

Equality and Good Relations Screening

European Social Fund – Call 3 Match Funding Assistance

Part 1. Policy scoping

Information about the policy

Name of the Policy

European Social Fund – Call 3

Match funding application call to assist successful applicants to the DfE's (Department for the Economy) European Social Fund.

Is this policy

An existing policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	A revised policy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	A new policy?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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European Social Fund – Call 3 Match Funding Assistance

The European Commission part-funds the ESF Funding Programme along with assistance from public authorities in Northern Ireland.

The strategic aim of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ESF Programme) is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council have allocated a total of £100,000 to match fund successful applicants from DfE's third call of the European Social Fund (ESF). The timeframe for projects will run from 1 April 2022 for 12 months. This is a competitive grant funding process with all award decisions made on the basis of merit.

What are the intended aims/outcomes the policy is trying to achieve?

The strategic aim of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ESF Programme) is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

This aim is to be realised through:

- i. promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- ii. promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and any discrimination; and
- iii. investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning.

Objectives for Priority Axes 1 and 2 of the ESF Programme (which Call 3 relates to) are outlined below:-

Priority Axis 1 – Access to Employment

Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.

- **Thematic Objective 8, Investment Priority i (a)** – Projects supporting unemployed including long term unemployed participants to access employment
- **Thematic Objective 8, Investment Priority i (b)** - Projects supporting economically inactive participants to access employment, education and training.
- **Thematic Objective 8, Investment Priority ii** - Projects supporting young people aged 16-24 not in employment, education or training integrate into the labour market.

Priority Axis 2 – Social Inclusion

Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and any discrimination.

- **Thematic Objective 9, Investment Priority i (a)** - Enhance social inclusion with projects supporting people with a disability to access employment, education and training.
- **Thematic Objective 9, Investment Priority i (b)** - Enhance social inclusion with projects supporting participants not in employment, education or training aged 16 and over within families receiving community family support to access employment, education and training.

Are there any expected benefits to the Section 75 categories/groups from this policy? If so, please explain.

The European Social Fund (ESF) Programme supports a wide and diverse range of projects across Northern Ireland. The Programme provides organisations with financial assistance to enable participants that are disadvantaged to develop the skills and confidence that they require in order to find employment. Projects offer a range of services, courses and activities, including advice, guidance, support, practical training and qualifications that enables participants to achieve their full potential. The programme especially targets groups who are most likely to experience disadvantage in accessing employment and will particularly benefit some groups, for example, disabled people and younger people.

The programme is geared toward assisting young people, people out of work, people with a disability or those requiring a family support programme. Therefore, organisations can apply for funding under one of the measures above.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the EU's most important instrument for helping EU citizens with finding better jobs and for ensuring fairer job opportunities for all. It plays an important role in meeting Europe's goals of more and better jobs as well as in promoting an inclusive society, and in mitigating the consequences of the economic crisis – particularly the increase of unemployment and poverty.

There are numerous benefits that this funding can achieve:

- One is to provide workers with new skills in order to allow them to adapt more easily to the demands of the labour market.
- Others aim at improving access to employment, for example by helping young people move from school to work or by training less-skilled job-seekers in all phases of life in order to improve their professional opportunities.
- Another benefit is to help people from disadvantaged groups to gain employment. This is part of the goal to enhance 'social inclusion', as creating better employability can help people to integrate better into society and is a crucial factor in the fight against poverty.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council have previously provided match funding assistance for Calls 1 and 2 of the European Social Fund. The projects funded have achieved considerable success, surpassing their targets on some occasions. Given that this fund is directly focussed upon improving employability outcomes across disadvantaged groups, it was agreed that Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council would provide another match funding opportunity against this latest call for applications.

The ESF Match Fund is open to consortia of organisations that aim to be representative of the communities or audiences the project is targeting. Eligible applicants are any non-profit organisation that has secured Call 3 ESF funding through the Department for Economy (DfE) that is operating from or within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area and identified Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council as a potential match funder within their ESF application.

Many of the potential participants fall within particular Section 75 categories as these people are the most vulnerable and at greater risk of facing unemployment. This programme will improve fairness in the labour market by supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged while working to support local people back into work at this challenging time.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Economic Development Department, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC)

Who owns and who implements the policy?

Owned by Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. Implemented by Economic Development department.

