

APPENDIX 1



Comhairle Ceantair
Lár Uladh
Mid Ulster
District Council

Draft Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership **Action Plan 2023-2024**

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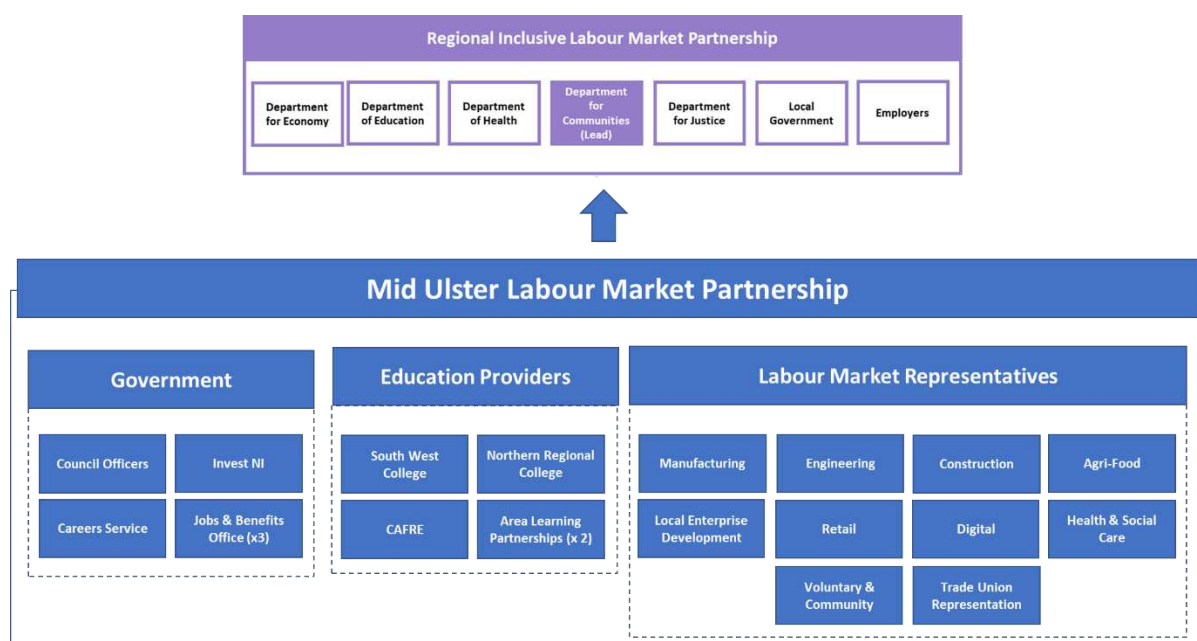
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1. Introduction

Mid Ulster Labour Market Partnership (LMP) has built on the success of its original Skills Forum, and Mid Ulster District Council (MUDC) has designed its LMP so that it is inclusive of all relevant government, education, and labour market stakeholders as well as key industry representatives.

Mid Ulster's LMP consists of representatives from all the major employment sectors in the region as well as including schoolteacher representation (through the two Area Learning Partnerships), and representation from the Further Education sector, including South West College (SWC), Northern Regional College (NRC), and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). Government representation includes Council officers from MUDC's economic development and community planning teams, along with representatives from Invest NI, Careers Service, Health & Social Care (H&SC) Trust, Mid Ulster Enterprise Partnership, and DfC's three Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs) located in the region.

Chart 1: Mid Ulster LMP Membership Structure



Mid Ulster LMP undertook a review of its initial one-year action plan, Strategic Assessment and employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Mid Ulster Council area in January and February 2023.

This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the area and was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing district wide engagement and consultation across the council area.

Cognisance was also taken of the:

- **Draft Programme for Government:** A focus on skills and employability is included in 'The Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework 2021'¹, which proposes nine outcomes including 'everyone can reach their potential' and 'our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral'.
- **Draft Northern Ireland Industrial Strategy:** Northern Ireland's industrial strategy 'Economy 2030: A Consultation on an Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland'² includes a vision for the region "to be a globally competitive economy that works for everyone". The strategy includes enhancing education, skills, and employability as one of the five core pillars for growth, with proposals consisting of reforms to careers advice, strengthening collaboration across industry and government, and delivering new models of youth training.
- **10x Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland:** 'Addressing Skills Imbalances, Driving Economic Growth' can be seen as an overarching objective and includes commitments to Supporting Economic Inclusion - Individuals with Low or No Qualifications, Supporting Social and Economic Development – Focus on Mid-Level Qualifications and Driving Growth and Innovation - Higher Level Qualifications.'
- **Mid Ulster Corporate Plan 2020-2024:** Theme 3, Economy includes a commitment to 'continue to support the work of our partners, including the Mid Ulster Skills Forum, to address employability and skills to ensure the existing and future needs of our region's business base are met'.
- **Mid Ulster Community Plan** sets out the ambition for the Council area under Education & Skills as, 'Our people are better qualified and more skilled. We give children and young people the best chance in life and we are more entrepreneurial, innovative and creative.'
- **Mid Ulster Economic Development Plan 2015-2020:** Priority 2 Enabling employability and skills includes aims to address emerging sectoral labour market shortages, address training and employment needs of long-term unemployed and economically inactive, address productivity constraints through in-job training and promoting the development of a strong educated skills base.
- **Mid-South West Regional Economic Strategy** is built upon 4 priorities, the first of which is 'Future-proofing the skills base: New industries, new technology, increased automation – the world of work is changing. Initiatives have begun in the region involving local businesses, FE colleges, universities and industry bodies to equip the workforce of the future.'
- **Community Wealth Building:** Key messages include 'Skills are undoubtedly the most important driver to increase employability and to create pathways out of worklessness. Educational and training provisions, including lifelong learning programmes, work-readiness initiatives, and technical apprenticeships in the social enterprise sector, are needed to address local skills mismatches, but also to strengthen the knowledge economy workforce.'

¹ <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/newnigov/pfg-draft-outcomes-framework-consultation.pdf>

² Department for the Economy (2017), 'Northern Ireland's industrial strategy, Economy 2030: A Consultation on an Industrial Strategy for Northern Ireland', <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/economy/industrial-strategy-ni-consultation-document.pdf>

As a result of the Planning Exercise the following Themes have been identified as local priority:

1. Economic Inactivity
2. Disability
3. Skilled Labour Supply

A Turning the Curve Exercise was undertaken in relation to the current Local LMP Action Plan Themes. A range of projects have subsequently been identified taking account of the above programmes, particularly in relation to the outcomes they deliver to ensure duplication of effort has not occurred.

A desk-based analysis of the Mid Ulster labour market was completed, and the findings used to inform primary research including roundtable discussions, consultations, employer survey and LMP members' workshop. A recurring issue raised was the impact of the removal of the European Social Fund (ESF) and the uncertainty around the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This uncertainty has provided obvious challenges for Mid Ulster LMP as it looks to plan for 2023-2024. To this end, Mid Ulster LMP has decided to take a cautious approach to the 2023/24 Action Plan and not be over-ambitious with the development and delivery of new project ideas.

We will review the Action Plan in the Autumn of 2023 when we have a better understanding of the employability and skills eco-system post ESF funding withdrawal and the advent of the UKSPF. The LMP Action Plan will therefore continue to be a living document.

With the above in mind, Mid Ulster LMP has decided to develop its Action Plan to take account of the maximum amount of potential funding available from the Department for Communities. Thus, the Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan includes a number of programmes which will be delivered if this funding is made available during 2023/24.

2. Strategic Assessment

2.1. Introduction

This section highlights the key statistics about the labour market in Mid Ulster. Most of the statistics are from NISRA³ who supply the data for Northern Ireland Local Labour Market Insight. The latest published statistics have been used but these often date back to 2021, so we have applied some caution when assessing if they remain valid at the start of 2023. At the Council level some of the sample sizes are small and NISRA caution on their use. We have not used any of these instances for Mid Ulster LMP but some data tables highlight where there are small samples for other Councils.

Using the available statistics this section highlights the key labour market facts and trends in Mid Ulster. This is supplemented by the consultations we have undertaken with employers, Jobs and Benefit Offices (JBOs) and stakeholders.

Following the termination of the 'European Social Fund' there is a high degree of uncertainty at the start of 2023 about the capacity in Mid Ulster to deliver support for those furthest from the labour market. This is primarily because the results of bids for the new 'Shared Prosperity Fund' are not yet public. Until results are known it will make some decisions about priorities and interventions more difficult.

2.2. Demand for labour in Mid Ulster

Mid Ulster is one the most entrepreneurial regions in Northern Ireland - home to over 9,430⁴ businesses in 2022 and representing the highest concentration of enterprise outside of Belfast. Over the last ten years registered businesses in Mid-Ulster have increased by 18%, above the Northern Ireland average of 16%⁵.

Employment in Mid-Ulster is significantly different to Northern Ireland as a whole. As shown in Table 2.2. employment in manufacturing at 28% is almost three times that of the Northern Ireland rate. Construction at 10% is double the Northern Ireland rate. Consequently, this means the service sector is considerably lower⁶. **This means the skills required by employers, the patterns of recruitment, and pathways to opportunity for residents will also be significantly different.**

³ Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)

⁴ A 2% increase on 2021. Source: [NISRA, IDBR, June 2022](#)

⁵ [NISRA, NI Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021](#)

⁶ NISRA, BRES 2021

Table 2.2: Number of employees in Mid Ulster and percent by main industry in Mid Ulster and NI, 2021 (main industries = over 1,700 employees in Mid Ulster)⁷

	Number of Employees	% of Mid Ulster	% Northern Ireland	Difference (percent points)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,730	3%	2%	1
Manufacturing	17,066	28%	11%	17
Construction	5,921	10%	5%	5
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	11,207	18%	17%	2
Transport and storage	1,801	3%	4%	-1
Education	5,356	9%	9%	-1
Human health and social work activities	6,272	10%	17%	-7
Other sectors	11,344	19%	37%	-18
Total	60,697			

Mid Ulster is the manufacturing centre of Northern Ireland, with key sub-sectors including advanced manufacturing, engineering, agri-food and construction. However, at 32% it also has the second highest proportion of small businesses (below £50,000 turnover) and well above the Northern Ireland rate of 25.5%⁸.

Overall, Mid Ulster had the fastest pace of employee job creation of any council area in Northern Ireland between 2016-21, growing at 13% (6,680 new jobs) compared to a total Northern Ireland growth rate of 7%⁹ and this growth has continued into 2022.

2.2.1. Public/private jobs

At 83% Mid Ulster has the highest proportion of employees in the private sector and is significantly different to the Northern Ireland average of 74%¹⁰. This high proportion is likely to have an impact on other aspects of the Mid Ulster labour market, such as skillsets of employees, willingness to work in the public sector, recruitment channels, and female employment. For example, the public sector recruits larger numbers of women so this may explain part of the large gender employment gap in Mid Ulster.

2.2.2. Self-employment

In common with Northern Ireland (and UK) the numbers of people in Mid Ulster who are self-employed has dropped since Covid. At 16.8%¹¹ of all employment Mid Ulster has the second highest rate and compares with just 11.6% for Northern Ireland. Given the industrial profile of Mid Ulster it is likely that the self-employed are mostly made up of people in skilled trade occupations and this group is likely to have been attracted back into PAYE jobs. Self-employment in Mid Ulster accounts for almost 1 in 5 jobs and approximately 11,000 people. **It is both a recruiting ground for employers and a route into economic activity for those out of work.**

⁷ NISRA, BRES 2021

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ [NISRA, NI Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021](#)

¹⁰ NISRA

¹¹ *ibid*

2.2.3. Vacancies

In 2021-22 there were 5,081¹² vacancies notified to Department for Communities in Mid Ulster. This was an increase over the previous year by 54%, however this was the lowest percentage increase of all Councils. The largest increase across Northern Ireland was for vacancies in the service sector, and Mid Ulster is less likely to benefit from these.

Since late 2022¹³ there appears to be a reduction in the number of vacancies advertised in Northern Ireland. Using the index for online adverts for jobs based in Northern Ireland there has been a dip in vacancies since late Autumn 2022. **If Mid Ulster has been following the same trend, then it is possible the level of vacancies will fall in 2023**, with much depending on the impact of low or negative growth.

