



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills



European Social Fund in England

Improving people's lives
2013-2014 (Revised)

Introduction



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The European Social Fund (ESF) aims to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU). It supports Member States' employment and skills policies and contributes to the Europe 2020 strategy for jobs and growth.

This booklet sets out how the ESF is making real and sustained changes to people's lives and contributing to local growth. By focusing on those who need support the most - including unemployed or disadvantaged people - the ESF is helping to tackle poverty and promote Social Justice. At the same time, the ESF also supports the Government's ambition to create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.

The 2007-2013 England ESF programme is investing £2.5 billion in jobs and skills. Priority groups for support include young people not in education, employment or training, families with multiple problems, offenders and people with low skill levels.

Work on the 2014-2020 ESF programme is progressing and is summarised on page 14 of this booklet. More information on the development and implementation of the 2014-2020 round of EU Structural Investment funding in England is available on the GOV.UK website.



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ESF investment

The European Social Fund is investing over £2.5 billion in England in the 2007-2013 programme, which continues until 2015. This is matched to a similar amount of national funding. The investment is providing new opportunities to people who face the greatest barriers to work and learning.

The 2007-2013 programme covers Gibraltar as well as England. Gibraltar receives £2.8 million ESF to address its specific employment and skills challenges.

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own ESF programmes.

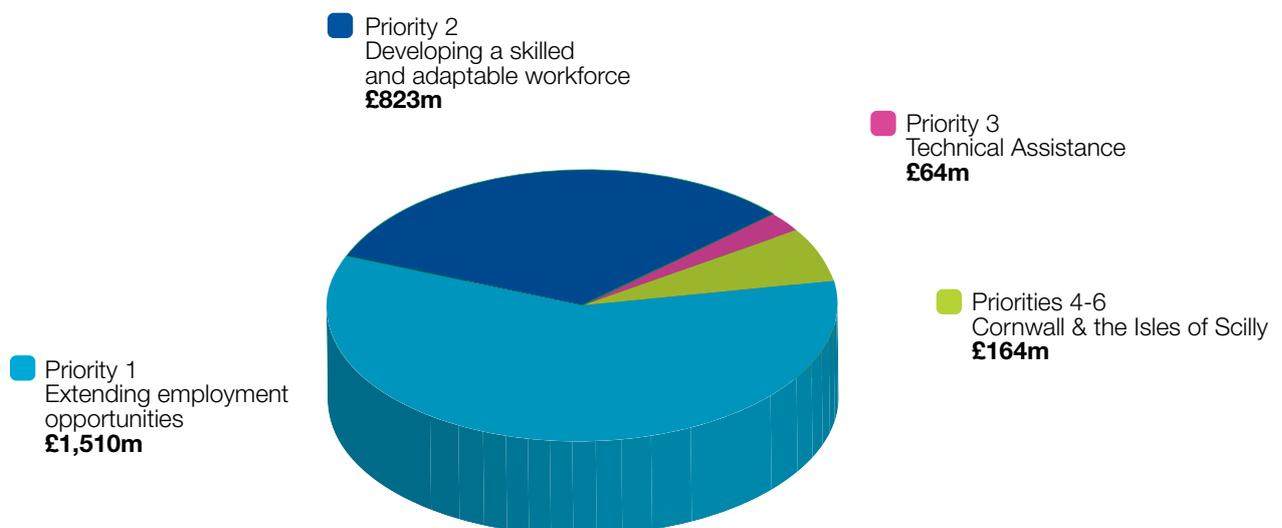
The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has overall responsibility for ESF 2007-2013 funds in England. DWP manages the England ESF programme at a national level.

The majority of ESF funds are distributed through public agencies such as the Skills Funding Agency, Department for Work and Pensions and National Offender Management Service (NOMS). These agencies are known as 'Co-financing Organisations'. Their role is to bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF complements domestic programmes. The Co-financing Organisations contract with the organisations or 'providers' that deliver ESF projects in local areas.

There are two main 2007-2013 England ESF programme priorities: extending employment opportunities and developing a skilled and adaptable workforce. There are similar priorities in the Convergence area of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where ESF money is available to tackle barriers to employment and to improve the skills of the local workforce (see page 9).