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

If yes, are they

Financial?		Legislative?		Other?	X
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If other, please detail below

Other: The success of the project is dependent on applications received. It is anticipated that there will be a high volume of applications, whereby the grant request exceeds the budget. On this basis, a robust scoring matrix has been developed to ensure that grant is awarded on the basis of merit.

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Staff:	Y
Service Users & Delivery Partners	Y
Other Public Sector Organisations	Y
Voluntary/Community/Trade Unions	Y

If other, please detail below

The participants are the main stakeholder affected by the Scheme.

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Name of policy	Who owns or implements policy?
DfE European Social Fund	Department for the Economy https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/publications/esf-call-3-application-forms-and-guidance
Equality and Disability Action Plans	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75
Local Development Plan	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/resident/planning/local-development-plan
Regeneration and Investment Action Plan	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/LCCC Investment Programme 2019 .pdf
LCCC Corporate Plan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/uploads/general/CORPORATE PLAN 2018.pdf
LCCC Equality Scheme	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75

Available evidence

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

The strategic aim of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ESF Programme) is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council have reviewed the operation of the previous calls, analysed which projects/organisations applied, who was successful, and ultimately who benefitted at an individual level.

In developing the match funding programme, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research initiatives were undertaken. The goal in this activity was to spread the net as wide as possible in terms of understanding the issues faced by LCCC employers and the local community, current provision in the field of employability and skills and gain a view of future needs. Research consisted of a review of the following publications:

- Equality Commission
- NINIS: Labour Market
- Covid-19 Research
- Department for the Economy: European Social Fund
- Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Plan
- Council Corporate Plan
- Interim Labour Market Partnership Plan

Information below is from the 2011 Northern Ireland Census which takes into account the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council Area.

Sec 75 Category	Details of evidence/information
Religious Belief	<p>The 2011 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to religious belief in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 67% Protestant (or other Christian)• 24% Catholic• 8% Other• 1% None <p>Across Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, the total percentage of employment across religious beliefs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catholic (working age 16-64 years) – 80.70% employed• Protestant (working age 16-64 years) – 81.70% employed
Political Opinion	<p>The 2011 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to political opinion in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area; 65.39% indicated that they had a British national identity, 14.83% had an Irish national identity and 30.46% had a Northern Irish national identity.</p>