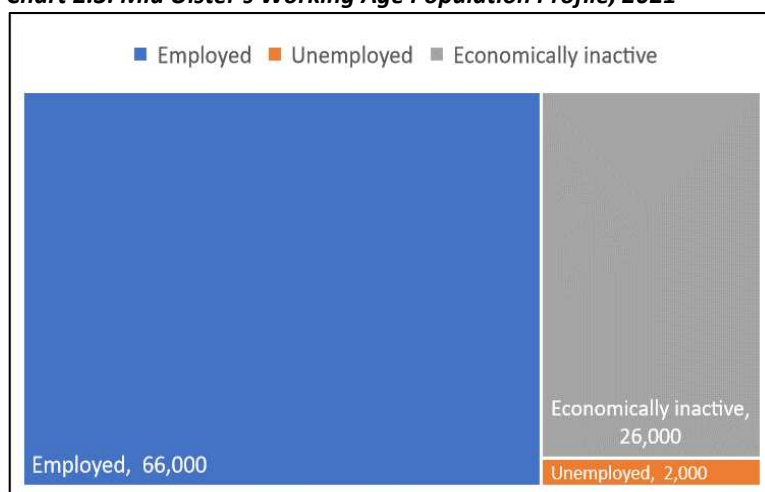
Pay in Mid Ulster

Mid Ulster is seventh in the Council rankings on pay but not much different to the Northern Ireland average. In June 2022 the HMRC PAYE (Real Time Information) average monthly pay in Mid Ulster was £2,235 compared to £2,307 for Northern Ireland. However, Mid Ulster is 25% below the UK average monthly pay. This low level of remuneration reflects the pay in manufacturing and construction and in some low paying service sector jobs. Whilst difficult to determine, it is likely that levels of pay in Mid Ulster will have an impact on: (a) the ability to attract the economic inactive back into the labour market; and (b) encourage inward migration from other parts of Northern Ireland and the UK.

2.3. Supply of labour in Mid Ulster

Since the 2011 Census Mid Ulster's population has grown by 8% and the proportion of older people has increased. There has been a significant 54% growth in people who were born outside of UK/Ireland – up from 9,100 to 13,900. Chart 2.3 below illustrates the composition of the 2021 Mid Ulster working age population (16-64)

Chart 2.3: Mid Ulster's Working Age Population Profile, 2021¹⁴



¹² Statistics on vacancies are temporarily on hold following the launch of JobApplyNI.com on 31 March 2022

¹³ Statistics on vacancies are temporarily on hold following the launch of JobApplyNI.com on 31 March 2022

¹⁴ NISRA LFS Local LMI

2.4. Economically active: those employed and unemployed

Mid Ulster has a very similar employment rate (70.3%) to Northern Ireland (70.2%)¹⁵. As such it is mid-table in the Council rankings, which range from Derry & Strabane on 65.4% to Lisburn & Castlereagh on 75.2%. However, Mid Ulster has dropped from 75.3% in 2019 prior to Covid – a full 5 percentage point drop. **If the employment rate returned to the 2019 level, then there would be a further 4,500 in employment in Mid Ulster.**

Unemployment (using the Labour Force Survey) remained stable in 2021 at around 2,000 people. The unemployment rate was 3.3% compared to 3.2% in 2020 and 2.7% prior to Covid in 2019. However, recent (December 2022) changes in the Claimant Count (see below) would suggest that the unemployment rate could have returned to pre-Covid levels.

Overall, unemployment can only drop by **around 700 people and contribute to a growth in employment**. At low levels of unemployment much of it is either frictional (temporary unemployment whilst changing jobs) or people who are long-term unemployed with significant barriers to employment.

2.5. Universal Credit Claimants in Mid-Ulster

In August 2022 there were 9,180 claimants¹⁶ on Universal Credit in Mid-Ulster, one of the lowest Councils in NI. Universal Credit includes three broad groups:

- In work but on low incomes (who previously would have been eligible for Tax Credits)
- Out of work and actively seeking work (previous Jobseeker Allowance claimants); and
- Out of work but are not required to seek work (claimants with health problems).

Using Northern Ireland proportions for the reason of a Universal Credit claim shows there are around 1,800 Universal Credit claimants in Mid-Ulster who are 'Searching for work'.

Table 2.5: UC claimant work requirements in NI and Mid Ulster, 2022¹⁷

	No work requirements	Planning for work	Preparing for work	Searching for work	Working - with requirements	Working - no requirements	Total
Aug-22							
% of NI UC claimants	45%	1%	7%	20%	11%	16%	100%
Mid-Ulster UC claimants	4,131	92	643	1,836	1,010	1,469	9,180

2.5.1.Claimant Count (searching for work)

The (experimental) Claimant Count used by government consists of all those claiming UC who have a requirement to be 'searching for work' and a further 302 Jobseeker Allowance (JSA) claimants in Mid Ulster who are yet to transition to Universal Credit. Taken together these two groups make up the experimental Claimant Count. Chart 2.5.1 below shows the Claimant Count since 2018. During 2018 and 2019 the numbers were averaging around 1,500 and then with Covid peaked at just over 4,000 people. **Since the 2022/23 Action Plan the Claimant**

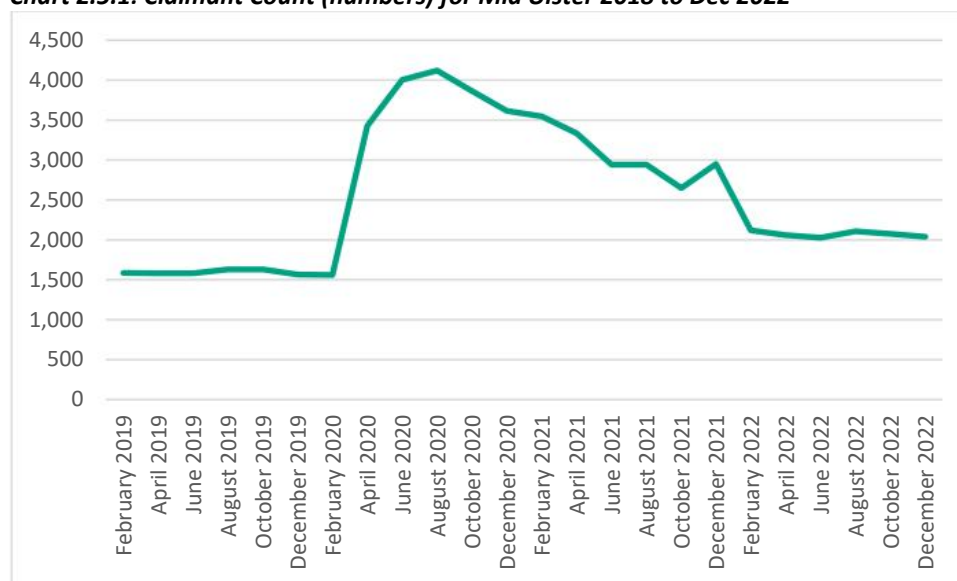
¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ [Department for Communities UC statistics](#)

¹⁷ Department for Communities

Count has dropped and as of December 2022 is 2,075 or 2.3% of the working age population. This is 520 people (33%) above the pre-Covid 2020 low of 1,555.

Chart 2.5.1: Claimant Count (numbers) for Mid Ulster 2018 to Dec 2022¹⁸



Of these claimants as many as 900 could be long-term unemployed¹⁹ (out of work for over 12 months). However, the long-term unemployment rate in Mid-Ulster has been significantly below the Northern Ireland average at between 20-27%²⁰, therefore the **numbers of long-term unemployed are likely to be in the range of 450 to 900 people**. (It should be noted that as LTU data has been unavailable since 2017, these are a best-case estimate.)

In December 2022 the claimant rate was 2.3% of the working age population which is the second lowest in Northern Ireland and significantly below the Northern Ireland rate of 3.1%. Over the year to December 2022 there was a decline of 8.4%. This was not as rapid as the 11.8% for Northern Ireland. This is to be expected given the already low claimant rate.

The age profile of claimants searching for work shows that the 25-49 age group is the largest group²¹. The 25-49 age group has more than doubled (112%) since 2019 whilst the over-50s have increased by 54%. Young people in the Claimant Count also increased significantly from 330 in 2019 to 570 in 2021. It is likely that these numbers have since reduced again given the Claimant Count decline in 2022.

In terms of maximising the number of people returning to work it will be important to focus on the 25-49 age group. However, there are strong social and economic reasons to provide support to the younger and older age groups, especially in the pursuit of an inclusive labour market in Mid Ulster.

Mid-Ulster has the highest proportion of claimants in Northern Ireland who are women – 45% (around 930 women) compared to 40% for Northern Ireland²². The Claimant Count levels remain 520 people above pre-Covid levels and 730 people above the historically low level of

¹⁸ Claimant Count Monthly data

¹⁹ Based on using the NI rate for long-term unemployment of 43.2% of claimants. See [NISRA LFS tables](#).

²⁰ NISRA [Long-term unemployed rates 2005-17](#)

²¹ Claimant Count Monthly Data

²² *ibid*

1,345 in November 2017 (1.5%)²³. This suggests it may be **feasible to reduce claimants by around 700 people in Mid-Ulster, given continuing high levels of demand from employers.**

This would reduce the claimant rate back down to around 1.5%, below which it is unlikely to fall. This level represents ‘frictional unemployment’ where most people are temporarily unemployed as they change jobs. In these circumstances it is possible for long-term unemployment to drop significantly as people are more rapidly recruited by employers. However, **those that remain long-term unemployed are highly likely to have very low levels of employability** (for various reasons) and need active support to improve their employability. If not, there is a likelihood they will become economically inactive and stop seeking work.

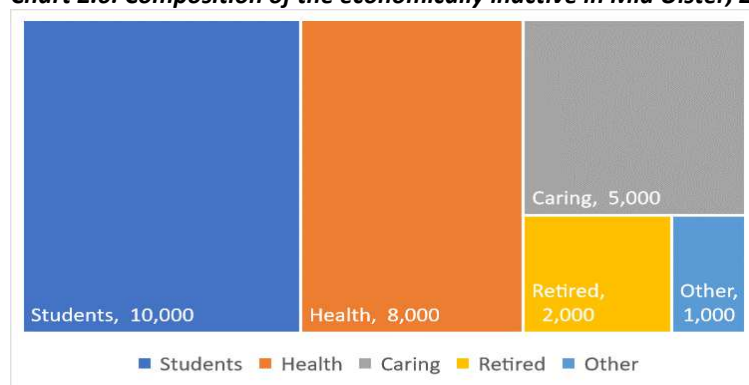
2.6. Economic inactivity in Mid Ulster

In 2021 27.7% of the adult working age population of Mid Ulster were economically inactive, of which over one third were students (10,000 people)²⁴. Excluding students, the economically inactive rate was 17%. This made Mid Ulster relatively low compared to Northern Ireland at 19.2%. However, a rate of 17% is an increase from an historic low of 14.7% in 2019 and marks a return to levels last seen in 2016.

Chart 2.6 shows the reasons why people are saying they are not looking for work and are economically inactive:

- Long-term sick – estimated 8,000 people (8.2% of working age population)
- Looking after family and home – estimated 4,000 people (4.1%); and
- Retired – estimated 2,000 (2%)
- Students – 10,000 up from 8,000 in 2020
- Other reasons – estimate 1,000 people (1%).²⁵

Chart 2.6: Composition of the economically inactive in Mid Ulster, 2021²⁶



There are significantly more women who are economically inactive. Excluding students there were 11,000 women (a rate of 24%) compared to 5,000 men (10.2%)²⁷. Almost two-thirds (10,000 or 62.5%) of the economically inactive (excluding students) report they have some work-limiting disability. 8,000 report ‘health’ as their main reason for not seeking work which

²³ Claimant Count Monthly Data.

²⁴ NISRA

²⁵ ‘Other reasons’ are predominantly ‘discouraged workers’ where people believe there are no available jobs that match their skills and requirements

²⁶ NISRA LFS Local LMI

²⁷ *ibid*

means a further 2,000 from the other groups also report some form of disability. This reinforces the strong influence that health conditions (including mental health) have on Mid Ulster's ability to increase the employment rate.

