

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET27 March 2025Report by Director of EnvironmentNo One Left Behind Employability Activity 2025/26**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the No One Left Behind (NOLB) grant award from the Scottish Government to East Renfrewshire Council and seek approval for the Annual Investment Plan in 2025/26, as well as to highlight potential funding challenges and associated risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Cabinet is asked to:
- (a) Note the progress of projects funded between 2023 and 2025 in Appendix 1;
 - (b) Approve the projects outlined in Appendix 2 for 2025/26 based on the Council's provisional allocation from the Scottish Government;
 - (c) Delegate to the Director of Environment to make adjustments to the proposals depending upon the detailed costs of projects being confirmed; and
 - (d) Delegate to the Director of Environment to approve any new proposal requests that can be accommodated, if any underspends or adjustments arise in the future, for 2025/26.

BACKGROUND

3. NOLB is a partnership approach between the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to transform employment support in Scotland. Since 2020, several phases of the policy have been rolled out with the transfer of funding being made direct to local authorities through the Local Employability Partnerships (LEP). The East Renfrewshire LEP is the area's strategic employability partnership. It supports the implementation of local and national employability policy, making best use of resources available to enable the delivery of a range of employability services to an all age client group, with a focus on those who have particular barriers to employment. Representatives from key partners contribute to LEP meetings and influence the development and design of employability services in the area. The partners include: East Renfrewshire Council; Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); Skills Development Scotland (SDS); West College Scotland; East Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce; Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER) as third sector interface; East Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP); Business Gateway East Renfrewshire; Barrhead Housing Association; Enable Works and Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH).

4. An East Renfrewshire Employability Delivery Plan 2022 to 2025 was developed and signed off by the LEP in 2022 outlining its vision, aims and objectives and service delivery over a three year period. This is complemented by an Annual Investment Plan (AIP) which is produced in partnership with LEP partners.

5. Since the introduction of NOLB by the Scottish Government in April 2020, the programmes have supported the following outcomes in East Renfrewshire:

- People registered with employability services - 1171
- People moving into employment - 591
- People gaining vocational training/qualifications - 248
- People moving into Further/Higher Education - 142

6. NOLB funding supports a wide range of Priority Groups, identified by the LEP via local data, which require support to move into employment. These groups are: unemployed or low income residents facing barriers to employment; young people not in education, employment or training; care experienced young people; young people with additional support needs (ASN); clients aged 50+; refugees; long term unemployed and those who are economically inactive.

7. For Parental Employability Support (PES) there is a focus on lone parents, young parents, parents with more than 3 children, parents with children under the age of 1 years old, parents with a disability or parents of children with disabilities, parents from a minority ethnic community or parents on low incomes including kinship carers.

8. NOLB programmes have been a key strand of employability services within East Renfrewshire since 2020 and have delivered a wide range of activity such as the Young Person's Guarantee and the PES Fund. The core purpose of NOLB funding is to provide a person-centred approach to employability that is more flexible and responsive to the changing labour market, tackles inequalities and grows Scotland's economy. NOLB supports those at risk of being left behind to move closer to and into fair and sustainable jobs.

9. Through NOLB funding, people can gain skills, confidence and access support to help achieve their employment goals. This support may include help to prepare for employment, training, education, and volunteering and to support career progression. Support is also connected with other key services including money advice, health, justice and housing provision, ensuring people can get the right support at the right time. People who choose to participate will receive support from an Employability Key Worker, and they will work with the Key Worker on an individual action plan to help them reach their employment goals. There is no time limit to this support.

10. In 2024/25, Work EastRen, the Council's Employability Services, ran a number of NOLB funded programmes in partnership with local employability partners and Council Departments. These included: Parent Traineeships; Youth Employability Programmes; Employment Recruitment Incentives; Specialised Employability Programmes; Supported Employment Programme; and Parental Employability Programmes for Priority Groups. Appendix 3 of the report highlights some NOLB case studies.