<p>Racial Group</p>	<p>The 2011 NI Census recorded the following statistics with regard to racial groups in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area; 2.36% were from an ethnic minority population and the remaining 97.64% were white (including Irish Traveller).</p> <p>Across NI as a whole, the following figures presents the unemployment rates by Ethnic Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White – 444,005 • Irish Traveller – 700 • Mixed – 595 • Indian – 43 • Pakistani – 175 • Bangladeshi – 59 • Other Asian – 52 • Black Caribbean – 61 • Black African – 113 • Other Black – 119 • Chinese – 1213 • Other Ethnic Group – 421 • Total Economically Inactive – 447,943
<p>Age</p>	<p>In 2015 the following statistics with regard to age in the Lisburn and Castlereagh area were recorded to inform the Corporate plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% Children were aged 0-15 years • 30% of people aged 16 -39 years • 33% aged 40 – 64 years • 17% aged 65 years and older <p>The population of the Council area aged 65 and over will increase by 9% by 2025 and 13% by 2030.</p> <p>In April 2020 the number of registered claimants in the 16 – 24 year age category in this area rose to 575 and in April 2021 the figure was 590. While the number of claimants is higher in the age 25 – 49 age group, that corresponds to a much bigger section of the population.</p> <p>In addition to furloughing and redundancies, many young people have seen their hours reduced over the course of the pandemic greatly reducing their income while retaining their employed status (not evidenced as economically inactive). Even pre-Covid 19, younger residents aged 16-24 were more likely to collect unemployment benefits than older age groups. (Source ONS).</p>
<p>Marital Status</p>	<p>The 2011 census records the following statics with regard to the marital status of persons over the age of 16 for the LCCC area;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single – 30.7% • Married – 53.8% • Same-sex civil partnership – 0.1% • Separated– 3.3% • Divorced– 5.5%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widowed – 6.7%
<p>Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>ONS (Office for National Statistics) figures (2016) suggest at least 2% of the NI population identify as Lesbian, Gay or Bi-sexual. However, LGB support groups suggest this is a significant under-estimate based on lack of willingness/confidence to identify as LGB.</p> <p>Government Equalities Office research suggests over 4% of the 18-25 year age group identify as LGB, confirming that younger people are more likely to be open about sexual orientation.</p>
<p>Men & Women Generally</p>	<p>The estimated population of Lisburn And Castlereagh Local Government District at 30 June 2019 was 146,002, of which 71,654 (49.1%) were male and 74,348 (50.9%) were female. Labour market research suggests females are more likely to be economically inactive, with care responsibilities a major factor; to be under-represented in some occupations and over-represented in others that are low paid and lower status; to experience unequal pay; and to experience barriers to progression when they are in work and when seeking to re-enter paid work following time out for family responsibilities.</p> <p>There is no official statistic on the number of people in N Ireland who identify as Transgender or non-binary but referrals to advice services are increasing year on year which suggests a small but growing minority.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The rate of disability in Northern Ireland is higher than the other UK regions with the exception of Wales. The rates of disability among older age groups is higher than other regions of the UK. The 50-64 year old age group accounts for 33.4% of our disabled population compared to 26.9% of the UK disabled population as a whole. The most striking finding was that 60.2% of disabled people in Northern Ireland are economically inactive while the comparative figure for the UK as a whole stands at 42.5%. Disability or health conditions is the most common reason for economic inactivity for men.</p> <p>The Employment Outcomes and Challenges for Disabled People in N. Ireland research report (August 2021) highlighted a pay gap for disabled employees. Although Northern Ireland compared favourably with other parts of the UK in this regard, there is still a difference in median pay between disabled and non-disabled employees which needs to be addressed.</p> <p>The concerns expressed by disabled participants engaging with this research were articulated in the report on their behalf. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pandemic has caused pressure on the labour market and this caused fear that low skilled jobs would now be taken by skilled workers and the reduction in the availability of jobs could affect people with disabilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitality Industry has been deeply affected and employs many disabled people • End of furlough could cause saturated labour market making it hard for those with disabilities to find work • Employers are likely to opt for the easier applicant in challenging times • Harder to find work experience positions for those with disabilities at present.
<p>Dependants</p>	<p>Dependants can include children, older people and those with disabilities.</p> <p>12.51% of people in the 2011 Census stated that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others.</p> <p>Family and caring responsibilities is most common reason for economic inactivity for women.</p> <p>According to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, lone parents, 91% of whom are women, also experience occupational segregation in employment, with lone parents with dependent children mostly employed in 'Personal Service' and 'Elementary' occupations. Caregiving has been identified as one factor influencing occupational segregation with women and lone parents choosing part time occupations, which offer sufficient flexibility to balance the demands of caregiving. This may have a potential impact on the sustainability of employment, with women and lone parents having to sacrifice pay and career progression to get the flexibility in employment they need.</p>

Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

The strategic aim of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ESF Programme) is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. Those who will be directly targeted will either be economically inactive or long term unemployed, irrespective of background or circumstance. This scheme will have direct and indirect benefits for some groups of service user, however, the aim of the is to improve fairness in the labour market by supporting the most vulnerable and disadvantaged while working to support local people back into work at this challenging time. Ultimately, this programme will benefit a wide range of groups, particularly groups that experience disadvantage or inequality.

Sec 75 Category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious Belief	Within the parameters of the programme and the agreed objectives, promotion and application processes need to ensure equality of opportunity regardless of religious belief, political opinion and racial group.
Political Opinion	
Racial Group	
Age	<p>Young people (aged 16-24) have high levels of unemployment need to be targeted in order to build new skills in fields representing current and emerging labour market opportunities.</p> <p>Actions will be aimed at preventing young people becoming long term unemployed (over 12 months) through all means available. Suggested actions included industry taster courses and short term training interventions directly linked to areas of current work opportunity for example warehousing, forklift/ HGV licences, hospitality, CSR (Construction) training and digital skills.</p>
Marital Status	Within the parameters of the Programme and the agreed objectives, there needs to be equality of opportunity in programme promotion and application processes so there are no additional barriers based on these characteristics.
Sexual Orientation	
Men & Women Generally	
Disability	The scheme already takes into consideration the increased levels of unemployment of people with a disability and aims to improve employability conditions. Some disabled participants will need particular supports or adjustments to enable them to participate.
Dependants	Projects that are funded may need to take into account that some of those who are target participants may have dependant responsibilities.