The economically inactive can be split by those 'who want work' (but not immediately available) and those 'who do not want work'. Official breakdowns for Council areas are not given but using the NI figures as approximations for Mid-Ulster gives:

- 14% of all economically inactive do 'want a job'
- 6% of all economically inactive 'want a job' and are long-term sick
- 3% of all economically inactive 'want a job' and are looking after family and home
- 5% of all economically inactive 'want a job' and are inactive for 'other reasons'

Table 2.6: Economically inactive wanting work in Mid Ulster in 2021²⁸

			Of which are:		
	All inactive (excl students)	Total want a job	Long-term sick	Looking after family	Other
Mid-Ulster	16,000	2,240	960	480	800
Want work rate of all inactive		14%	6%	3%	5%

If Mid-Ulster returned to its lowest rate of 22.4% then this would represent around 4,500 people (including students) in Mid-Ulster becoming economically active. However, around half of this drop is likely to be represented by students²⁹ and the other half are likely to be (but not necessarily) from the 2,240 'want work' group in Table 2.6. The key target group for achieving this will be to support and encourage those 'who want work' (2,240) to take more active steps to find employment. Approximately 1,000 of the target group are 'long-term sick' and of this group a significant percent will have mental health problems. Policy interventions should focus on helping those who want to return to suitable work, and overcoming the barriers to work this group may experience.³⁰

2.7. Qualifications profile of Mid Ulster population

Compared to other areas, Mid Ulster has high numbers of low and medium qualifications, but less high-level qualifications. The constant challenge for Mid Ulster will be meeting the increasing skills and qualifications demands for the new jobs being created which are increasingly likely to require high-level qualifications. This trajectory towards higher level skills needs is highlighted within the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre Northern Ireland Skills Barometer 2021 report³¹ which states:

'The labour market is demanding individuals with qualifications and for the most part, the education system is producing them. However, for a region to prosper in productivity, improve living standards and compete at a global level, the labour market needs more. Employers demand individuals qualified to the appropriate level but also qualified within the relevant subject matter. They require these individuals not only to have accurate levels of qualifications

²⁸ Source: NISRA inactivity by reason and LGD in User Requested Look-up Table

²⁹ The main reason for the rise in inactivity between 2019-21 was an increase of 3,000 students

³⁰ 'Is poor health driving a rise in economic inactivity?' The Health Foundation, October 2022

³¹ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1112986/Skills-Barometer-Summary-Report-2021_FINAL_SENT.pdf

within the correct field, but also with strong soft skills and recent relevant working experience. Collaboratively the education system, employers and policy makers must work to develop a system that sufficiently prepares talented young people to prosper within the world of work’.
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In the last decade significant progress has been made on reducing the numbers of people with **no qualifications**³². Almost one-third (30%) of 16–64-year-olds had no qualifications in 2012 and Mid Ulster was bottom of the league table. By 2021 there had been a large improvement to 12% and fourth in the Council rankings.

This improvement can be due to a number of factors:

- Retirement of older workers who had lower levels of formal qualifications
- A strong upward trend in educational attainment by young people
- Support to enable adults to have the opportunity to acquire new skills and qualifications.

This improvement has led to a current (2021) bulge in people with medium level qualifications and a significantly poor performance for high-level qualifications (Degrees and above). In Northern Ireland, Mid Ulster has the lowest proportion of its population with a Degree and the highest proportion below a Degree or with no qualifications.

Between 2012 to 2021 Mid Ulster moved from the lowest proportion with **medium level qualifications** to the highest proportion in 2021. In 2012, 43.5% of working age had medium qualifications whilst the Northern Ireland average was 53%. By 2021 this had flipped with Mid Ulster having 56.7% and a Northern Ireland rate of 45.9% - a significant difference. For those with **high qualifications Mid-Ulster’s position has worsened** relative to other areas between 2012-22. In 2012, 26% had a degree which was eighth in the Council rankings, by 2021 the rate was 32% and was bottom of the rankings by a considerable amount. In both years these Mid Ulster’s proportions were worse than the Northern Ireland average but the gap had significantly widened – from minus 2% to minus 10%.

Given the low skilled profile of Mid Ulster a decade ago there has been impressive progress. The challenge for the future is to meet the danger of the vulnerability of medium skilled jobs by upskilling the population to take advantage of the anticipated new jobs requiring high qualifications. **For example, for Mid Ulster to reach the Northern Ireland average for high qualifications (42%) a further 10,000 people would need to attain a degree level qualification.**

To boost high qualifications by this extent will take time and concerted action to provide opportunities for people to progress. Given the immediacy of some employers for high qualifications, the gap will likely need to be closed by inward migration of qualified people. The attractiveness of Mid Ulster as a place to live and work will therefore be important.

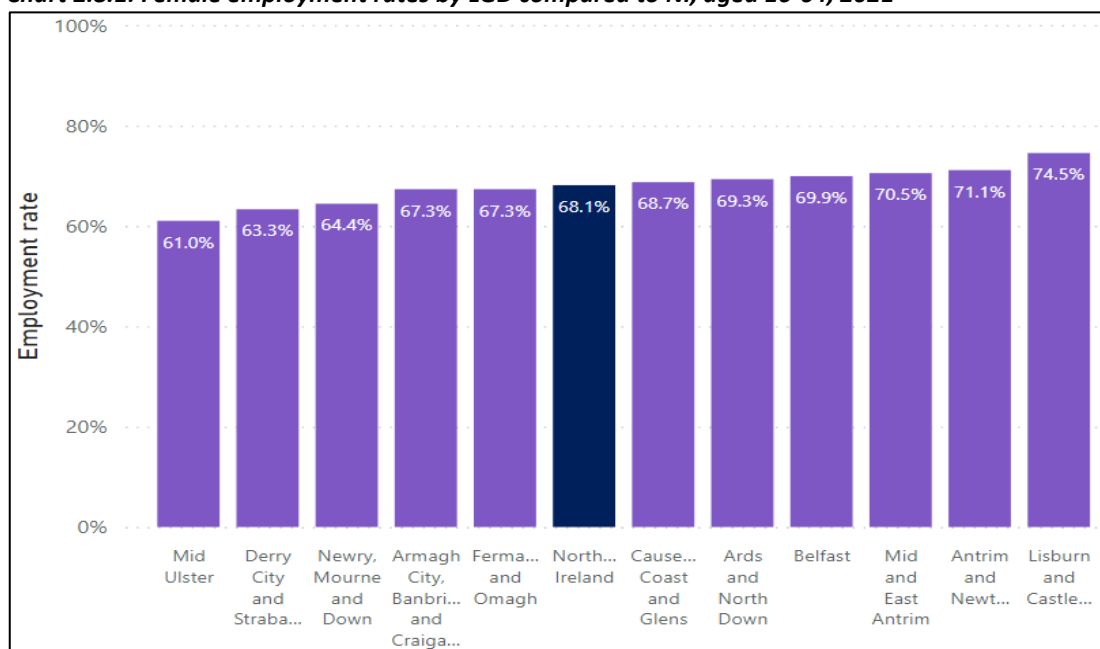
³² All figures for qualification levels in this section are from NISRA [LFS tables for Local Government Districts](#)

2.8. Encouraging an inclusive labour market in Mid Ulster

2.8.1. Gender Employment Gap

In 2021 Mid-Ulster had the lowest employment rate for women in Northern Ireland. At 61% it is considerably below the Northern Ireland average of 68%.

Chart 2.8.1: Female employment rates by LGD compared to NI, aged 16-64, 2021³³

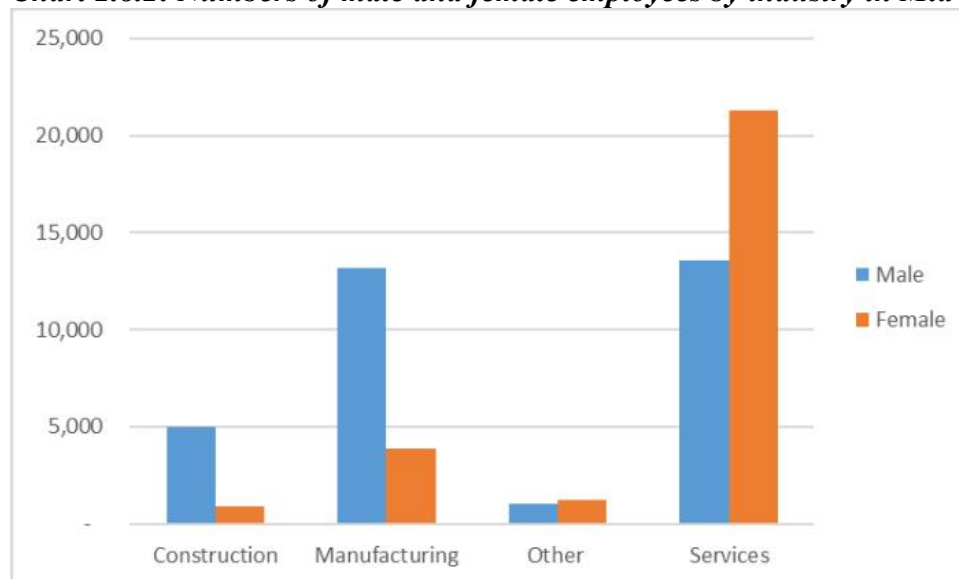


The Gender Employment Gap in 2021 was 18.6 percentage points and has widened further since 2020³⁴. This is possibly as a result of unequal shouldering of responsibility for increased childcare requirements arising from Covid-19 lock-downs and home schooling and shielding of vulnerable at-risk citizens with underlying health issues. **If the women's employment rate returned to the level in 2019 then there would be around 3,000 more women in employment.**

Women's employment is influenced by the nature of industries in Mid Ulster and the balance between public and private sector employment. Chart 2.8.2 show how women are significantly under-represented in Manufacturing and Construction and are over-represented in the Service sector. Between 2020 and 2021 there was a small reduction in Service sector jobs but increases in Manufacturing and Construction. Women are also over-represented in public sector jobs but Mid Ulster has the smallest percentage of public sector employment in Northern Ireland. These factors are likely to be major causes of the increasing gender gap.

³³ Labour Market Insight

³⁴ *ibid*

Chart 2.8.2: Numbers of male and female employees by industry in Mid Ulster, 2021³⁵

2.9. Disability Employment Gap

As shown in Table 2.9, at just 24%³⁶ Mid-Ulster has the lowest employment rate for disabled people in Northern Ireland. There is a large and significant difference between Mid-Ulster and other Council areas – the highest ranked Council (Lisburn & Castlereagh) has double (48%) the disability employment rate of Mid Ulster. There should be some caution when interpreting statistics for disability at the local level in Northern Ireland because of small sample sizes, but the low levels of disabled employment in Mid Ulster suggests there are some structural reasons in the labour market.

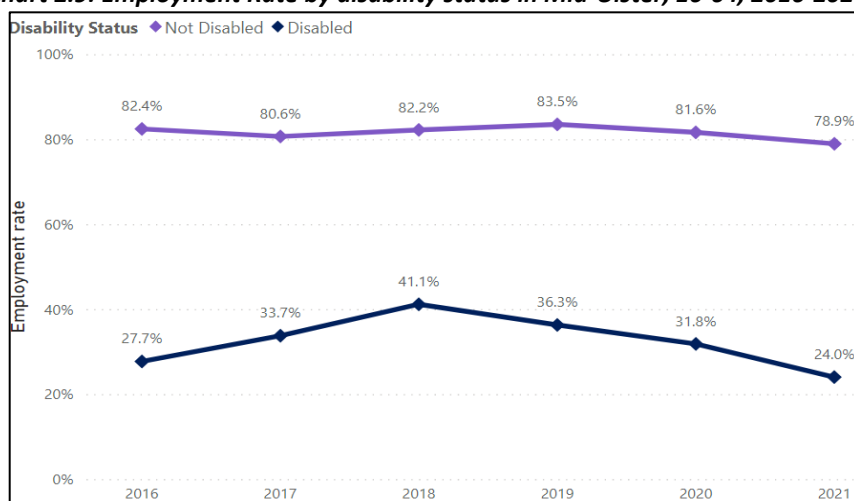
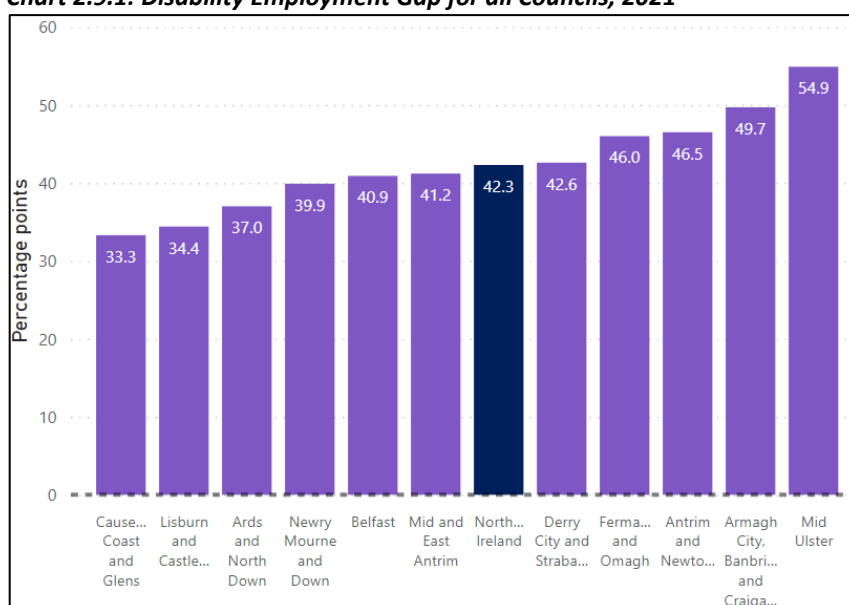
Chart 2.9 shows the employment rate for those who are disabled³⁷ and those who are not. The gap between the two rates is the 'Disability Employment Gap' – Chart 2.9.1 compares the gap with other Councils.