11. Please refer to Appendix 1 for NOLB (all age provision) outcomes achieved to date for the period between 2023 and 2025. Some of the key highlights are: 177 registrations with 89 people supported into employment, 48 into Further Education/Higher Education (FE/HE) and 38 completing a qualification or training course.

12. For PES, there have been 187 registrations with 46 supported into employment/improved labour position, 2 into FE/HE and 35 completing a qualification or

training course. Those still to be supported into employment will continue to receive ongoing Key Worker support to improve their work readiness.

13. NOLB funding is awarded to local authorities on an annual basis. This includes PES funding. For 2025/26 there is a new allocation of funding for Specialist Employability Support (SES). SES funding provides support to people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum conditions to find and keep full time jobs.

14. The 2025/26 provisional allocation is split across the 3 programmes as detailed below and a one year Annual Investment Plan for NOLB will be submitted to the Scottish Government for 2025/26 based on activity outlined in Appendix 2:

Grant Commitment	Amount
All Age Employability Support (16 years old+)	£520,407
Tackling Child Poverty - Parental Employability Support Fund	£428,168
Specialist Employment Support (5 stage support for people with learning disabilities)	£93,154
Total	£1,041,729

FUNDING UPDATE

15. As has been the case in previous years, these figures are a provisional allocation. Parliamentary process around the draft budget is on-going, and discussions have still to take place with COSLA via the Settlement and Distribution group.

16. Once confirmed, the funding awarded will cover the continuation of existing employability programmes and proposed new activity as outlined in Appendix 2 of this report. For NOLB this includes a wide range of Youth Employability Programmes alongside funding for core Employability Support for the 50+ and resettled cohort. For PES, this includes continuation of core parental employability support with its offer to parents who are unemployed and in work, alongside dedicated Money Advice & Rights guidance and advice. SES funding will be used to continue funding the 5 stage Supported Employment Programme to support people with learning disabilities.

ANNUAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2025/26

17. As per guidance from the Scottish Government, proposals are required to be approved by the East Renfrewshire LEP and LEP Sub Groups as part of the NOLB AIP. Projects to be considered for approval are based on local demand, need and current employability data. The LEP has also considered the proposals as outlined in Appendix 2 and is supportive of this.

EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

18. It is expected that the NOLB programmes will achieve the following for the 2025/26 programming period:

NOLB (all age, all stage)

- Number of people starting on programme and engaging with services - 200

- Number of people supported into employment including self-employment, following support - 100
- Number of people supported to gain a qualification or complete a course - 50
- Number of people supported into FE/HE - 50

PES (parents)

- Number of parents starting on programme and engaging with services - 200
- Number of parents supported into employment including self-employment and improved labour market position, following support - 80
- Number of parents supported to gain a qualification or complete a course – 40

Specialist/Supported Employment (adults with disabilities)

- Number of people starting on programme and engaging with services - 18
- Number of people supported into employment including self-employment, following support - 10

Please note that some clients may be on more than one programme, due to their individual needs and circumstances.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

19. The provisional allocation has been confirmed via a letter of comfort sent on 31 January 2025. Financial implications will arise for partners and Council services should there be any reduction in funding awards. Consequently this will have an impact on scale of delivery and commensurate impact on those local residents seeking employability support. As this is annual funding, any delays in the award will impact on delivery timescales. Annual funding awards create particular challenges around future planning, delivery and recruitment.

20. The Council must comply with the conditions of the grant, as set out in Scottish Government guidelines.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

21. The Work EastRen team have undertaken a wide range of consultations with key internal and external partners via the LEP Strategic and LEP Sub Groups. The proposals listed in Appendix 2 have the support of the LEP.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

22. There has been a significant increase in NOLB reporting and compliance requirements and additional staffing resource is required.

