



# The Covid 19 youth employment programme in D2N2

This call aims to improve progression into the labour market for young people aged 16 to 24 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 young people facing particular difficulties to build trust and confidence, acquire sector specific skills, soft and basic skills to enable them to progress into employment or wider employability programmes such as apprenticeships, traineeships, Kick start opportunities

## **Local Priorities:**

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

It is projected that the coronavirus pandemic will have a disproportionate impact on the employment opportunities for young people. It is unlikely that opportunities that were previously available to them will exist in the foreseeable future. The disruption to economic activity during and in the wake of the outbreak is likely to take the heaviest toll on younger workers. Young people tend to be lower paid, have less savings, and work disproportionately in sectors that are losing jobs the fastest. Those just leaving education are entering a jobs market with few current vacancies or, if they have found a job, are most likely to be the first to be made redundant and the last to be rehired.

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 116% increase in the number of claimants claiming in 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 with wholesale and retail, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, business administration and construction furloughing the most jobs.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies suggests that young workers are most affected by the crisis and youth unemployment will rise disproportionately to general unemployment levels. Of the 77,425 claimants across D2N2 (August 2020) those aged 16-24 make up 21% of claimants, a total of over 16,000 young people. This represents a 114% increase in the number of claimants aged 16 to 24 from August 2019.

Young people who live in rural areas have significantly increased odds of unemployment due to the impact of Covid 19 on rural sectors such as the visitor economy and ongoing barriers such as transport issues.

This programme will ensure young people have access to high quality and dynamic labour market intelligence which demonstrate roles available, skills needed to secure them and the education, training, and support pathways available to help them get there.

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 particularly young people
- 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.
- There are significant differences in the socio-economic conditions experienced across D2N2's communities, including a polarised productivity

problem and a legacy of carbon-intensive industries. The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 lockdown measures on some places and groups such as women and younger workers may exacerbate these existing issues.

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 youth unemployment programme will support unemployed and redundant individuals to develop careers and employability skills to understand and become more competitive in the post CV19 labour market.

The Covid 19 youth employment 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 young people in the following ways.

- Develop 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 the D2N2 Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy
- Supporting a well-coordinated employment support landscape providing timely and targeted support to meet individual needs in the new labour market
- Supporting DWP brokerage services to support young people facing unemployment / redundancy or in vulnerable sectors into new sectors or training such as the Kickstart initiative

### **Call Outline**

Businesses and young people 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 young people leading to sustainable employment. The coronavirus pandemic has had a massive impact on the issues faced by young jobseekers. 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.

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

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

- Track, engage, assess, support and monitor young people who are NEET (e.g., through intensive, innovative, holistic and tailored outreach work) so they can benefit from other Covid 19 youth programmes on offer such as Kick Start, apprenticeships and traineeships etc
- Identify the scale of the potential impact of Covid 19 on young people including NEETs and the impact of C19 on their immediate careers and education choices
- Identify mechanisms to give confidence to businesses to continue to invest in offering employment opportunities and support to young people
- 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, growth sectors recruiting, employers' skills needs and up skilling/training opportunities
- Support unemployed / redundant young people 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 young women, to help them make informed career choices and enter appropriate employment opportunities in the post Covid-19 labour market
- Support young people who have higher skills including graduates by creating purposeful placements appropriate to their skills levels which lead to high level jobs to support personal and business growth and innovation
- Provide support for start-ups for unemployed and redundant young people including those with higher level skills such as graduates
- Broker opportunities with local employers to employ young people who are NEET e.g., to support them to access traineeships, apprenticeships, work experience and supported internships for young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Also offer support for employers to take on young people NEET.
- Foster an aspirational and enterprising culture amongst young people by supporting them to acquire sector specific skills (basic, intermediate, and technical) needed by employers.

- Increase participation in traineeships and apprenticeships by preparing young people to fully take advantage of these employer led opportunities.
- Provide support and a range of soft skills to disadvantaged young people to overcome the barriers to engagement, such as lack of childcare, transport, confidence building, motivation, and health issues.
- Development and delivery of innovative and employer led supported internships for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities giving them opportunities to gain experience in the workplace.
- Job coaching and wraparound support where appropriate.
- Provide comprehensive careers guidance and current labour market information to ensure young people can explore all appropriate labour market options
- Develop employability skills, workplace literacy, numeracy and digital skills.
- Work with DWP, NCS, FE colleges and independent training providers to encourage them to develop appropriate employment related traineeships, apprenticeships and supported internship programmes.
- Broker opportunities including support for employers to give them the understanding and skills to recruit and employ young people, offer work placements, traineeships, apprenticeships, supported internships and emerging T-levels
- Support, both practical and financial, for young people's travel needs particularly those living in rural areas.
- Develop effective youth engagement models ensuring young people have a voice in their development and opportunities.

There are existing ESF projects within IP 1.2 in D2N2 that provide support and training for NEET or at risk of NEET for 16 -24-year olds. Such programmes however were commissioned during a time of relatively high employment and targeted on those hardest to reach young people within disadvantaged communities.

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 young people affected by the Covid 19 pandemic.

This call will provide much needed additional support to the current landscape to support young people disproportionately affected by the Covid 19 pandemic and improve progression into the 'new' opportunities in the post Covid 19 economy

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.

## **D2N2 Economic Growth and Recovery Strategy Plan**

The activity in this call aligns specifically to

- 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 to deliver this programme 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 (DWP, ESFA) aimed at delivering business development and employment 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>1.2</b>
	The Covid 19 youth employment programme in D2N2
ESF	£2m
Match Funding	£2m
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Volumes TBC</b>
<b>Priority Groups</b>	
	Participants (under 25 years of age) who are unemployed or inactive
	Unemployed including long term unemployed
	Inactive
	Ethnic Minorities
	Disabilities
	Basic Skills
	Single adult household with dependent children