At a gap of 54.9 percentage points Mid Ulster is significantly higher than other Councils and the gap has grown by almost 5 percentage points since 2020.

³⁵ NISRA

³⁶ Labour Market Insight

³⁷ The definition of 'disability' is those who have a long-term physical or mental health condition (lasting or expecting to last 12 months or more) that affects their ability to carry out day to day activities.

Chart 2.9: Employment Rate by disability status in Mid-Ulster, 16-64, 2016-2021³⁸**Chart 2.9.1: Disability Employment Gap for all Councils, 2021³⁹**

However, in 2018 Mid Ulster had a disability employment rate of 41.1% (see Chart 2.9) and was ranked fourth highest. This large variation (in a relatively short time) may suggest that the statistics are not wholly reliable because of small samples (as warned by NISRA). If the statistics are a sufficient reflection of the current position, then if the disabled employment rate returned to 41% there would be **approximately 2,500 people with disabilities in Mid Ulster who would move in to work.**

2.10. Deprived communities

An inclusive labour market in Mid Ulster will need to address the geographical distribution of where unemployed and economically inactive people are more likely to live. The implications for service delivery of employment and skills interventions are that resources need to be

³⁸ Labour Market Insight

³⁹ ibid

focused on those communities which are more deprived and where significant numbers of eligible people will live.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures⁴⁰ provide a standardised method for ranking all communities (Super Output Areas) across Northern Ireland. Whilst this is based on 2017 data there will be minimal changes in the communities or the rankings. Across most measures Mid Ulster has a high number of communities in the bottom 25% of deprived communities in Northern Ireland. However, Mid Ulster performs better in the 'Employment Measure', consistent with its overall employment rate. There are five areas in Mid Ulster in the bottom 25% of the Northern Ireland employment measure: Coalisland South; Glebe 2; Killymoon; Ballysaggart; Town Park East 2.

Table 2.10: Ten most deprived communities in Mid Ulster by Measure and by Multiple Deprivation, 2017⁴¹

INCOME

Rank

68

Pomeroy

76

Coalisland South

113

Ballygawley

163

Maghera

183

Aughnacloy

198

Donaghmore

205

Oaklands

207

Upperlands

214

Draperstown

222

Dunnamore

EMPLOYMENT

Rank

96

Coalisland South

190

Glebe 2

217

Killymoon

219

Ballysaggart

223

Town Parks East 2

233

Coalisland North

238

Ardboe

262

Drumglass

267

Pomeroy

292

Gortallowry

HEALTH AND DISABILITY

Rank

82

Coalisland South

122

Glebe 2

137

Town Parks East 2

178

Ardboe

189

Oldtown

191

Coalisland North

192

Killymoon

203

Drumglass

210

Ballysaggart

236

Newbuildings

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

Rank

131

Glebe 2

155

Ballysaggart

191

Killymoon

199

Coalisland South

206

Drumglass

221

Town Parks East 2

235

Coalisland West and Newmills

250

Newbuildings

258

Ardboe

275

Maghera

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Rank

6

Dunnamore

10

Lissan

24

Swatragh 2

30

Lower Glenshane 1

36

Augher

40

Clogher

44

The Loop

53

Altmore

57

Caledon

59

Oaklands

LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Rank

65

Coolhill

122

Altmore

137

Mullaghmore

150

Caledon

195

Upperlands

197

Augher

203

Clogher

226

Killymeal

229

Stewartstown

250

Ballysaggart

CRIME AND DISORDER

Rank

90

Town Parks East 2

96

Tullagh

98

Mullaghmore

156

Ballysaggart

159

Newbuildings

197

Coalisland South

203

Gortallowry

204

Oldtown

215

Town Parks West

253

Glebe 1

MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION

Rank

92

Coalisland South

167

Pomeroy

206

Ardboe

218

Town Parks East 2

227

Glebe 2

232

Ballygawley

239

Ballysaggart

254

Killymoon

255

Maghera

271

Dunnamore

For each domain, as well as the overall multiple measure the 890 SOAs in NI are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 890 (least deprived)

⁴⁰ Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure, NISRA, 2017

⁴¹ ibid

3. Consultation Findings

Consultation to inform the Action Plan has included:

1. Employer online survey – circulated via LMP members and Council networks as well as promotion through Council's social media channels. A total of 45 responses were received for the survey.
2. Stakeholder meetings – face to face and virtual meetings were facilitated with Mid Ulster LMP and the following;
 - Employers represented on Mid Ulster LMP
 - Area Learning Partnership (Dungannon & Cookstown, Magherafelt)
 - Northern Regional College (NRC)
 - South West College (SWC)
 - College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)
 - Skills & Education Thematic Group (CP)
 - Network Personnel
 - Trade Union
 - MUDC – elected members & staff
 - Department for Communities
 - Jobs and Benefit Offices
 - Department for Economy Careers
 - Invest NI (Regional / Local)
 - Local Enterprise Agencies (Workspace, Cookstown & Dungannon)
 - MEGA
 - STEP

3.1. Employer Survey Findings

Respondents to the survey included a mix of businesses from different business sectors and micro, small, medium and large businesses, as shown below in figures 3.1.1/3.1.2

Fig. 3.1.1 Survey Respondents by Business Sector

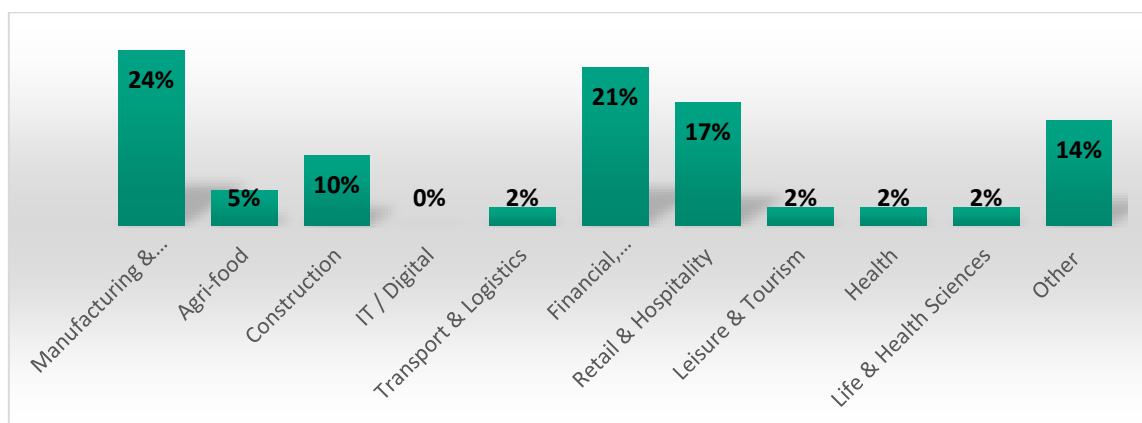
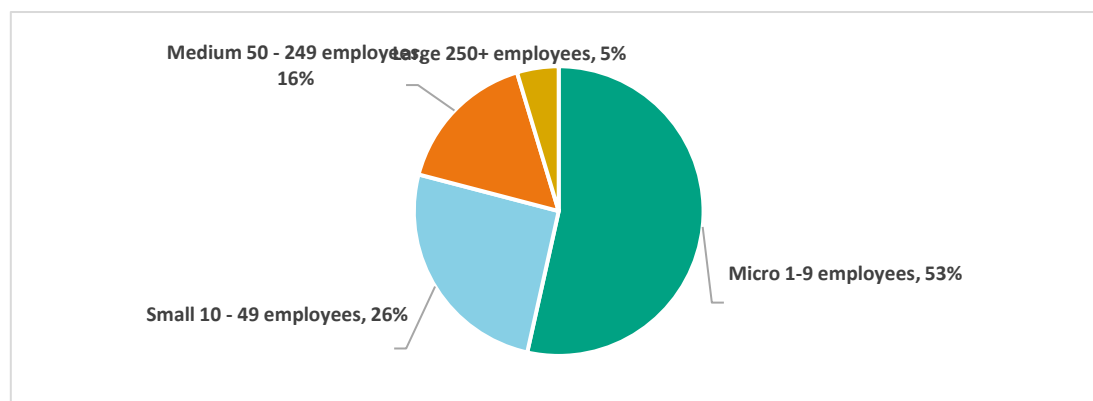
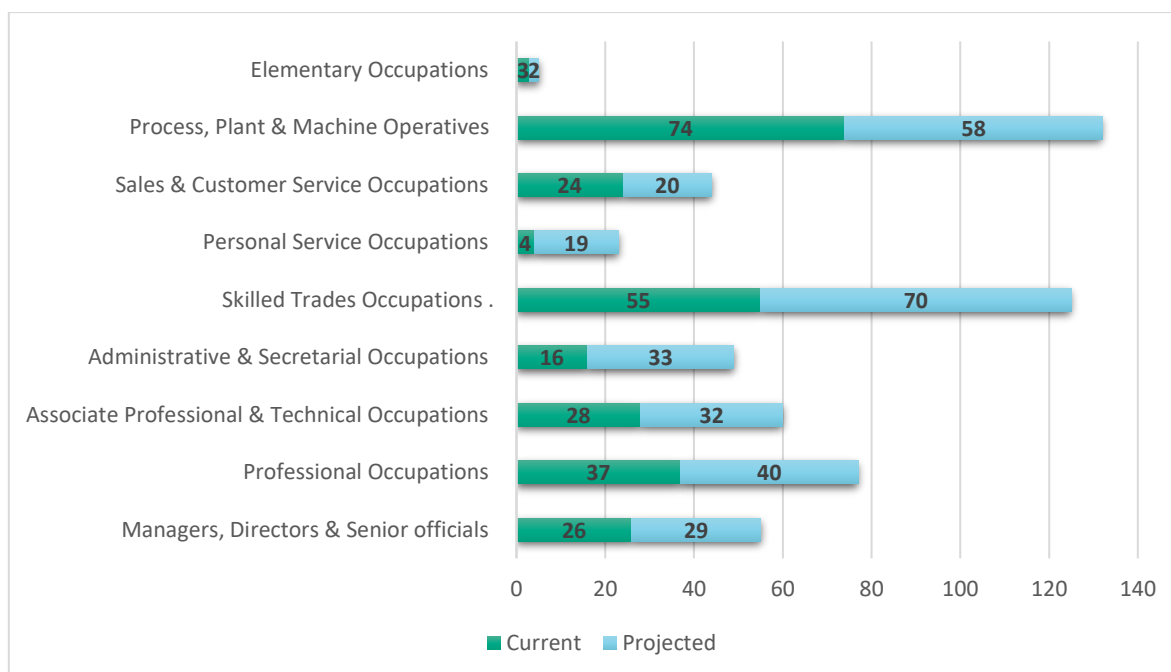


Fig. 3.1.2 Survey Respondents by Business Size



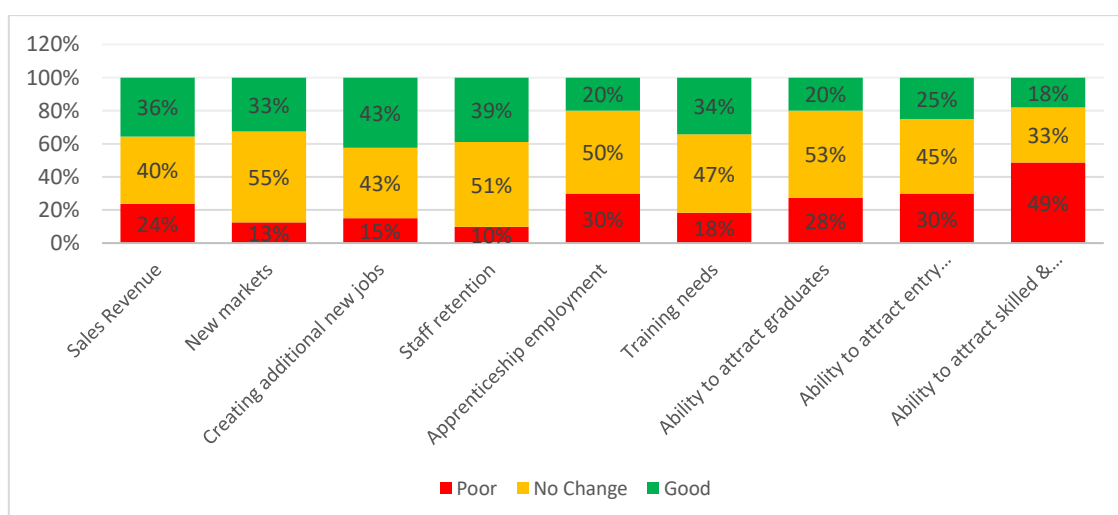
Respondent businesses currently employ 2,195 employees and report to have 267 current job vacancies and a further 303 projected within the next 12 months across all professional occupations. The job categories with the most vacancies reported (current and projected) are for process, plant and machine operatives (23%) and skilled trades occupations (22%).

