



# The Covid 19 employment programme in D2N2

This call aims to improve progression into the labour market for adults through innovative and vocationally based skills activity leading to employment, including apprenticeships and traineeships, or further training/education opportunities.

This call is a key element of the D2N2 response to the Covid 19 pandemic and takes forward key recommendations contained in the D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy

Applications should deliver specific interventions that will engage economically inactive and unemployed people facing particular difficulties to build trust and confidence, acquire soft and basic skills and/or to enable them to progress into employment or wider employability programmes (mainstream or ESF).

## **Local Priorities:**

### **COVID-19 Response and Recovery element:**

Businesses and individuals in D2N2 have been severely affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. Applicants should consider how their project will contribute to the economic stabilisation and growth of local businesses by providing support and skills for individuals leading to sustainable employment. The coronavirus pandemic has had a massive impact on the issues faced by jobseekers and inactive people. It is unlikely that opportunities that were previously available will exist in the foreseeable future. The effects on aspirations through the lack of opportunities are yet to be seen but these are likely to include access to employment, apprenticeships, skills, and training including FE and HE opportunities.

The D2N2 economy faces a number of challenges that are reflected in low wages, low productivity and relatively low skills attainment. Our Economic Recovery and Growth Plan highlights high and persistent levels of worklessness, pockets of severe deprivation and skill levels that are below the national average as being key issues hindering economic growth.

Unemployment as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic is expected to rise exponentially across D2N2. As of October 2020, there were 77,425 claimants (Universal Credit and JSA) across D2N2 with females disproportionately affected making up 60% of claimants. This represents a 107% increase in the number of claimants from October 2019.

Research undertaken by Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham projects that the unemployment rate across D2N2 will rise to 11% with

areas such as Nottingham and Chesterfield disproportionately affected at 17% and 12% respectively.

Workers likely to be most affected are those working in sectors characterised as low skill occupations who are likely to bear a greater risk of unemployment particularly affecting those who are female and males in low-paid employment.

The research has highlighted that D2N2 businesses could lose 77,000 employees by 2020 Q4. Current figures (October 2020) indicate that the number of claims made under the Job Retention and Self Employment Income Support Schemes in D2N2 stands at nearly 131,000,100 with wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, business administration and construction furloughing the most jobs.

The D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy also highlights the following key challenges which the project will need to address

- 54,000 jobs are at high risk of automation with a further 413,000 likely to experience various forms of automation
- There is a disproportionate adverse impact of Covid-19 on some places, sectors, supply chains and demographic groups
- 13 out of 17 local authorities within the D2N2 region are identified as 'social mobility 'cold spots' which could be further disadvantaged due to the Covid 19 impact on local labour markets
- There is a high proportion of low skilled and low earning jobs, and long-term unemployment, made worse in some places by Covid-19 due to the high concentration of sectors experiencing lockdowns, for instance retail and hospitality in the Peak District.

The impact of Covid-19 has made it clear that we need to reconsider both which sectors are in need of immediate support to survive and which we can support to deliver future growth, and to reconsider in an increasingly digital world how we deliver that support. Other sectors that have not been immediately impacted by the pandemic – such as the professional & scientific sector – are also likely to experience a notable decline in employment numbers.

Certain sectors however such as logistics are reporting difficulties filling vacancies and the D2N2 CV19 unemployment programme will support redundant individuals to develop careers and employability skills to understand and become more competitive in the post CV19 labour market.

The Covid 19 unemployment programme will particularly align to the D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy Plan by having in place provision to avoid the scarring impact of widespread long-term unemployment by supporting individuals to

- Have the skills to ensure they are well equipped to deal with the short-term impact of Covid-19 and to take advantage of the long-term opportunities we outline in our Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy

- Supporting a well-coordinated employment support landscape providing timely and targeted support to meet individual needs.
- Supporting DWP brokerage services to support workers facing redundancy or in vulnerable sectors into new sectors or training

### **Call Outline**

This call aims to improve progression into the labour market for adults through innovative and vocationally based skills activity leading to employment, including apprenticeships and traineeships, or further training/education opportunities.

Although the following list is not definitive applicants should consider the following activities: -

- Engage, assess, support and monitor jobseekers and inactive people (e.g., through intensive, innovative, holistic, and tailored outreach work) so they can benefit from the programmes on offer in the local area.
- Harness and develop remote learning innovations, develop online learning innovations, ensure individuals have digital skills and digital connectivity, ensure participants can access a greater range of employment opportunities wherever they live.
- Supporting participants to engage with modern online job searching and applications, updating and tailoring CV's to job applications, uploading CV's online, managing a Universal Credit account online, keeping safe online
- Developing labour market information to identify local job opportunities, sectors recruiting, employers' skills needs and up skilling/training opportunities
- Support redundant individuals to develop careers and employability skills to understand and become more competitive in the post CV19 labour market.
- Develop and deliver specific careers advice and employment and skills support for women, to help them make informed career choices and enter appropriate employment opportunities in the post Covid-19 labour market
- Developing self-employment support arrangements including providing advice and support for self-employment.
- Broker opportunities with local employers to employ participants e.g. to support them to access jobs, traineeships, apprenticeships, work experience and supported internships for participants, especially those with complex barriers, special educational needs and disabilities.
- Offer support for employers to offer sustainable employment opportunities.
- Promote national CV19 employment initiatives to employers to maximise the number of new employment opportunities across D2N2
- Increase participation in traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Provide opportunities to link learning to work experience including volunteering.
- Provide support and a range of initiatives to unemployed and inactive people to overcome barriers to engagement, such as lack of childcare, transport in rural areas etc.