In addition, technical assistance funds (priorities 3 and 6) are available to help finance the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Operational Programme, together with activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the funds, at national and local levels.

ESF allocations by priority (£ million)



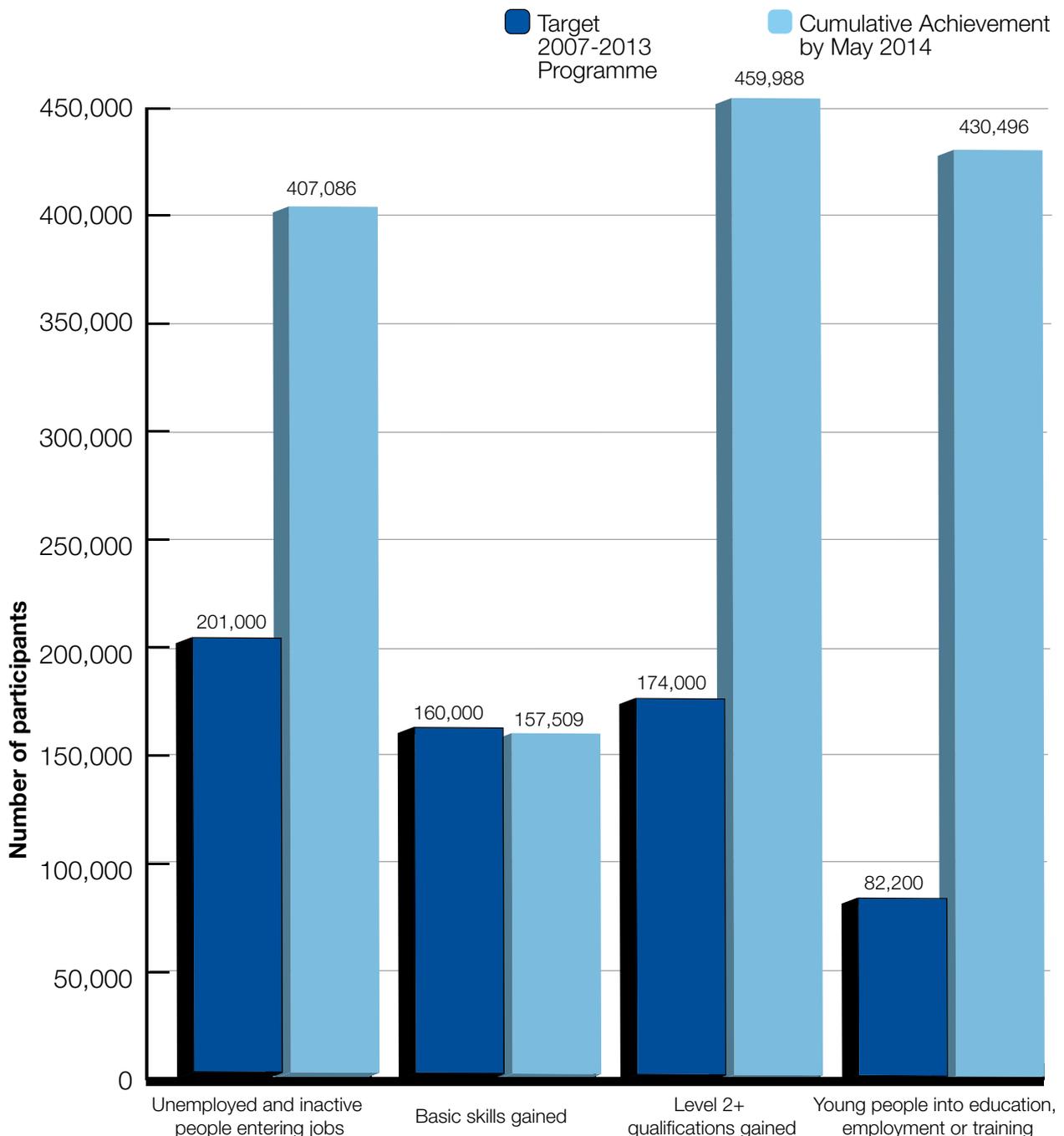
Performance and participation

ESF aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. By the end of May 2014, there had been over 3.8 million participant starts on the 2007-2013 England ESF programme. ESF investment is providing new opportunities to people who face the greatest barriers to work and learning:

- 407,086 unemployed or inactive participants have entered jobs;
- 157,509 participants have gained basic skills;
- 459,988 participants have gained qualifications at level 2 or above;
- 430,496 disadvantaged young people have been helped to enter employment, education or training.