Fig. 3.1.3: Current and Projected Job Vacancies



The business outlook over the next 12 months is considered to be 'no change' or 'good' for many employers in respect to a range of business development indicators as shown in figure 3.1.4. 43% of respondents report the outlook for their business is 'good' with respect to creating additional new jobs but 49% report that the outlook is 'poor' in terms of the ability to attract skilled and experienced staff.

Fig.3.1.4 Business Outlook Over the Next 12 Months



78% of respondents report they experience challenges in the recruitment of staff and the most reported issues are:

- Lack of applications (66%)
- Applicants don't have the necessary skills / qualifications (49%)

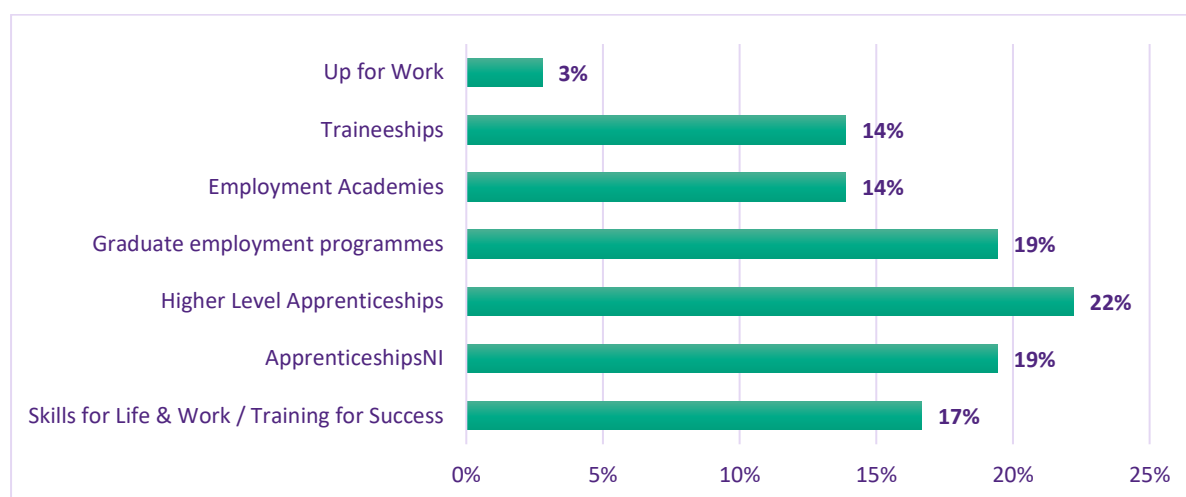
- Applicants don't have the necessary experience (49%)

Difficult to fill job roles reported included:

Fabricators & Welders	Accountancy & Finance
Sand blasters	Graduate & Locum Pharmacists
Painters	Administration
Assemblers	Engineers
Timber machining	HR
General operatives	Marketing & sales
Senior Architectural Technologies / Architect / interior design	Graphic design
Construction - QS, Foremen, Trades	Chefs
Product development – cosmetics industry	Taxi drivers

Findings would illustrate a disconnect between employers and mainstream support programmes. There is a low uptake of recruitment from employment programmes as shown in figure 3.1.5, with Higher Level Apprenticeships the most frequently reported by 22% of employers.

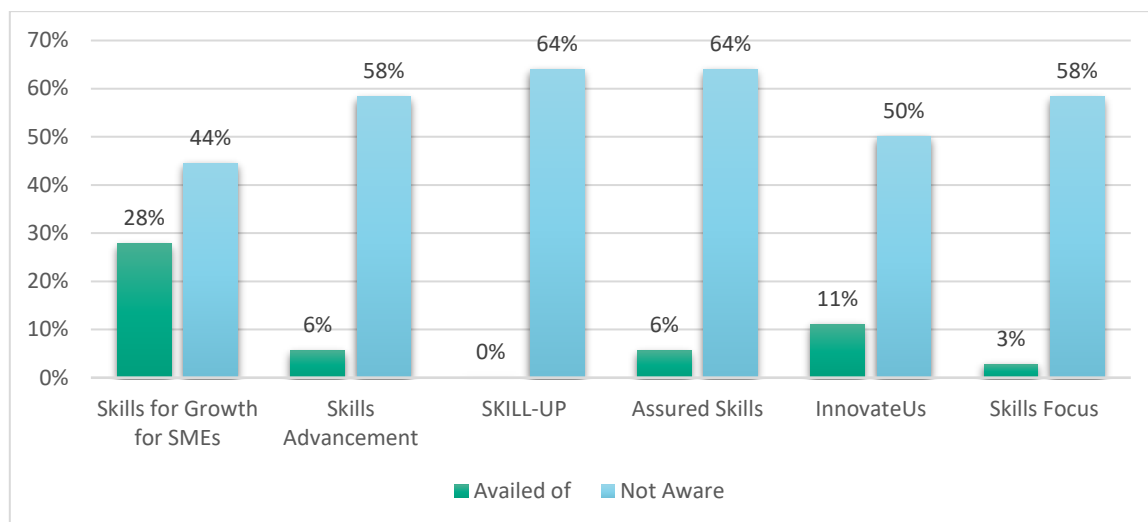
Fig.3.1.5: Employer Uptake of Recruitment Support Programmes



When asked why employers did not access current support, 52% reported they were not aware how to avail of these programmes and 20% reported they did not have time to engage. One employer commented *“Business owners and Directors simply don't have time to fill in 10/20 page forms and multiples of them for various programmes”*.

This trend is also reflected in responses to employer access to skills training interventions. There is a low uptake across all skills training programmes, with Skills for Growth the most frequently reported by 28% of respondents. No businesses have accessed SKILL UP, DfE's free training delivered by Northern Regional College and South West College locally. Generally, employers are not aware of the training schemes available.

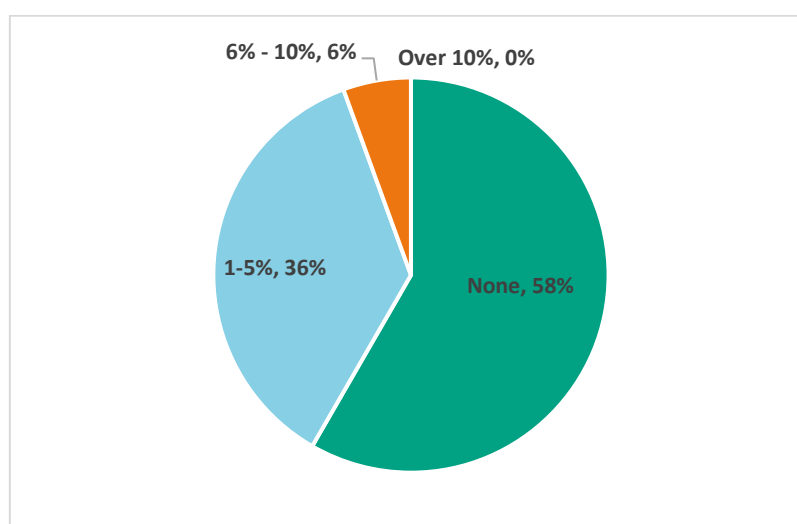
Fig. 3.1.6: Uptake of Skills Training Programmes



56% reported to have current employment and training support needs they would welcome help with, including specific training and help with recruitment.

As highlighted in the Strategic Assessment, Mid-Ulster has the lowest employment rate for disabled people in Northern Ireland. Low levels of disability employment were evidenced in the survey, with 58% of employers advising that none of their workforce has a disability.

Fig.3.1.7: % of Workforce with a Disability



Again, within those surveyed, knowledge and uptake of employer disability support programmes available which support the integration and inclusion of people with a disability into the workforce was reported as low.

- 53% were familiar with Access to Work (NI) – a DfC support programme providing advice and guidance for employers on employee's disability needs in the workplace and, if

appropriate, a financial grant towards the cost of necessary support. Examples of support available includes:

- adaptations to premises and equipment
 - communicator support at interviews
 - special aids and equipment
 - travel to work costs
 - a support worker
 - travel within work e.g., to attend a meeting or training course
-
- 33% were familiar with Workable (NI) – a DfC support programme providing support for people with a disability, for example, assigning a job coach to assist the worker with a disability and their colleagues adapt to the needs of the particular job, extra training and disability awareness training.
 - 29% were aware of Disability Action’s Job Match scheme which supports people with a disability with their job search and job preparation activity, including work tasters and placement and in work support.

When asked what support interventions would encourage them as an employer to increase employment of people with a disability, funding for adaptations was the most frequently reported response (55%), followed by job specific training (48%) and information on existing support for employers (42%). This reinforces the fact that employers are not aware that support already exists for adaptations and training.

Employers were asked to rank where they would welcome LMP intervention to meet the needs of business. The top five recommendations were:

1. Job specific skills training academies
2. Pre employment support for potential job applicants
3. Awareness raising of job opportunities in Mid Ulster
4. Support for upskilling staff
5. Promotion of apprenticeships

3.2. Stakeholder Findings

Stakeholder consultation highlighted many labour market supply and demand issues and challenges.

3.3. Employer Challenges

Recruitment was highlighted as a major issue and concern for local businesses and the lack of applications for vacancies, as well as an appropriately skilled, experienced labour supply was being experienced across all industry sectors, skill levels and job roles. There is a high level of competition between local businesses for existing labour and as a result of Covid and hybrid / remote working conditions, there is global competition, as people can now work anywhere in the world from their own home.

It was acknowledged that there is a need to move away from traditional recruitment methods which are not working and a need for employers to rethink job roles and working conditions that will attract the economically inactive e.g. flexible and agile working, part time / job share roles, terms and conditions that will attract people into work. There is a need for a cultural change and a mind shift amongst employers which will need supported, to consider opportunities within sectors such as manufacturing, engineering and construction that will attract people from the economically inactive cohort, especially women and people with a disability.

There are excellent examples of good practice in Mid Ulster in terms of modern employer recruitment / talent acquisition, engagement in Higher Level Apprenticeships and schools and industry links. The MEGA model which is industry led is an excellent working model that was consistently referenced as a best practice example that is supporting industry needs. MEGA is an industry led collaborative network focused specifically on promoting the manufacturing and engineering sector as a source of high value, long term employment and creating transformational career opportunities that deliver skills for life.

Stakeholders highlighted a need for better working across Mid Ulster in terms of showcasing good practice and supporting employers to modernise recruitment practice and avail of exiting support programmes which are not currently being well utilised by local businesses. There is a need to develop HLAs across other industry sectors and construction was reported as a difficult sector that would welcome HLA support and development.

3.4. Labour Market Challenges

Barriers to employment need addressed to facilitate access to opportunities in Mid Ulster. Barriers identified include:

- Affordable childcare is a huge issue and the number one barrier for women returners.
- Lack of confidence and awareness of individual capabilities discourages job search amongst the economically inactive.
- Mental health is a big issue, a legacy of the conflict and more recently Covid.
- There is a lack of recognition of transferable skills which excludes potentially suitable out of work individuals from applying for jobs.
- Terms and conditions are not attractive to encourage the economically inactive into work e.g. flexible working, part time roles, disability adaptations, wages. Specifically targeting needs to focus on women, people with a disability and older retirees.
- English language is a challenge for migrant communities and there is large demand in Mid Ulster for English language classes.
- Unemployment is particularly high within the traveller community which necessitates tailored support.