23. There are no property, legal, IT, Subsidy Control, equalities, sustainability or climate change implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSIONS

24. The NOLB programme provides an excellent opportunity to ensure continuation of core employability programmes that support our local residents into sustainable employment and the extension of the Parental Employability Support programme to help mitigate child poverty in East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Cabinet is asked to:

- (a) Note the progress of projects funded between 2023 and 2025 in Appendix 1;
- (b) Approve the projects outlined in Appendix 2 for 2025/26 based on the Council's provisional allocation from the Scottish Government;
- (c) Delegate to the Director of Environment to make adjustments to the proposals depending upon the detailed costs of projects being confirmed; and
- (d) Delegate to the Director of Environment to approve any new proposal requests that can be accommodated, if any underspends or adjustments arise in the future, for 2025/26.

Director of Environment

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March 2025

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APPENDIX 1: PROGRESS TOWARDS NOLB OUTCOMES

No One Left Behind Outcomes 2023-24/2024-25 (To 31 January 2025)

April 24 to March 25 (Year to 31 January 2025)	Registrations	Supported into Employment including apprenticeships	Supported into Further or Higher Education	Supported to complete vocational training
No One Left Behind Employability Support (Youth Employability Programme, Care Experienced Employability Programme, Enable Next Steps Programme, Positive Pathways Programme, Employment Recruitment Incentives, 50+ Employability Programme, Resettled Employability Programme; Supported Employment Programme for Adults with ASN; Vocational Programme)	2023/2024 174	2023/2024 117	2023/2024 44	2023/2024 25
	2024/2025 177	2024/2025 89	2024/2025 48	2024/2025 38
Parental Employability Support Funding/Tackling Child Poverty (Core Parental Employability Support Key Worker Programme; Enable Progress for Parents Programme; Self Employment Programme; RAMH Health & Wellbeing Programme; Chamber Dads Returner Programme; Trust Activ8 Programme; Education Parental Traineeships; Vocational Programme)	2023/2024 131	2023/2024 43	2023/2024 5	2023/2024 17
	2024/2025 187	2024/2025 46	2024/2025 2	2024/2025 35
Totals	669	295	99	115

APPENDIX 2 – PROJECTS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR APPROVAL

TOTAL BUDGET 2025/2026 - £1,041,729

NOLB (No One Left Behind – All Age/All Stage) Provisional Allocation - £520,407

Activity - Continuing	Delivery Partner	Budget	Rationale	Forecast Achievements
Youth Employability Programme	The Lennox Partnership	£48,000	Young People not in Employment, Education, Training. In place since 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people starting on programme -60 • Number of people supported into employment - 35 • Number of people supported into FE/HE -15 • Number of people completing qualification or training -10
Care Experienced Employability Programme	VERG Ltd	£48,000	Care Leavers/Care Experienced. In place since 2019.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people starting on programme - 25 • Number of people supported into employment -10 • Number of people supported into FE/HE -10 • Number of people completing qualification or training -12 • Number of people completing work experience or volunteering - 5
Next Steps Programme (ASN)	Enable Works	£65,000	Young People with Additional Support Needs. In place since July 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people starting on programme -35 • Number of people supported into employment -15 • Number of people supported into FE/HE - 6 • Number of people completing qualification or training – 10 • Number of people completing work experience or volunteering - 5
Positive Pathways Programme	Education	£84,000	School Leavers with no positive destinations or with emotional based absences. In place since 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people starting on programme – 40 • Number of people supported into employment - 5 • Number of people supported into FE/HE - 15 • Number of people completing qualification or training - 5 • Number of people completing work experience or volunteering - 15
Resettlement Employability/50+ Key Worker	Work EastRen	£45,000	Refugees and resettled cohort. In place since 2022. 50+ pilot in 2024-25.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people starting on programme - 40 • Number of people supported into employment - 25 • Number of people supported into FE/HE - 4 • Number of people completing qualification or training - 10