Progress against programme targets

Operational Programme Targets

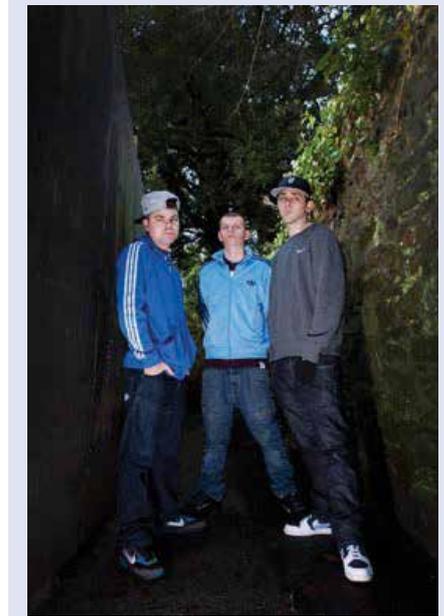


Policy priorities

By focusing on those who need support the most, the ESF helps to support people into work, tackle poverty and promote the inclusion of those who are most disadvantaged. Priority groups for such support include families with multiple problems; offenders and ex-offenders; and young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

The Department for Work and Pension's ESF funds activity to tackle multiple disadvantages, specifically focusing on:

- Support for families with multiple problems, helping to address issues such as inter-generational worklessness and lack of qualifications whilst participating on this voluntary programme;
- Additional support for Work Programme participants who are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit and Income Support. Again, participation is voluntary and their places on the Work Programme are funded through ESF; and
- Community Work Placements, part of the 'Help to Work' initiative. This provider led programme is for claimants who have completed the Work Programme. It helps deliver jobsearch, refresh employability habits and boost claimants' CVs by entering them into work placements of community benefit for up to six months.



Simon Burt Photography

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) ESF programme aims to prepare and support over 120,000 offenders to access and benefit from mainstream employment and skills services by 2014. There is a particular focus on supporting offenders on release from prison, including short sentence prisoners, to help secure employment.

Young people are a key target group for the Skills Funding Agency and ESF, especially those aged 14-19 who face multiple barriers to participation and are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

ESF supports a range of employment and skills provision, including Apprenticeships, to help young people prepare for working life. It is used to deliver activity that engages young people and helps them gain skills and knowledge that support their progression into employment, education and training. This includes extra training and support for young people to succeed in an Apprenticeship, or to consider an Apprenticeship as an opportunity to increase their skills and contribute to the economy.

ESF also contributes to economic growth through its skills provision, by improving the employability of people seeking work, and by improving the skills levels and productivity of the workforce. ESF can also help entrepreneurs start new businesses, with the potential for them to grow and create further job opportunities.

In the final stages of the current ESF programme, the Skills Funding Agency has been working with local stakeholders through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). This work has produced specifications and assessment criteria that relate directly to the needs that LEPs identified in their local areas. This prospectus approach to procurement helps training providers to deliver the elements of ESF support that people and businesses need most in their local area.

Local impact

ESF supports projects that contribute to local growth and complement other EU and national funding. It targets and responds directly to the employment and diverse skills needs of businesses and people in communities around the country.

Active Plus

Active Plus is a ground-breaking initiative, with the core of its training staff being injured military veterans.

The project helps people build and rebuild their confidence and skills, and supports them in finding a job or setting up a business. The initial investment, using ESF Convergence money, provided courses to improve the employability of older workers. Positive feedback by the clients increased the confidence and self-esteem of the combat veterans who helped them.

These courses have performed well, supporting over 1,000 participants. 70% progress into work or work related activity. The flexibility of the Active Plus model has seen mainstream investors coming on board (including Jobcentre Plus and the Big Lottery) and the customer base expanded to people of all ages, including school pupils and their parents.