Stakeholders report a need for personalised and 1:1 support at a community level to support the unemployed and economically inactive back to work. Mentoring was highlighted as a very

valuable and effective approach that can add value to current support and programme interventions, facilitating and encouraging access to programmes as well as in work support.

The need for employer support was also highlighted with respect to changing recruitment practice and enabling employers to consider how they can attract the economically inactive into the labour market. Specifically it was recommended a sectoral recruitment approach should be considered, supporting employers in the manufacturing, engineering and construction sectors to encourage for example women and people with a disability to consider job opportunities.

Traditionally post primary schools have promoted a Higher Education career path and the Apprenticeship route would not have been as well promoted as an alternative option for school leavers. MEGA has helped to increase the awareness and profile of Higher Level Apprenticeships as a high quality career path and schools welcome HLA developments locally. However, there is a need to do more with respect to awareness raising, role models / local Ambassadors, parental education and access to local apprenticeship opportunities. There has been a growth in available HLAs in Mid Ulster and MEGA report to having 260 apprenticeship opportunities currently.

School engagement with employers is reported to be poor and post primary schools would welcome an opportunity for improved employer input to experiential learning opportunities that enhance and complement curriculum delivery. Schools are also challenged with sourcing work experience opportunities and report that work experience is essential to enhancing the employability skills of young people and raising their awareness of local industry and job opportunities.

3.5. Current Provision

Consultation with stakeholders has highlighted much current and planned activity that Mid Ulster LMP will need to ensure Action Plan activities complement and add value to. Provision includes:

- DfC suite of support programmes
- Further Education (FE) provision including the new Step-Up programme targeting women returners and the Ignite Your Skills programme targeting businesses and the economically inactive, which will adopt a sectoral focus based on local industry needs
- Enterprise activities through the Local Enterprise Agency (LEA) network including Go For It and Exploring Enterprise
- Potential PEACEPLUS applications
- DfC plans for a Labour Market Observatory
- Current European Social Fund (ESF) activity which will cease on 31st March 2023 and potential UK Shared Prosperity projects which Mid Ulster LMP is aware of have been submitted by local organisations. At the time of drafting the Action Plan, UK Shared Prosperity Fund decisions had not been made. Funded activity will need to be factored into Action Plan delivery once announcements have been made on successful projects to avoid duplication.

3.6. Summary Feedback

Consultation findings reinforce the evidence presented through the statistical analysis and have highlighted the following key challenges for consideration by Mid Ulster LMP:

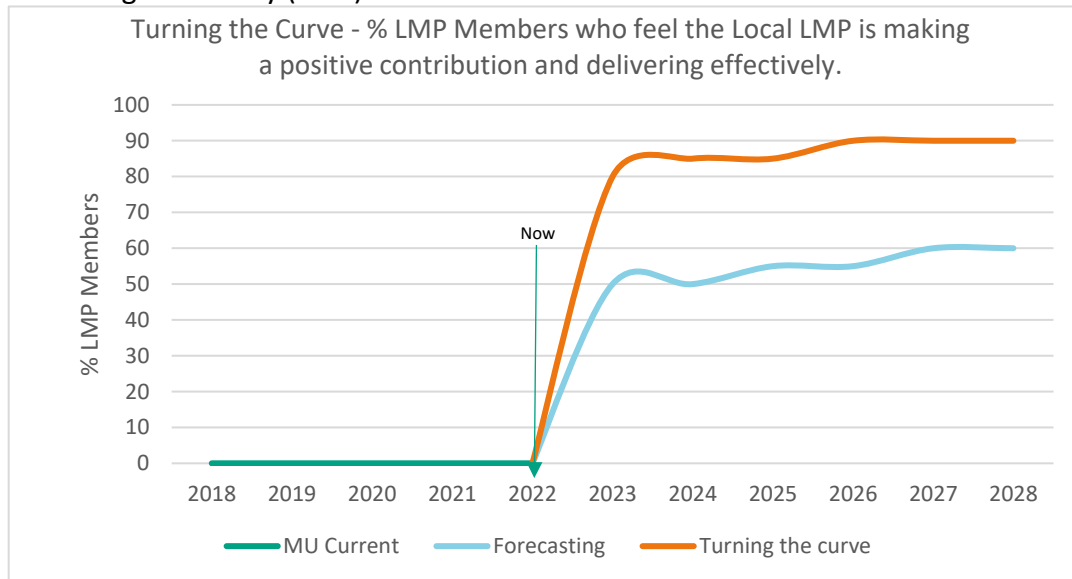
- There is a need address the demand for labour across sectors, and especially within skilled trades and process operatives job roles. There is support for the academy model.
- Employers are not actively engaging in mainstream support programmes and there is a need to promote and raise awareness of support interventions as well as a need to better engage with employers to support their access to all relevant support.
- There is a need to proactively support the inclusion of women and people with disabilities into the labour market. This will necessitate employer focused activity to raise awareness of barriers to employment and consider cultural changes needed in respect to terms and conditions and necessary supports / adaptations.
- Supporting the long term unemployed and economically inactive back into the labour market will also necessitate focused, personalised support and 1:1 mentoring delivered in local communities where people feel safe and barriers such as personal development and mental health can be addressed has been recommended as an effective approach that would add value to mainstream delivery.
- HLAs are becoming increasingly more popular as a career path for school leavers and there is a need to build on the good work that has been delivered and further enhance resources to promote HLAs and improve awareness raising of HLA job opportunities locally.
- There is evidence of good practice (recruitment, HLAs, schools and industry working) that needs to be rolled out across different sectors, sharing the learning between employers and all stakeholders.
- The industry led MEGA model is an effective model that should be replicated across other sectors.

3.7. Defining the interventions - turning the curve

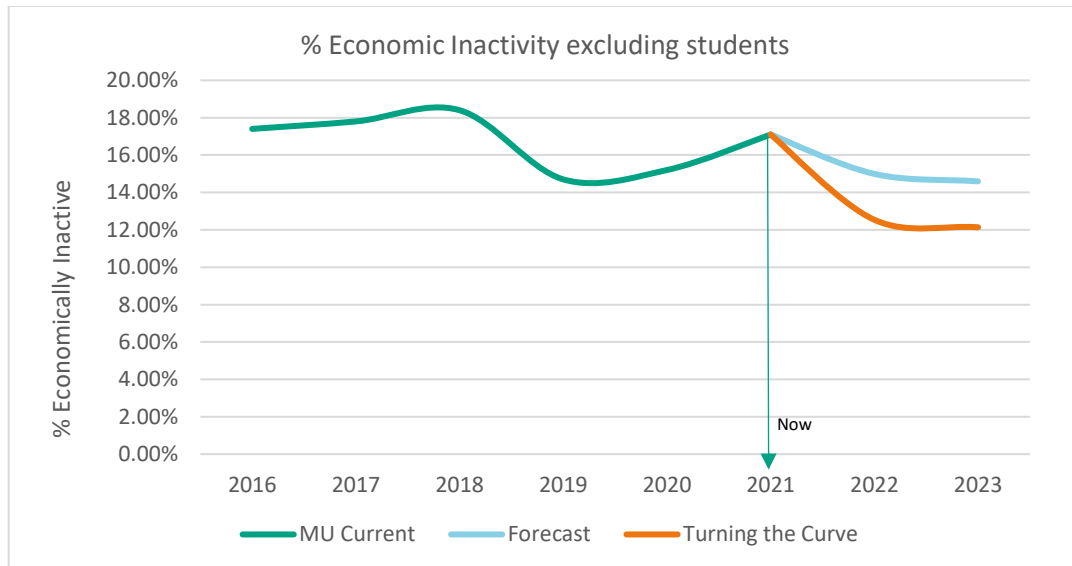
An outcome-based approach has been used to address the following local priorities in 2023/24. **To Note:** with reference to the Turning the Curve exercises, the term “Now” refers to the assessment of the most recently available data made at the time of the review.

Strategic Priority (SP) 1: LMP Delivery and Development

% LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)

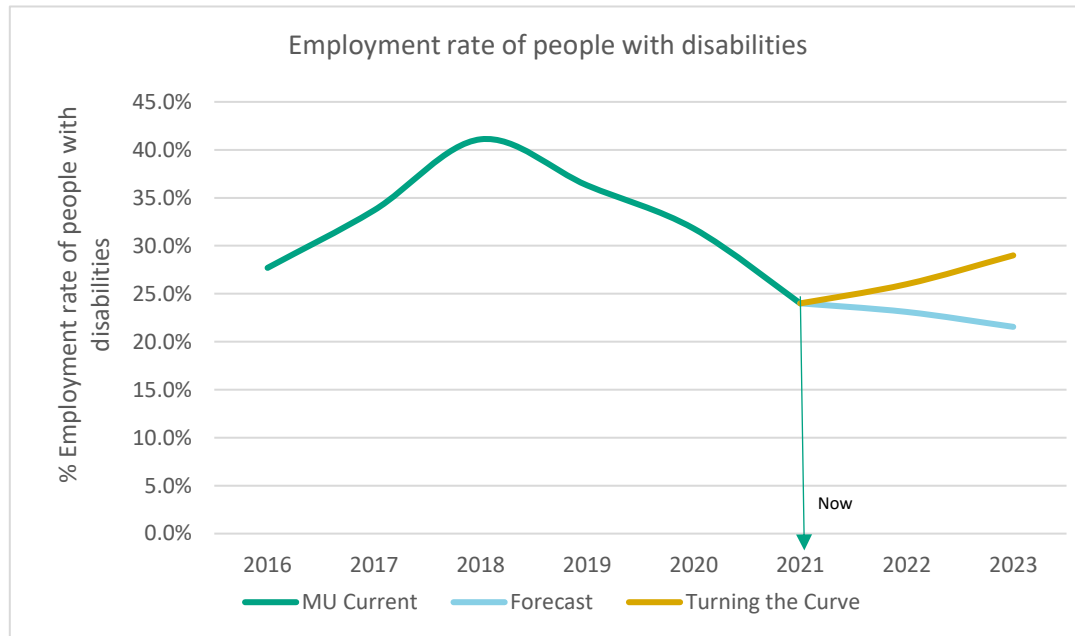
**Strategic Priority (SP) 2: Economic Inactivity**

% Economic Inactivity excluding students (NISRA LMI Portal)