Vocational Budget	Work EastRen	£5,000	Funding and training for Work EastRen Clients. Sector based training. In place since 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people completing qualification or training - 50
LEP Funded Work Placement Programme (all age, all stage) Work Placement Trainees	LEP Partners	£175,407	Agreed via LEP. Has run previously 2022-2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people starting on programme - 10 Number of people supported into employment - 10
Sub-Total		£470,407		
Proposal – New Activity				
Data, Finance & Compliance Officer	Work EastRen	£50,000	New activity To support all NOLB activity and support SG/LEP data requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a significant increase in NOLB reporting and compliance requirements from the Scottish Government from 2024-2025 onwards and as such Work EastRen are seeking additional support to carry out these functions.
Grand Total		£520,407		

PES (Parental Employability Support – Tackling Child Poverty) Provisional Allocation - £428,168

Activity - continuing	Delivery Partner	Budget	Rationale	Forecast Achievements
Financial Inclusion Officer PES/MART	Money Advice & Rights Team/Work EastRen	£43,000	Financial inclusion support for parents. In place since 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents receiving financial advice – 150 Number of parents receiving better off calculations - 100
In Work - Client Adviser	Work EastRen	£45,500	Support to clients experiencing in-work poverty. In place since 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents starting on programme – 80 Number of parents supported into employment/improved labour market position– 35 Number of parents completing qualification or training – 15
Enable Progress for Parents – Parents with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities	Enable Works	£67,000	Employability support for Parents with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. In place since 2023.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents starting on programme - 35 Number of parents supported into employment/improved labour position –16 Number of parents completing qualification or training – 10

Vocational training	Work EastRen	£20,000	Vocational training for upskilling of parents. In place since 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents completing qualification or training – 40
Wellbeing & Employability Programme	Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH)	£25,000	Counselling and Anxiety Workshops for parents on our programmes. Since 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents starting on programme – 40 • Number of parents completing workshops - 30
Traineeships	Council Departments	£120,000	Traineeships for Parent – Council based. In place since 2021 and co-designed with LEP partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents starting on programme –7 • Number of parents completing traineeship – 7 • Number of parents with improved labour market position - 7
Child Minding Funding	Scottish Child-minding Association (SCMA)	£10,000	Training to fund Child Minding employment and support. In place since 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents supported into employment- 10
Funded Work Placements	Work EastRen	£32,500	To fund flexible working positions for parents to support Time to Flex Framework. In place since 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents supported into work placement – 5 • Number of parents completing qualification or training - 5
LEP Parental Sub Group – Funded Activity	Work EastRen/LEP Parental Sub Group	£65,168	Range of programmes aimed at parents into employment. In place since 2024 and co-produced and designed via LEP sub group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents starting on programme – 40 • Number of parents supported into employment/ improved labour market position –30 • Number of parents completing qualification or training – 10
Grand Total		£428,168		

Specialised Employability Support (Supported Employment) Provisional Allocation - £93,154

Activity	Delivery Partner	Budget	Rationale	Forecast Achievements
Triple E Supported Employment Programme	Values into Action Scotland	£93,154	Adults – all age, all stage with Additional Support Needs and/or disabilities. In place since October 2024.	Number of people starting on programme - 18 Number of people supported into employment -10
Totals		£93,154		

Appendix 3 – NOLB Case Studies

Care Experienced Employability Programme (CEEP) – funded via No One Left Behind

The Care Experienced Employability Programme (CEEP) offers holistic, one-to-one support with progression into employment, further education and training to our care experienced young people in East Renfrewshire. An individualised action plan is created in collaboration with each young person, to reflect their aspirations, abilities and personal circumstances. One client was recently supported, and provided with funding, to gain his Royal Life Saving Society National Pool Lifeguard Qualification. He has also received support to apply for the role of Pool Lifeguard with Glasgow Life and attended an interview for this on in January 2025. Before the pandemic, this client was on track to pursue a career in sports and fitness but lockdown had an impact on these plans and he instead found work in labouring. The CEEP key worker worked with him to identify a path back into his chosen career, and provided ongoing support with identifying suitable training, completing job applications and preparing for interviews.