Active Plus has expanded from its Cornish base to include Devon, Dorset and Somerset with plans for delivery further afield!

Me & My Learning Service

The Me & My Learning Service in Melton Mowbray is one of a group of five Local Authority led pilot projects which aim to support Local Support Services (LSS) activities to help the unemployed, with a view to expanding such LSS/ESF provision in the future.

The project, which opened in July 2014, provides co-ordinated support for vulnerable individuals in order to identify and address the barriers they face to independent living and achieving, where appropriate, sustainable employment.

Conveniently located in a single, easily accessible central location the centre works with a wide range of partner organisations including providers, services and businesses to accommodate their clients' needs and maximise their chances of becoming digitally, financially and socially independent.

Skills Enhancement Fund

Calderdale College is running the Skills Enhancement Fund project with up to £33 million of ESF funding via the Skills Funding Agency. The project, which ends in 2015, engages with employers to invest in skills development and helps them respond to changes in market needs and the economy. Through contracts with providers and employers, the project has so far supported 43,400 starts on learning and helped people to gain over 14,700 accredited qualifications or units.



Local impact

Inspire!

The Inspire! Programme operates across 6 boroughs in North London to engage with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Co-financed by the Skills Funding Agency, it is managed by Inspire! Education Business Partnership, a charity that brings young people, education and businesses together to raise aspirations and improve training and employment opportunities for young people. The Inspire! Programme centres offer friendly informal settings where young people who may have dropped out of mainstream education can come to meet their peers and access support and advice from youth workers who can help them get their lives back on track.



Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a cross cutting theme in the 2007-2013 England ESF programme. In ESF, sustainable development has a particular focus on ensuring that the environment is taken into account during the delivery of provision. This focus is reflected in providers' sustainable development policies and implementation plans.

A number of projects have a specific environmental focus and have used this to help people learn new skills and find work. For example, some projects have used the environment as a resource to help motivate disaffected young people by teaching them basic skills in a non-classroom setting. A wide range of projects have achieved 'win-wins' by helping individuals learn new skills and get back to work whilst also directly protecting the environment through activities such as recycling, reducing landfill and promoting energy efficiency.

The national ESF Sustainable Development Mainstreaming Plan, which is available on the GOV.UK website:

- Describes the progress that has been made in mainstreaming sustainable development so far in the 2007-2013 ESF programme; and
- Sets out the priorities for the remainder of the programme, such as encouraging more specialist provision.

During 2013-2014 the main focus of mainstreaming activity will be on:

- Identifying good practice in embedding sustainable development within the current programme;
- Considering ways in which this good practice can be developed and delivered during the next programme period from 2014-2020; and

Sharing and disseminating project ideas with partners across the wider European Structural and Investment Funds Growth programme through an on-line lessons learned report which includes illustrative case studies.



Simon Burt Photography

Equal opportunities

Gender equality and equal opportunities is an important cross cutting theme in the 2007-2013 England ESF programme.