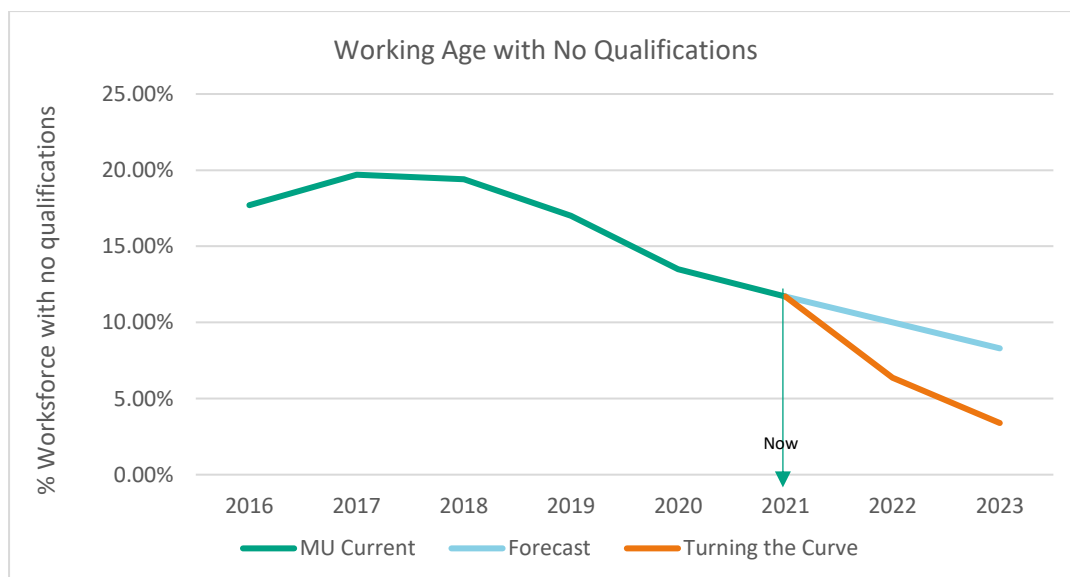


Strategic Priority (SP) 2: Disability

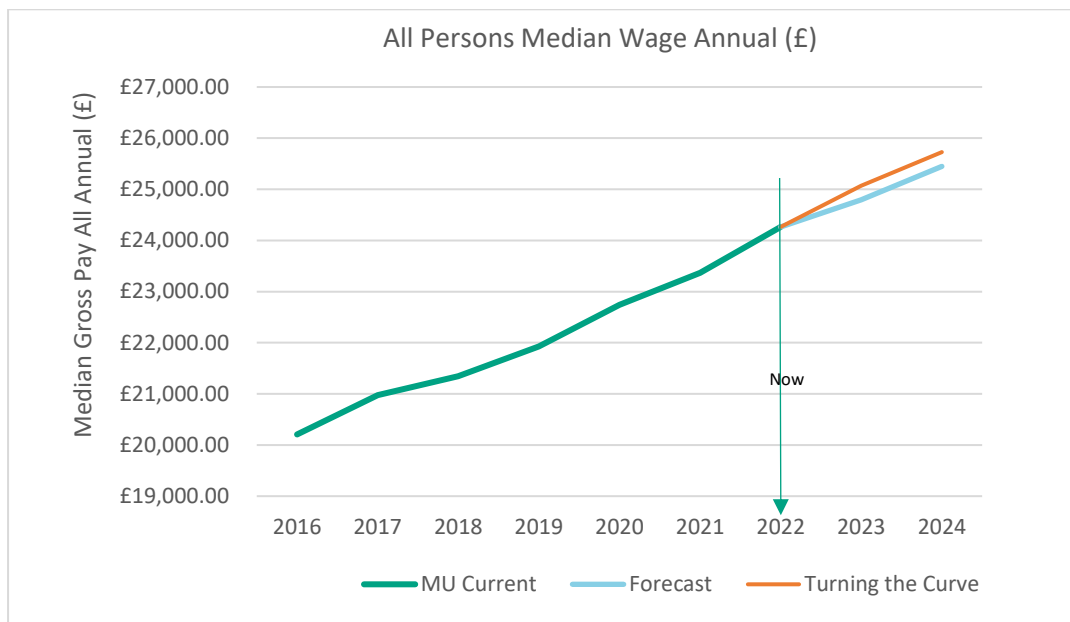
% Employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA LMI Portal)

**Strategic Priority (SP) 2: Skilled Labour Supply**

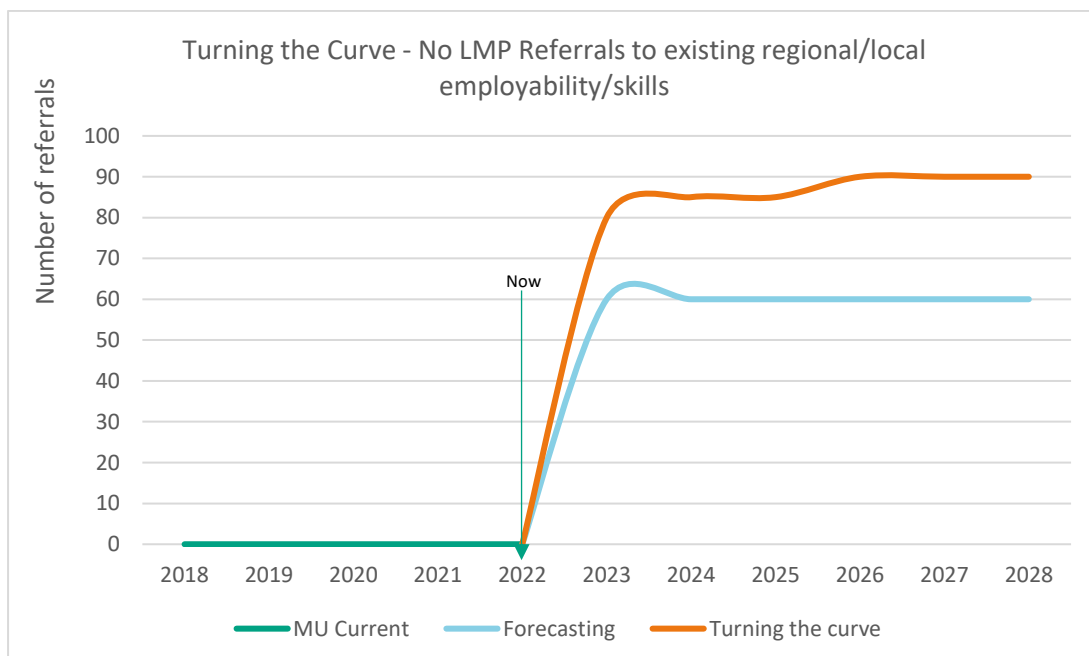
% Working Age: No Qualifications (NISRA – Labour Force Survey)



All Persons Median Wage Annual (NISRA LMI Portal)

**Strategic Priority (SP) 3: Increased Awareness**

Increased awareness of existing regional/local employability or skills provision (LMP)



4. Mid Ulster LMP 2023/24 Action Plan

4.1 Introduction

In January/February 2023 the Mid Ulster LMP undertook a Strategic Assessment of employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Mid Ulster Council Area. This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect priority employability and labour market issues in the area and was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the results of ongoing district wide engagement and consultation across the council area.

Cognisance was also taken of the:

- Mid Ulster Community Plan
- The 10X Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Mid-South West Region Growth Deal
- Mid Ulster Economic Development Strategy
- Community Wealth Building Model

As a result of the Planning Exercise the following Themes have been identified as local priority:

1. Economic Inactivity
2. Disability
3. Skilled Labour Supply

Mid Ulster LMP focused on the above themes as they are the most relevant to the Council area which has a strong local economy, low unemployment, low NEETs (young people who were not in education, employment or training), lower than NI average economic inactivity but considerable problems with respect to disabled and female participation within the local economy.

A Turning the Curve Exercise was undertaken in relation to the current Local LMP Action Plan Themes and projects and considered the programmes of work in relation to the outcomes they delivered.

4.2 Alignment to strategic priorities

The Mid Ulster LMP Action Plan has been designed to align with the Strategic Priorities (SPs) defined by DfC in the development of Mid Ulster LMP programme, namely:

Strategic Priority 1 – To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for Mid Ulster

Strategic Priority 2 – To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally.

Strategic Priority 3 – To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.

A range of indicators have been selected to assess delivery under each of these strategic priorities.

4.3 Baseline information

The Mid Ulster LMP will impact on the following set of indicators from the baseline position stated below.

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2022/23 Baseline	
Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area	LMP Delivery and Development % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP) (see turning the curve graph on pg. 26)	2018	0
		2019	0
		2020	0
		2021	0
		2022	0
		no baseline data to be collected until end Q4 22	
Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	Economic Inactivity % Economic Inactivity excluding students (NISRA LMI Portal) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 26)	2017	17.80%
		2018	18.40%
		2019	14.70%
		2020	15.20%
		2021	17.10%
	Disability % Employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA LMI Portal) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 27)	2017	33.7%
		2018	41.1%
		2019	36.3%
		2020	31.8%
		2021	24.0%
	Skilled Labour Supply % Working Age: No Qualifications (NISRA – Labour Force Survey) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 27)	2017	19.70%
		2018	19.40%
		2019	17.00%
		2020	13.50%
		2021	11.70%
# All Persons Median Wage Annual (NISRA LMI Portal) (See turning the curve graph on pg. 28)		2018	£21,345
		2019	£21,924
		2020	£22,743
		2021	£23,366
		2022	£24,264

Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally	Increased Awareness											
	Increased awareness of existing regional/local employability or skills provision (LMP)											
	(See turning the curve graph on pg. 28)											
		<table><tr><td>2018</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	2018	0	2019	0	2020	0	2021	0	2022	0
2018	0											
2019	0											
2020	0											
2021	0											
2022	0											
		no baseline data to be collected until end Q1 23										

5 Action Plan

Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area							
Indicators: % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)							
Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
LMP Delivery	SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development To support the effective partnership delivery of the LMP Action Plan and development of future Action Plans.	Bi-monthly meetings of the LMP. Annual survey of LMP members.	1 April 2023	31 Mar 2024	Staff Resource + SP1.1 £1714.40 Hospitality and Catering	How much did we do? • 6 x LMP meetings. How well did we do it? • (130/216) 60% attendance at LMP meetings. Is anyone better off? • (27/36) 75% of LMP members who think that the LMP is making a positive difference.	1,2,3,4
Strategic Planning	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan To complete a 3-year strategic assessment and develop a 1 year action plan for 2024-25	Complete a 3-year LMP Strategic Assessment for 2024-2027 and develop a 1-Year Action Plan for 2024-25.	1 Sept 2023	31 Jan 2024	Staff Resource + SP1.2: £20,000 Ext. consulting.	How much did we do? • 1 x Action Plan drafted to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP • 1 x Strategic Assessment developed on time to inform LMP Action Plan 2024/25 How well did we do it? • (27/36) 75% of LMP Members who feel that their views have been taken into	3,4

						<p>account with regard to the Action Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (27/36) 75% of LMP Members who feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Strategic Assessment. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (27/36) 75 % of LMP members reporting increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues. 	
Working Groups/Sub Committees	<p>SP1.3: Construction Sector Working Group</p> <p>Continue to support the Construction Sector Working Group to enable submission of a Collaborative Growth Project application and support delivery of a 2-3 year Action Plan to increase attractiveness of the Construction Sector within Mid Ulster.</p>	<p>Bi-monthly meetings of Working Group.</p> <p>Submission of Collaborative Growth Application to Invest NI.</p> <p>Commence delivery of Construction Sector Action Plan.</p>	1 July 2023	31 Mar 2024	<p>Staff Resource +</p> <p>SP1.2: £0</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 x Working Group meetings. <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (25/40) 62.5% attendance of working group members at working groups meetings. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (6/8) 75% of Working Group members who feel clear on their role. • (6/8) 75% of Working Group/ members who feel that their views have been listened to 	

Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally							
Indicators: % Economic Inactivity excluding students, % Employment rate of people with disabilities, % Working Age: No Qualifications, # All Persons Median Wage Annual							
Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
Economic Inactivity	SP2.1: Sector Based Academies Target a swift reduction in the number of job claimants and improve economic activity rates through sector focused employability academies to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into the workplace.	Sector-focused Employability Academies co-designed supported by the Project Officer and local employers. 4 academies - 20 participants per cohort (80 total): Tourism and Hospitality (£750 per participant); Construction (£1500 per participant); H&SC (£750 per participant); HGV/Coach Driver (£2000 per participant). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability facilitator/mentor to engage the participants. • Mentoring, personal employability development plans, CV writing & mock interviews. (4-12 weeks depending on need) • Industry ambassador led master classes. (4-12 weeks depending on sector requirement) • Guaranteed interview on completion of academy. • Continued Mentorship for 6 months after employment. Project Delivery Officer and LMP Manager to provide Project	1 Jul 2023	31 Mar 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.2: £116,000 Delivery partner(s) costs for 80 participants: Tourism: £15,000 (20 x £750) Construction: £30,000 (20 x £1,500) Health and Social Care: £15,000 (20 x £750) HGV: £40,000 (20 x £2,000) Internal Costs: Project Delivery Officer (20%) £10,100 LMP Manager (10%) £5,740	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 participants enrolled • 4 Academies provided. How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (60/80) 75% academy participants completed the programme • (60/80) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (45/60) 75% participants gaining new employment. • (45/60) 75% of participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project • (30/45) 75% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme 	2,3,4

		Management, Course Co-Design with Industry and assisting delivery agent with participant and employer recruitment and PR/Marketing of the project					
	SP2.2 Agri-Food Academy The agri-food sector is one of the largest sectors within Mid Ulster Council area, providing considerable employment to its residents. The agri-food sector is facing similar recruitment challenges to other sectors across Mid Ulster and this stand-alone academy will attempt to reduce unemployment and encourage the unemployed and economically inactive into agri-food jobs.	Agri-Food Employability Academies co-designed by local employers and supported by the Project Officer. 1 Academy - 20 participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employability facilitator/mentor to engage the participants. • Personal employability development plans, CV writing & mock interviews. • Industry ambassador led master classes. • Digital literacy improvement. • Guaranteed interview on completion of academy 	1 Jul 2023	31 Mar 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.2: £21,500 delivery partner(s) costs for 20 participants at an average of £1,075/head.	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants enrolled • 1 Academy provided. How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15/20) 75% academy participants completed the programme. • (15/20) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (11/15) 73% participants gained employment. • (11/15) 73% of participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project • (8/11) 73% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme 	2,3,4
	SP2.3: Women Returners Programme Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with one of the	Women Returners Programme to increase the number of women in paid employment across the council area.	April 2023	March 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.7: £40,790 Delivery Partner Costs:	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 female participants enrolled • 20 employers engaged. 	1,2, 3,4