- Job coaching and wraparound support where appropriate.
- Work related learning and experience, employer master classes developed and delivered in partnership with employers.
- Employability skills, workplace literacy, numeracy and digital skills.
- Work with colleges and independent training providers to encourage them to develop appropriate traineeship and supported internship programmes for participants to progress.
- Broker opportunities including support for employers to give them the understanding and skills to recruit and employ participants, offer work placements, traineeships, apprenticeships, supported internships
- Support, both practical and financial, for travel needs particularly for those in rural areas.
- Develop effective engagement models ensuring participants have a voice in their development and offer Covid 19 safe support which maximises digital employment and skills opportunities
- Make reference as to how the project will be designed and developed to drive forward the Guiding Principles of the D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy

There are existing ESF projects within IP 1.1 in D2N2 that provide support and training for unemployed and inactive people – principally the Ways 2 Work programme managed by Nottingham City Council. Such programmes however were commissioned during a time of relatively high employment and targeted on those hardest to reach within disadvantaged communities.

Such programmes specifically target inactive and disengaged people within community venues and the delivery partnership reflects this due largely to the relatively high levels of employment in the LEP area.

The Covid 19 pandemic is likely to see greater volumes of individuals losing their jobs and becoming unemployed. It is likely that there will be sector turbulence with businesses in certain sectors being disproportionately affected in terms of redundancy.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic however, the number of those made unemployed will rise in a labour market where business and employment opportunities reduce. It is important therefore that there is sufficient support for all individuals affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.

Applicants should, as part of their application, identify other ESF and mainstream funded projects and ensure complementarity and lack of duplication. They must also demonstrate how they intend to work effectively with other statutory agencies such as the DWP and NCS to ensure the offer is understood by referral staff and MI systems are in place to offer the most appropriate service to individuals.

The activity in this call aligns specifically to the following propositions contained in the D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy Plan

- Priority 4 Employment and Skills

- Priority 7 Inclusion

Applicants are invited to align applications and activity to the key guiding principles outlined in the D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy Plan

### **Guiding Principle Number one – Productivity**

Lead a bold new way of bringing together the education and skills, innovation and business support systems to support our people and businesses to thrive.

Skills are a key route to productivity. Our Skills Advisory Panel is leading the skills and employment response to Covid-19 that closely aligns to our economic strengths and sectors. We will mitigate the impact on businesses, support existing and new businesses to source the talent they need to flourish. We will enable D2N2 residents to enter and progress along flexible skills pathways at all levels and career points: skilling, upskilling and reskilling.

### **Guiding Principle Number three – Connectivity and Inclusion**

Too many places and people experience long-term unemployment, poor education, poor health outcomes and low aspirations, and we know that many of these places are also vulnerable to the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown measures associated with it. Covid-19 has thrown into sharp relief the issue of digital exclusion and taught us the power of digital connectivity. We know many people have been unintentionally excluded because they work in roles that cannot be carried out remotely, because they have limited digital connectivity, because they lack the skills to participate digitally, or because they have limited access to the hardware needed to access

Applicants must be able to demonstrate: -

- Clear linkages and alignment with existing ERDF business support and ESF employment and skills projects aimed at supporting individuals and businesses to recover and grow from the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Clear linkages and alignment, but not duplication, with other mainstream funded programmes aimed at delivering business development and skills-based programmes.
- Practical connection with employers and mainstream work opportunities.

### **Contracting and funding allocation**

The programme will be procured through the ESF Managing Authority (DWP) open call process.

The ESF funding allocation to support this call is £2,000,000. Applicants will need to have eligible match funding at 50% which must be from a source other than the European Union.

Proposals should: deliver activities eligible for ESF; cover the whole D2N2 area; and be in line with the D2N2 LEP Core Delivery Principles. The Managing Authority may award more than one contract should applications of sufficient quality and scale be

received that in combination provide for LEP wide coverage without duplication of activities or geography. There is a requirement for all contracts to clearly evidence how they will interact with each other to ensure they complement existing and future planned provision.

This document provides the strategic intent for this programme. Full details of the bidding, contracting and confirmed criteria will be provided within the published specifications.

The table below provides an indicative breakdown of the funding allocation and targets.

<b>Investment Priority</b>	<b>1.1</b>
	The Covid 19 employment programme in D2N2
ESF	£2,00,000
Match Funding	£2,000,000
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Volumes TBC</b>
<b>Priority Groups</b>	Unemployed
	Inactive
	50+
	Ethnic Minorities
	Disabilities
	Basic skills
	Single adult household with dependent children