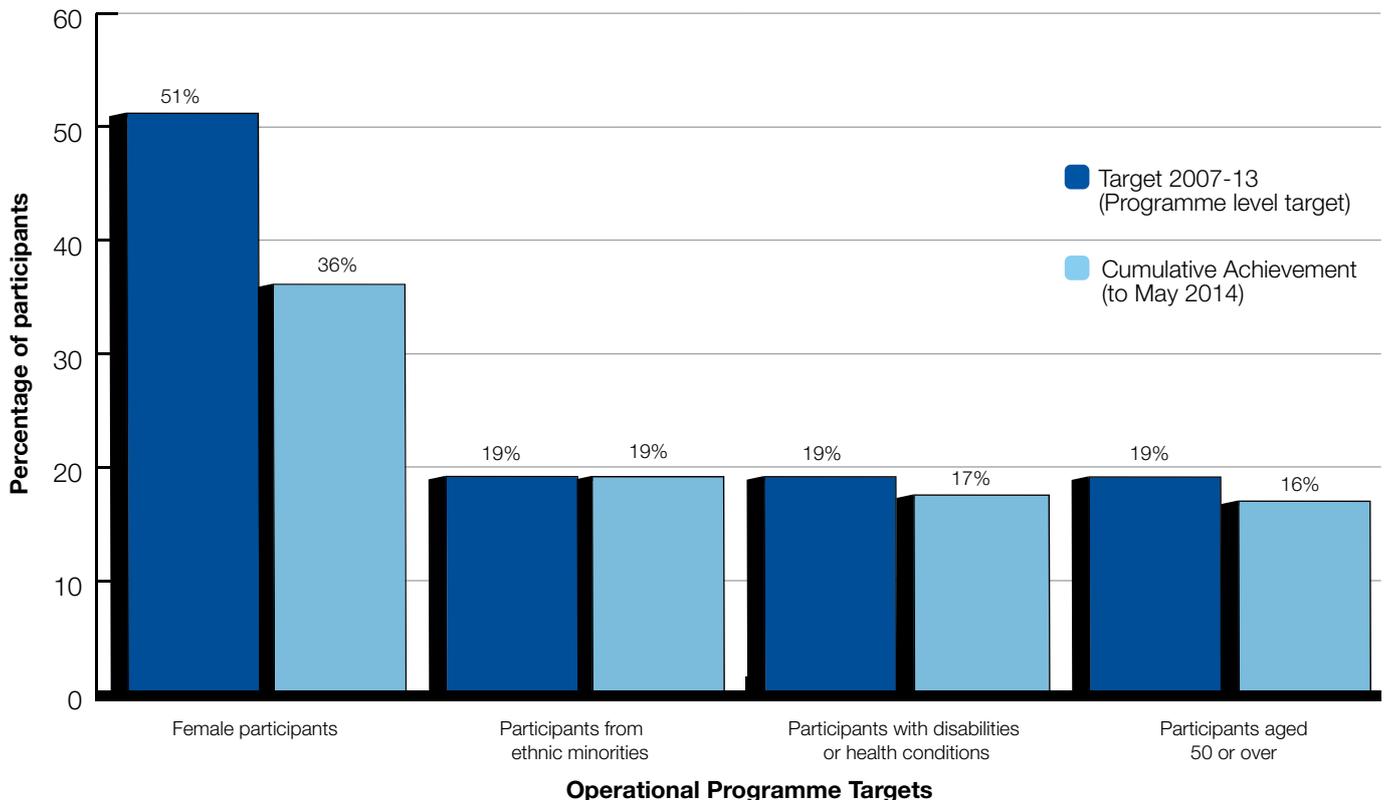
The programme promotes equal opportunities by:

- Integrating equal opportunities into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and
- Funding holistic, specialised and niche support for individuals disadvantaged in the labour market.

The participation rates of women, disabled people, people aged 50 and over and people from ethnic minorities are monitored and results are published on the GOV.UK website – along with a range of other indicators which measure results and impacts.

Female participation is below the 51% percentage target, in part because of the high number of men made redundant and accessing ESF projects during the recession. CFOs are working with providers to identify ways in which they can increase the female participation rate. Other action to promote female participation includes the annual Gender Equality Leader Award (See page 11) and the launch in 2012 of an ESF Gender Equality Good Practice Guide.

Equal opportunities targets and participation rates



Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly



ESF Convergence is investing in jobs and skills, delivering for people and businesses across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and making a real impact as we build for the future.

The Cornwall Learning Education Business Partnership has led a series of over 10 Skills Show Experience events across Cornwall, with local businesses offering 'have a go' events and 'taster' sessions at local schools including a two day Big Careers Event in October 2014.

In March 2014 the Jamie Oliver inspired Fifteen Cornwall Apprenticeship Programme became the first project with ESF investment to win a RegioStars award. The award in the inclusive growth: creating jobs for the young generation category was one of only four awards across Europe.

Jamie Oliver said "It's brilliant news that we've won a RegioStars award for creating jobs for young people. We aim to create fantastic opportunities for our apprentices by giving them time, love, care and a platform to develop both their confidence and the professional skills they need to be successful in the workplace. Over 90% of the graduates from Fifteen Cornwall are in employment, and over 80% working in the restaurant industry. I'm incredibly proud of our restaurant and Foundation Team, whose hard work and dedication makes this all possible – the Fifteen family are very lucky to have each other."