	<p>largest gender employment gaps in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to support women into employment across the MUDC area.</p>	<p>Engage 20 prominent local employers on a 1-1 basis in a targeted Employer led and focused programme to increase awareness of benefits of flexible working policies most beneficial to Women Returners</p> <p>Deliver an awareness programme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 2-day support specific to their available job roles - raise awareness of need for and assist in development of flexible working policies, promote benefits of Women Returners to workforce and assist in recruitment process • Inform them of other available supports via FE Colleges, Women's Centres, Local Training organisations, Universities etc. • Develop case studies. <p>Engage 20 Female Participants who are currently Economically Inactive</p> <p>Applicants will receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 hours 1:1 coaching. • 2 small group mentoring to include employability support. • Mentoring support for a further 6 month period for those successfully placed in employment • Signposted to job roles identified by employers and 			<p>Employer Training: £5,000</p> <p>Participant 1-1 Coaching £13,000 Small Group mentoring: £2,000</p> <p>Project Admin and PR: £10,000</p> <p>Internal Costs: Project Delivery Officer (10%) £5,050 LMP Manager (10%) £5,740</p>	<p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (15/20) 75% participants complete the programme • (15/20) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. • (14/20) 70% of employers reported satisfaction with the project. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10/14) 50% of participants gained new employment. • 40% of participants (8) sustain employment 6 months after programme completion. 	
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		<p>encouraged to apply for these and other suitable roles within the labour market.</p> <p>Project Delivery Officer and LMP Manager to provide Project Management, assisting delivery agent with participant and employer recruitment and PR/Marketing of the project.</p>					
	<p>SP2.4: Mentorship Programme</p> <p>There are labour market shortages throughout Mid Ulster whilst at the same time there are job seekers, unemployed, NEETs, long-term unemployed and economically inactive residents. During the development of the Action Plan, we were told that those furthest from the labour market require support, 1:1 mentoring to develop the necessary confidence, motivation and skills to enter/re-enter the labour market.</p>	<p>Community-led mentoring programme which will provide an intensive 1:1, group work, support programme for 90 'hardest to reach' individuals with the goal to support them into employment, further education or training. Programme to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement & outreach ▪ Assessment & Personal Planning ▪ Employability & Skills Planning ▪ Support into employment, training or further education ▪ Aftercare (12 weeks 1:1 support plus 6 month aftercare mentoring support) <p>Targets take into account high dropout rates for those who are 'hard to reach' and therefore far from the labour market.</p>	1 Jun 2023	31 Mar 2024	<p>Staff Resource + SP2.3: delivery partner costs for 90 participants £64,000 at an average cost of £711/head</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much did we do? 90 participants enrolled • How well did we do it? (54/90) 60% participants completed the programme • (54/90) 60% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. • Is anyone better off? (16/54) 30% participants gained employment. • (8/16) 50% still in employment 6 months after completing the programme • (16/54) 30% participants undertake further education or training following completion of the project 	1,2,3,4

Skilled Labour Supply	<p>SP.2.5: Graduate/ Internship/ Work Experience/ Mentor Toolkit</p> <p>To develop a toolkit which provides a step-by-step guide to local employers to assist with employing graduates, offer internships and work experience, and develop mentorship roles for those close to or in early retirement; develop appropriate HR policies to assist with recruitment and retention including flexible working, terms and conditions; provide best practice to employee health and wellbeing. The Toolkit will make it simpler for local employers to offer work experience or placement opportunities.</p>	<p>To commission external, professional support to produce a Toolkit which sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frameworks/templates and best practice on benefits of recruiting work and graduate placements, internships, work experience, engaging mentors from early retirees etc. ▪ Employer role – how does the employer benefit ▪ Terms, duration, costs, government support etc. ▪ How and when is best to offer opportunities ▪ Legal and insurance obligations <p>(6 weeks)</p> <p>Development of draft/sample HR policies relating to recruitment and retention, employee wellbeing and flexible working policies.</p> <p>Delivery of the toolkit to at least 50 local employers through enhanced employer engagement via a mixture of small group events or one to one support. (On-going throughout year. Half day engagement per employer)</p> <p>Project Delivery Officer and LMP Manager to provide 1:1 support to local employers as well as project management, organisation of group info sessions and PR/Marketing of the project.</p>	<p>1 Jul 2023</p>	<p>31 Mar 2024</p>	<p>Staff Resource +</p> <p>SP2.4: £37,575</p> <p>£7,000 external consultant</p> <p>Internal costs: Project Delivery Officer (55%) £27,775 LMP Manager (7%) £4,020</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Toolkit provided • 50 employers engaged <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (40/50) 80% of employers reported satisfaction with the project. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (20/50) 40% of employers creating work placements. • (30/50) 60% of employers who reported feeling more confident that their business would be more successful. 	<p>2,3,4</p>
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Disability	<p>SP2.6: Employer-led Disability Inclusion Programme</p> <p>Improve on Mid Ulster's position as the Council region with the largest disability employment gap in NI by investing in an employer-led employability programme that aims to improve employer understanding of special needs and the support services available. This programme has been developed as a precursor to the new DfC Trust Inclusion service.</p>	<p>Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme to increase the number of disabled people in paid employment. Engage charitable subject-matter expertise to deliver the initiative. Engage 20 prominent local employers in a targeted Employer-led and focused programme to match employers to participants. Deliver an employer education & awareness programme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address knowledge gaps & misperceptions about disability • inform on available support (Access to Work, Workable NI) • provide 2 week training and support specific to their available job roles • Develop case studies. <p>Applicants will receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted recruitment programme specific to available job roles & access available support packages to place 20 participants. (4 weeks) • Mentoring and employability support provided to applicants over the life of the programme and for a further 6 month period for those successfully placed in employment • Guaranteed Job Interview 	1 Jul 2023	31 March 2024	<p>Staff Resource + SP2.5: £37,575 (£1,878 per participant)</p> <p>Delivery partner costs: Employer Training: £10,000</p> <p>Participant Training: £10,000</p> <p>Project Admin and PR: £10,000</p> <p>Internal Costs: Project Delivery Officer (15%) £7,575</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 participants enrolled • 20 employers engaged. <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (16/20) 80% participants complete the programme • (16/20) 80% employers complete the programme • (15/20) 75% of participants reported satisfaction with the project. • (15/20) 75% of employers reported satisfaction with the project <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (10/16) 62.5% of participants successfully secure employment • (6/10) 60% of participants sustain employment 6 months after programme completion. 	2,3,4
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		Project Delivery Officer to provide Project Management, assisting delivery agent with participant and employer recruitment and PR/Marketing of the project.					
	SP2.7: Disability Charter Working with DfC Disability Services to introduce a local MUDC Disability Charter which recognises local employers who support disabled workers within the workforce.	Appoint charitable subject-matter expertise to develop charter standard, working closely with DfC Disability Services. Undertake a basic disability audit of businesses who have engaged as part of the Disability Inclusion Programme and award Charter mark where appropriate. Audit (half day) to be carried out within 4 weeks of completing training and support.	1 Oct 2023	31 March 2024	Staff Resource + SP2.6: £7,500 external consultant	How much did we do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 employers engaged How well did we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (12/16) 75% of employers reported satisfaction with the project. Is anyone better off? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (8/16) 50% of employers awarded the MUDC Disability Charter. • (12/16) 75% of employers more knowledgeable to recruit employees with a disability 	3,4

Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally							
Indicators: % Increased awareness of relevant existing projects / initiatives and building confidence through locality based engagement (LMP); # LMP referrals to regional/local employability/skills provision (LMP)							
Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance Measures	Delivery Quarter
Increased Awareness	<p>SP3.1: Job Fairs / Employability Events</p> <p>Promote the programmes and support / encourage employers and participants to access and implement the schemes through a range of events to include employer engagement/education, apprenticeship and job fair, partner events, local job fairs.</p> <p>Marketing of the LMP.</p>	<p>Improve employer & participant knowledge and access to existing employability and skills services by hosting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 2 localised Job Fairs per JBO (Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt) • 1 Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair • A minimum of 2 employer events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effective Recruitment and Retention in today's world and the need for flexible working policies ○ Disability Inclusion – how to remove barriers and myths and tap into a readily available labour pool. • Up to 3 localised employer events – recruitment and retention/terms and conditions/ flexible working/ employee wellbeing. • A minimum of 2 Partner Events – Bring IT On 	1 April 2023	31 March 2024	<p>SP3.1: £20,500</p> <p>Apprenticeship and Job Fair £9,000</p> <p>Large Employer Events £4,000</p> <p>Localised Job Fairs £3,000</p> <p>Localised Employer Events £1,000</p> <p>Partner Events £1,000</p> <p>PR and Marketing of the LMP £2,500</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Events • Attendees at Events (1280) <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (400/500) 80% of attendees report satisfaction with event. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (65/130) 50% of attendees at employer events reported increased awareness of LMP programme • (225/450) 50% of attendees intend to apply for a job as a result of the job fairs 	1,2, 3,4

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 x large school event, ○ 1 x Enterprise Week event <p>Event Attendee Numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship and Jobs Fair: 300 • Large Employer Events: 100 • Localised Jobs Fairs: 450 • Localised Employer Events: 30 • Partner Events: 400 <p>Marketing of the LMP</p>					
	<p>SP3.2: Female Job Fair / Employability Events</p> <p>To hold a job fair which provides opportunities for women from MUDC area who are unemployed, underemployed or looking at career change opportunities to meet with local employers offering employment opportunities. The Women's Job Fair will be organized in conjunction with local JBOs (Magherafelt, Dungannon & Cookstown).</p>	<p>Improve employer & female jobseekers from MUDC with the knowledge and access to existing employability and skills services by hosting a Women's only Job Fair.</p> <p>Influential speaker – one per event to give presentation on real life experience and achievements.</p> <p>15 employers per event 1 Speaker per Event Support agencies to include FE colleges and universities</p>	1 July 2023	30 Nov 2023	SP3.1: £7,500 Job & careers fair	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Jobs Fair • 150 female participants. • 45 employers • 3 Speakers <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (90/150) 60% of jobs fair attendees rated the event as helpful for finding work, training, further education opportunities <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (75/150) 50% of attendees intend to apply for at least one job because of the job fair. • (30/45) 67% of employers participating who 	3,4

						<p>reported the event was a good platform to showcase their sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (30/45) 67% of employers participating reported the event would assist in filling vacancies 	
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6 Budget

The proposed budget for Mid Ulster LMP's 2023/24 Action Plan is set out in the table below.

Budget Category	Budget Sub Category	Budget 2023-2024
Administration	LMP Staff Costs	
	LMP Manager (73%)	£41,246.66
	LMP Finance and Admin Officer (100%)	£35,736.56
	LMP Project Delivery Officer (50%)	£10,731.36
	Running costs	
	Staff mileage	£2,250.00
	Printing & stationary	£404.02
	LMP Internal Audit	£2,000.00
	LMP Chairperson Stipend @ £80 per mth	£960.00
	LMP Vice-Chair Stipend @ £50 per mth	£600.00
	Total Administration	£93,928.60
Operational	Strategic Priority 1	
	SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development	£1,714.40
	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan	£20,000.00
	SP1.2: Development of a 3-Year Strategic Assessment and 1-Year Action Plan	£0
	Strategic Priority 2	
	SP2.1: Sector Based Academies	£115,840.00
	SP2.2 Agri-food Academy	£21,500.00
	SP2.3: Women Returners Programme	£40,790.00
	SP2.4: Mentorship Programme	£64,000.00
	SP.2.5: Graduate/ Internship/ Work Experience/ Mentor Toolkit	£38,795.00
	SP2.6: Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme	£37,575.00
	SP2.7: Disability Charter	£7,500.00
	Strategic Priority 3	
	SP3.1: Job Fair / Employability Events	£20,500.00
	SP3.2: Female Job Fair / Employability Events	£7,500.00
	Total Operational	£375,714.40
	Overall Total (Administration & Operational)	£469,643.00