout my personal life.

"As well as this I had the opportunity alongside my work to complete a HNC in Childhood Practice. I was given support by my line manager as well as other colleagues to be able to finish the course with a great standard of work. I will be graduating in October.

"Because of the opportunities I have had by being part of a Kickstart placement, I have been able to make more of myself than I thought I would ever be able to. I am now a part of a close-knit supportive team that helps and supports me within and without of the workplace."

In June 2022 the Policy and Resources committee agreed to fund additional Kickstart placements for a broader group of recipients. Throughout 2022-23 the CLDE team worked with HR and internal team leader/ managers to establish an additional three employment opportunities. Unfortunately, due to the time taken to establish these and budget restraints only two additional placements have come to fruition, one position in the Communications Team and one position in the Corporate Administration Team. These will be delivered during 2023-24.

In addition to the internal Kickstart opportunities the CLDE team have worked with OHAC Employability Team, HR and the Business support team to establish a permanent post within the Caretaker team within OIC. This post was made possible through agreement of ring-fenced funding within the Strategic Performance and Business Directorate. Working in collaboration a 'carved role' has been established within the Caretaker team for an individual identified under NOLB. The role has been designed to meet the needs of the individual whilst meeting service demands and requirements.



Employer Engagement Event in Hub

This was the first event held in The Hub – for Learning Skills and Work. It was organised by the LEP to help support employers and managers from businesses across Orkney which was designed to help them with local recruitment and retention issues.

It had been identified that there are a variety of recruitment issues being faced by employers in the current landscape in Orkney, and they were finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff.

The event promoted the variety of ways in which businesses can broaden their approach and become an employer of choice; enabling them to access people that are looking for employment opportunities. The event also provided support to employers to enable them to retain staff they already have in their workforce. Representatives from partners across the LEP were in attendance to offer the wide variety of support available locally. **Fifteen representatives across businesses attended on the day** with many continuing to engage with partners and access the support available.

Challenges

As this report demonstrates there has been a huge collective effort across the partnership to progress towards and meet the actions and outcomes of the Local Employability Partnership Delivery Plan with numerous positive outcomes. However, it must be noted that there have been significant challenges at all levels of provision planning and service delivery due to how funding is administered through Scottish Government. Uncertainty around allocations, delays in receiving grant offer letters and the persistence of only receiving annual funding to deliver on a three-year plan have caused significant problems.

These challenges have included:

- The inability to plan in a timely and effective manner to meet the needs of the individuals and communities we work with.
- The inability to recruit or maintain staff.
- Challenges to procure sustainable provision/services needed within the community.

CLDE staff, wider OIC colleagues and LEP partners have consistently engaged with Scottish Government to raise these challenges and push for multi-annual funding allocations that are administered in an open and timely manner. Without this, the LEP will continue to have significant challenges to effective and efficient provision planning and service delivery.

Conclusion

We hope this report demonstrates the volume, breadth and partnership nature of the work being delivered across the LEP, as we strive to support individuals progress towards fair and sustainable employment that meets their needs and that of the local community. It must be noted that alone an individual partner would not be able to achieve the volume/breadth of work that has been achieved or associated outcomes. It is only by working creatively and collaboratively that this is possible. Although a relatively new partnership which continues to develop, there is recognition across the LEP and from wider stakeholders that the Orkney Local Employability Partnership demonstrates a huge commitment to working together at all levels to plan, fund, coordinate and deliver inclusive provision which support the individuals and communities we work with. This puts Orkney in a unique and strong position as we move forward and progress to meet the intended outcomes of our three-year Operational Plan.