The Fifteen Cornwall Apprenticeship Programme runs alongside the chef training programme helping the young people overcome issues they may face.

Skills Support for Redundancy receives ESF Convergence co-financed by the Skills Funding Agency and is led by The Learning Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Ltd and delivers through a variety of partners including colleges, the TUC and Cornwall Chamber of Commerce. Maria worked for over three years as a pattern cutter for a shoe manufacturer until she was made redundant. Within two days she was offered training in IT, Team Leading and jobsearch skills. Within three weeks she had a new job with surf lifestyle chain Ann's Cottage and on top of that her new employers will benefit from training for a further 27 employees.

The ESF Convergence Higher Education strand is investing in graduate placements, through Unlocking Cornish potential, and PhDs with business through Combined University partners including University of Exeter, Plymouth and Falmouth Universities.

ESF Convergence is making a real difference, right now, in the lives of participants – helping people to help themselves into work, to stay in work and to progress in work. In addition to that, it is creating a legacy by shaping new ways of working, both within ESF delivery and through the process of mainstreaming, where successful employment and skills practice developed and championed using ESF is visibly shaping the mainstream offer through investors such as Jobcentre Plus and the Big Lottery.

Celebrating ESF success

The achievements of ESF projects and their participants are highlighted at events throughout the year.

The Skills Show

In November 2013, ESF activities and achievements were showcased to thousands of visitors at The Skills Show, at the NEC, Birmingham. The Skills Show, which takes place again at the same location from 13-15 November 2014, is the UK's largest skills and careers event. Run by Find a Future it is particularly targeted at young people aged 16-24, including those not currently in education, employment or training. Throughout the event, visitors can view over 50 skills competitions recognising high performing students in a range of vocational skills.

Through a part-funded ESF technical assistance project ESF activity at the event includes:

- A designated ESF area where around 30 local ESF providers will promote ESF investment in skills and jobs; and
- Presentation of the ESF Mainstreaming Leader Awards 2014.

The Skills Show provides unique opportunities to publicise and promote the activities and achievements of the 2007-2013 England ESF programme to a wide audience including the general public. It is this year's major ESF information activity.



The project opens the Skills Show up to ESF providers who would not normally have the chance to exhibit and promote their programmes. It also targets past, present and potential learners who would not generally participate in any of the events, to give them the opportunity to attend, have a go at many new and exciting skills activities and receive advice, encouragement and motivation to continue or progress with their own learning.

The Skills Show Experience

To extend beyond the reach of the national event, ESF supports the Skills Show, which will deliver a series of high profile skills events across England in 2014 and 2015 giving young people access to tasters of work-based skills, careers advice, and information about ESF training and employment support.

ESF Mainstreaming Leader Awards 2013

The ESF Mainstreaming Leader Awards were presented at one of the ESF seminars delivered during the 2013 Skills Show. These annual awards were first launched in 2010, and aim to give high profile recognition to those ESF providers and sub-contractors who 'go the extra mile' in promoting equal opportunities and sustainable development. After the awards were presented, each award winner gave a short presentation to share the ideas and good practice within their projects.

Celebrating ESF success

ESF Mainstreaming Leader Award winners 2013

ESF Gender Equality Leader Award - Sheffield City Council and the Youth Association for South Yorkshire (YASY)

Sheffield CC and YASY have managed two projects, Make a Move (MAMS) and MAMS Too, which have supported teenage parents to access the help and support they need to build a happy and sustainable life for themselves and their children. Based at a Sheffield city centre location, the projects provided specialist help on housing, debt, relationships, money management and preparing for work. At the Leader Awards presentation event former project participant Kadie-Anne (pictured, third from left) spoke impressively about how the project has helped her on the way to higher education after she came to them as a teenage mum.



ESF Sustainable Development Specialist Project Leader Award (joint winner) – West Yorkshire Probation Trust Green Futures Building

This project aims to improve the skills and employment prospects of offenders by providing placements and training opportunities at the ABLE Kirklees project in Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire. Participants benefit from skills development and training, leading towards qualifications, in environmentally based activities at the project site. Opportunities for offenders include training and working at a domed food production unit, a floating café, a teaching and recreational fishing lake, a BMX track, an outdoor classroom and footpaths, nature trails and picnic areas.