This support reflects the Promise foundation of "scaffolding", by putting supports in place to empower him to move towards his goals. The programme is open to all care experienced young people from 16-29 years old living within East Renfrewshire or open to East Renfrewshire Youth Intensive Support Services (YISS) Team. The young person was successful at interview and will start work in February – he is currently being supported into work and there will be ongoing in- work support to ensure that he progresses within the role and sustains employment.

50 Plus Pilot Employability Programme – funded via No One Left Behind

The client had heard about the Work EastRen 50+ programme through a friend and self-referred into the service. The client, who is 61 years old, was looking for a change in employment having worked in the construction industry for over 40 years. He had some ideas but was unsure how to progress these or where to start. The client talked through his wealth of experience and the transferrable skills which he had developed over the years with his adviser. He had previously trained apprentices and gained a qualification in welfare. As far as he was concerned, his main barrier to re-employment was his age and he felt this put him at a disadvantage within the job market.

He was looking for a change of direction and to find out what may be available to him given his age, stage and experience. He wanted to investigate what else would be available out with construction. After an initial assessment, the client was supported to look at the jobs market as part of his action plan. The adviser also discussed the possibility of the voluntary sector based on his welfare qualification and experience. A local volunteering opportunity with the East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau was explored. Regular appointments were set up and his CV was reviewed. Alongside this, there was ongoing active job searching with support of the adviser. Particular support was offered around interview techniques with a focus on competency based questions. The client had never considered these having worked in the building trade.

As a result of the support on offer and regular interactions with his client adviser, the client applied for a job within East Renfrewshire Council. He was originally interviewed for a part time position but the interviewing panel were so impressed by him and asked him to take up a full time

position. The job description was discussed with him following a job matching session with his adviser and his transferrable skills were highlighted before application.

The client is now in a job that he believes is more suited to him and he is looking forward to working until his retirement age. The client's feedback to our adviser was "got the job, thanks to yourself".

PES Traineeship Programme – run in partnership with Education and funded via PES

Our 2024/25 Parental Employability Support Fund Traineeships have almost completed their 6-month placement within the Council's Education Department. The clients had flexible roles, including Pupil Support Assistant, Early Years Play Worker and Business Support Assistant posts. These post were aimed at supporting parents in Scottish Government Child Poverty priority groups including Lone Parents, Ethnic minority, disability or child disability parents, 3+ dependent children, young parents and parents with a child under the age of 1. The parents were given roles close to their home/children's school to help with childcare barriers and hours that support this too. The parents have been supported with induction, training, accreditation and dedicated financial and employment adviser support. The programme is nearing completion, and already there are two parents gaining prolonged employment within the Education Department, with further interviews for permanent and supply posts ongoing.

PES Traineeships - Client Case Study

Our client registered with the Parental Employment Support Fund in April 2024, having been referred by Barrhead Job Centre. As a lone parent of two, the client was receiving Universal Credit and other benefits after leaving her job due to health issues in November 2023.

Our client outlined her goals of finding part-time work that accommodates her children while gaining new skills. A referral to the PES Financial Inclusion Officer provided a Better Off Calculation to assess potential earnings and any changes that may arise financially for the client.

The client was keen on Pupil Support roles nearby to support childcare and lack of transport options. The client was referred for Adult Learning courses and supported with applications. In July 2024, our client expressed interest in the PES Traineeships, leading to her applying for a Pupil Support Assistant position, which their adviser supported with interview preparation.

Our secured a 20-hour Trainee Pupil Support Assistant role, allowing flexibility for childcare and valuable experience in education. The client is nearing the end of the placement and is receiving further support to prepare for the a supply register and other longer term opportunities but feels in a much better position to apply for and gain a Pupil Support role.