Part 2. Screening questions

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Sec 75 equality categories? (Minor/ major/ none)

The programme is intended to have a positive impact on employability of all who participate but will particularly benefit certain target groups.

Sec 75 Category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact (minor/major/none)
Religious Belief	No differential impact identified	None
Political Opinion	No differential impact identified	None
Racial Group	No differential impact identified	None

Age	As the programme is specifically targeting young people, it will provide training and employment opportunities for this group	Minor positive
Marital Status	No differential impact identified	None
Sexual Orientation	No differential impact identified	None
Men & Women Generally	The scheme is intended to benefit men and women/all genders equally.	None
Disability	The scheme will benefit those with a disability as there will be specific programmes developed which are tailored to the needs of disabled persons across the Lisburn & Castlereagh Council district. The aim is to improve employability outcomes.	Minor Positive
Dependants	No differential impact identified	None

2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Sec 75 equality categories?

During project delivery, the successful recipient's achievement of targets is also monitored on a quarterly basis. Any failure to meet the target thresholds will be reviewed prior to the release of any grant monies.

If any opportunities arise to better promote equality of opportunity in future then these will be given consideration in due course.

Sec 75 Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details
Religious Belief	<p>The programme is already targeting identified underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>Any projects/organisations that are funded will be required to have equal opportunities policies and make their support fully accessible.</p> <p>Successful projects can be encouraged to monitor by equality category to ensure take-up appropriately reflects all sections of the community.</p>	
Political Opinion		
Racial Group		
Age		
Marital Status		
Sexual Orientation		
Men & Women Generally		
Disability		
Dependants		

3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (Minor/ major/ none)

Good Relations Category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact (minor/major/none)
Religious Belief/ Political Opinion/ Racial Groups	No direct impact identified in relation to religion, political opinion or racial group	

4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Good Relations Category	IF Yes, provide details	If No, provide details

Religious Belief/ Political Opinion/ Racial Group		No direct opportunity identified at this time. This is a financial assistance scheme that will combat employment inactivity across the Lisburn Castlereagh Council area. It doesn't lend itself to promoting good relations.
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Additional considerations

Multiple identity

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

LCCC recognises that all individuals are not exclusive to just one designated group. Some people will potentially benefit on multiple identity grounds or where they experience multiple disadvantage, for example young people who have a disability or disabled people who have dependants.

Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

Screening Decision: Screen out with minor mitigation
 It has been concluded that a detailed equality impact assessment is not necessary as no negative impacts have been identified and all the potential impacts are minor and positive for the project's target groups. Objective criteria have been developed to ensure a fair application/selection process within the parameters of the programme objectives.

Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

It is considered that this programme already promotes equality for the target groups. However, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council will endeavour to further promote equality by ensuring the funded organisations take proactive steps in relation to how they deliver their project.

We can ensure they have EO policies and make their support fully accessible. Furthermore, we can encourage them to monitor by equality category to ensure take-up appropriately reflects all sections of the community.

Timetabling and prioritising

If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

N/A

Part 4. Monitoring

The ESF grant beneficiaries achievement of objectives will be monitored on a quarterly basis by their vouching Programme Officer.

The successful recipients will be subject to a quarterly monitoring exercise to ensure targets are being achieved as set out in the Letter of Offer. This process will ensure that the project is being delivered as expected. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a bi-annual progress report which provides a detailed summary of the beneficiaries who have been supported into training or economic activity, and highlight any variances. Negative variances are subject to further inspection prior to the release of any grant monies.

The applicant is also subject to rigorous monitoring through the DfE's compliance unit. The results of these exercises are shared with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council to ensure that all projects are being delivered as envisaged and are indeed targeting the Section 75 groups that were proposed as part of the application process.

We will encourage monitoring of beneficiaries across the Section 75 categories to ensure that all sections of the community benefit from the programme.

Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

Screened by:	Position/Job Title	Date
Melissa Cunningham	Programmes Officer	21.02.2022
Signature:		
Approved by: Sarah Johnston	Programmes Manager	21.02.2022
Signature:		
Approved by: Paul McCormick	Head of Service	21.02.2022
Signature:		
Reviewed by: Mary McSorley	Equality Officer	21.02.2022

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.