ESF Sustainable Development Specialist Project Leader Award (joint winner) - Heeley City Farm's Young Rangers

ESF and Skills Funding Agency funds were secured for a project to help 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET). The project gave young people lots of engagement in many aspects of animal farming and crop growing, and offered Environmental Conservation Apprenticeships, where participants learnt traditional skills like dry wall building. The awards assessment panel was impressed at the way the project used the environment as a resource to help young people NEET, delivering interesting re-engagement activities for those who prefer practical learning activities.

Celebrating ESF success

Adult Learners' Week 2014

Adult Learners' Week is an annual week-long national campaign, which seeks to engage and inspire people to pursue adult learning. Organised by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), and part-funded by the ESF to help promote ESF activities and successes, it is the UK's largest learning campaign. In 2014 there were three national and 10 local ESF Adult Learners' Week award winners.

National ESF Adult Learner Award – Melanie Tomkinson

Melanie Tomkinson has struggled with a life of crime, addiction and homelessness. However, engaging in education and training during her two year prison sentence enabled her to stay clean and secure a part-time job. Supported by the National Offender Management Service CFO New Futures project, Melanie has helped other women facing the problems she has faced in various voluntary capacities, as a prison Education Orderly, as a Literacy Mentor and as a Prison Listener for Bristol Samaritans.



ESF Young Adult Learner Award – Jordan George

Jordan George was unemployed, getting into trouble and had no focus. But following an Apprenticeship with the Fifteen restaurant in Cornwall (supported by the Cornwall Food Foundation, Cornwall College and the ESF) he is on his way to becoming a professional chef. During his apprenticeship he has gained a VRQ Level 1 in Professional Cookery, a Health and Hygiene certificate, and Level 2 Maths and English. But just as importantly, he has gained the confidence, skills and experience he needs to shine in his chosen profession and to move on to a job in a restaurant in St Ives.



ESF National Project Award – Bad Boy's Bakery

The ESF National Project Award went to Bad Boy's Bakery, a social enterprise run within HMP Brixton by Working Links (NOMS CFO) and funded by the ESF. The project gives serving offenders support, skills and qualifications, and most importantly helps them to find relevant employment on release, cutting re-offending rates. It has already seen some great results, with almost one-in-four (23 per cent) moving from the Bakery into some form of employment (around half of these in the hospitality and catering industry), and only one-in-20 (5%) re-offending within the first year.



Community grants

ESF community grants are grants of up to £15,000 which enable small voluntary and community organisations to reach out to some of the most disadvantaged and excluded people. They are managed by a number of grant co-ordinating bodies contracted by the Skills Funding Agency in most areas of England.

The grants have a local focus and seek to move people closer to the labour market. They support a wide range of activities including initial help with basic skills, taster work experience, training, advice and counselling, and confidence building.

Because of the nature of the target groups, project outcomes usually involve progression towards a job or further training, rather than the immediate achievement of a job or qualification.

Case study: Reactiv8

A project in Bedfordshire that combines educational learning inside and outside the classroom.

In the East of England, ESF community grants funding is managed by TCHC Ltd. 3123 unemployed and economically inactive participants have been supported on 110 projects throughout the East of England.

One of the grant recipients Reactive8 in Bedfordshire, delivered the Back on Track project that combined educational learning outside as well as inspiring learning in the classroom.

The project used British Army Training techniques with proven educational material to help support those aged 19+, most “hard to reach” and at risk of social exclusion, to get back into employment, education or training. This unique and radical approach helped to identify and remove any barriers the client group face; and used non-traditional interventions to define and refine patterns of behaviour to equip them with the necessary skills, mind-set and attitude to achieve sustainable employment and create a lasting effect.



Innovation

Starting in 2009 and concluding in 2013, the ESF Innovation, Transnationality and Mainstreaming (ITM) strand of 32 innovative projects developed and tested new ways of extending employment opportunity and raising workforce skills.

Backed by £23 million of ESF funding, the strand focused on new approaches, tools, methods and service provision within six themes for innovation: active inclusion, demographic change, engaging with employers, skills for climate change, ICT and the Digital Divide and social enterprise.

