



This document explains our approach and learning about designing successful investments. Clearly, we cannot condense all our learning here and your conversations with your Big Lottery Fund contact will go into more detail.

Our approach to all our investments

We apply a number of approaches across all our investments. We expect these to be reflected, in a proportionate way, across the jointly funded ESIF activities

Our funding is distributed primarily through **voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations**. We are well placed to broker strong partnerships between the VCSE, the private sector and statutory services – the partnerships which are necessary to find, and sustain, solutions to cross-cutting problems. We have an extensive range of contacts and networks at local level.

We focus on the **impact** of our funding, rather than just the process. This means, for example, that we will invest for the long term, because we recognise that deep seated issues can take time to resolve.

Across our investments, we focus on **rigorous evaluation and learning**. We use this to focus our funds to where there is compelling evidence of need that is not otherwise being met. We also use our knowledge to understand the needs and solutions for different communities. This is supported by our locally-based teams and existing networks to make sure we reach, and listen to those communities and people most in need

We have **established procedures** for fair decision-making, reporting and monitoring the progress and impact of our funds. We run our operations as efficiently as possible, while still providing an excellent service, which we will continue to apply to ESIF work.

We **involve people** whose lives are affected by the problems we seek to address directly in the development, design and delivery of our plans. Collaborations, including co-design or co-production, are important to how we work. We also value approaches that build on existing community assets, skills, talents and resources.

Our approach to employability

Our recent national Talent Match initiative was designed with organisations, such as the Private Equity Foundation, The Big Society Network, Virgin Media, DWP, Cabinet Office, the 16-24 Alliance and The Work Foundation, amongst many others. Your LEP's specifications for activities can benefit significantly from those consultations and learning, especially as you start your own local collaborations. We can help you start such collaborations through our Partnership Development Fund (PDF). We know that our

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collaborations have identified which current interventions are working best locally, and vitally, the remaining gaps and need where new approaches could make the biggest impact.

Talent Match was developed in closed consultation with colleagues from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Lottery funding needs to remain additional to government funding – i.e be distinct and add value. This did not preclude our Talent Match funding working alongside Government, or aligning funded activities.

Features of good employability projects.

Co-design: means making sure that projects fully include beneficiaries in the design and delivery of their projects. This means that the employability intervention is more likely to be delivered in a way that meets their needs. We want projects that can also engage people furthest from the labour market through innovative ways, such as through sport, community work, volunteering.

Meeting individual needs: Each individual has different needs, and has a different starting point. For example, the barriers to employment facing former gang member in Nottingham City may be very different to those faced by someone living in rural Herefordshire. We look for projects that provide support that is bespoke to the individual. We also want project that can help people tackle the multiple barriers people have to work, such as mental health, addiction, transportation, homelessness, history of offending or caring responsibilities.

Local delivery: While statistics can provide an overall picture, this can sometimes mask pockets of particular employment need. We expect projects to clearly evidence the need in their location, and propose solutions appropriate for the local labour market.

Partnership: Talent Match partnerships include local education providers and employers, which together help to keep training opportunities matched up with the needs of the local labour market. Equally, such partnerships are more likely to help create new opportunities as well as supporting people to access existing opportunities.

Capturing Impact and Evaluation: We want our funding to have an impact that goes beyond the life of the project. 79% of Big Lottery Fund grantees surveyed in recent research reported that our requirement for evaluation helped them make future improvements to project delivery. We particularly want employability projects to capture learning about the duration of a good outcome (for example, 6 months+ of employment).

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*Project example**

Homeless charity Llamau run the Learning 4 Life Scheme as part of the Life Skills programme. They provide young care leavers with tailored support and guidance to help them into work and enable them to live independent lives.

Chris was referred to Llamau by a social worker from children's services after he was placed into local authority care. Through the scheme he was offered a placement opportunity with AE Insulation Ltd, a Cardiff-based company that provides and installs insulation for residential industrial and commercial properties. Having experienced a lot of chaos through his childhood he wasn't ready for an apprenticeship, and just wanted a paid job with the possibility of studying more seriously later on. After just a few weeks of work, he was taken on in a paid capacity; and has now been employed for over ten months. During that time he has begun to gain qualifications, including in computers, which he never imagined he could. The project also gave him other skills, and has built up his confidence about meeting people.

Chris doesn't believe he would have found work without the support of his support worker at the project. "If there was something I didn't understand, the support worker at the project would explain it to me and also encourage me and push me towards getting a job. When I was on my own I was ringing loads of different people and they would take my details and I'd never hear from them again. This project took me to that next step of actually getting a job".

**we have other project examples, which you might find useful. Please ask your Big Lottery Fund contact.*

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ANNEX – Employability investments to date

Talent Match

This is a current strategic investment in England. Co-designed by young people, it specifically helps those most in need, long-term unemployed 18-24 year olds, into sustainable employment or enterprise. Our Talent Match providers are working with young people furthest from the labour market, including those not claiming Jobseekers Allowance or other benefits. At least 20% of the young people in Talent Match will be supported into sustainable employment. Our Talent Match providers have put in place training, education, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities and works directly with young people to address barriers that prevent them from accessing work.

The framework we established for Talent Match initiative might help LEPs consider their own framework priorities for an investment in this area:

- 21 five-year projects of between £1m and £10m, delivered by partnerships in 21 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas.
- Each partnership is led by a voluntary sector organisation private, education, public and health sector organisations together with young people.
- Each partnership has 'mapped' the current provision for young people within the area to identify
 - *Who* the young people most in need are;
 - *Where* they are;
 - *How* their needs are currently being met; and
 - *Whether there are gaps* in provision for them that need to be filled.
- Partnerships have used this local mapping to design the most appropriate solutions to meet local needs.

We also have a number of other investments in this area, such as:

The Coastal Communities Fund

Since 2012, we have awarded 62 grants totalling £32m including to some LEPs in England

Volunteer it Yourself

London Youth's 'VIY' programme is delivered in partnership with Cospa, Wickes, RMT Training and City & Guilds. It will involve up to 1,000 young people and 270 volunteer mentors.

Getting Ahead

Getting Ahead was developed with the Welsh Government and is aimed at ex-offenders, or care leavers.

Life Skills

The £14m Life Skills programme in Wales matches our funds with European Social Fund (ESF) as is managed by Big Lottery Fund.

Investing in Communities: Life Transitions

This fund provides grants of £10,000 – £1m to support people at key life changes.

Young Start

This fund distributes money from dormant bank accounts to create opportunities for children and young people aged 8-24