Each theme was supported by a network which brought together ESF projects and policy makers, and each project included an element of cooperation with at least one other EU Member State. Across all 32 projects there were 64 transnational partners from 19 countries.

2014-2020 European Funding

Overall approach

A Growth Programme is being established in England which runs from 2014 to 2020 and is made up of the following funding streams:

- European Social Fund (ESF)
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- Part of the European Agricultural Fund for Regional Development



Historically these funds have been accessed and managed independently. By being brought together through the Growth Programme they can provide greater flexibility in the way money is spent and a more accessible application process for those seeking funding for different activities.

Each of the three funding streams has a separate national Operational Programme document setting out its strategy, the priorities and activities it will support and information about delivery arrangements. The ESF in England will focus on supporting three objectives:

- **Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility.**
This will focus on access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people, and on the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market, particularly those who are NEET. It will incorporate the additional money from the Youth Employment Initiative for areas with very high rates of youth unemployment.
- **Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.**
This will focus on the active inclusion of disadvantaged people who are furthest from the labour market in order to improve their employability. It will help to tackle barriers to work in a holistic and integrated way, including through supporting early action, outreach activities and access to locally provided services.
- **Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning.**
This will focus on enhancing access to lifelong learning, upgrading the skills and competences of the workforce, and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems. It will include support for intermediate, technical and higher level skills, and skills needed by SMEs, as well as helping low skilled people to progress.

Following public consultation during spring 2014 the ESF and ERDF Operational Programmes were submitted to the European Commission in July 2014. Negotiations prior to approval will continue throughout the autumn. The Government responses to the consultations were published on GOV.UK in September. The ESF and ERDF Operational Programme documents are likely to be agreed with the European Commission in the latter part of 2014.

At a local level Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) provide the strategic context to plan and prioritise ESIF investments in each local area. A LEP is a private sector-led partnership between local authorities and local businesses which sets the strategy for achieving economic growth in its area.

Each member state is required to submit a draft Partnership Agreement to the European Commission covering the ESIF funds in 2014 to 2020. The UK Partnership Agreement sets out financial allocations and describes how the UK will use EU funds to help meet long-term goals as set out in the EU's growth strategy Europe 2020 and the UK National Reform Programme. The UK Partnership Agreement is expected to be approved and adopted in the latter half of 2014 – in advance of Operational Programme document approvals.

More information about the 2014-20 Growth Programme for England, including the role of Government in managing the funds, can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Communicating ESF



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England ESF programme

www.gov.uk/dwp/esf-2007-2013

The England ESF web pages have moved to the GOV.UK website and provide general information about the 2007-2013 ESF programme in England, including news, lists of projects, case studies and guidance. They also provide information on the 2014-2020 ESF programme.



Europa

www.europa.eu

The Europa website is the website of the European Union and provides information on a wide range of EU activities including ESF.



Convergence

www.inspiringwork.org

Inspiring Work is the new website that brings together employment and skills activity across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. The website covers ESF Convergence activity and is part-funded by ESF technical assistance.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Greater London Authority

www.london.gov.uk

The London ESF website provides up to date news and information on the £820m 2007- 2013 ESF Programme in London. ESF Investment supports workless Londoners progress into employment and is helping to boost the skills of the workforce.



Gibraltar EU Programmes

www.eufunding.gi/

The Gibraltar Government's ESF Programme has invested over £4.5 million between 2007 and 2013 of which over £2.2 million is from the ESF.



Adult Learners' Week

www.alw.org.uk

Adult Learners' Week (ALW) is the UK's largest and longest-running learning campaign - celebrating the achievements of learners and encouraging thousands of people, whatever their background or age to give learning a go. ALW also publicises ESF and is part-funded by ESF technical assistance.



National Council for Voluntary Organisations

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

The National Council runs a part-funded ESF technical assistance project. It provides advice to civil society organisations on matters related to the ESF programme.



TAEN – The Age and Employment Network

www.taen.org.uk

The Age and Employment Network (TAEN) works to promote an effective labour market that serves the needs of people in mid and later life, employers and the economy. TAEN runs an ESF technical assistance project to provide information and guidance to projects that are targeting older workers.



Twitter

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