

**Evaluation of European Structural Funds'
Contribution to Community Planning
Partnerships**

**North Lanarkshire CPP Baseline and
Progress to 2010**

Scottish Government

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This document contains a six-part baseline report written in November 2009 and a follow up progress report produced in September 2010

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Blake Stevenson was commissioned by the Scottish Government to evaluate the contribution of European Structural Funds to Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) over the period 2008-2010. The evaluation covers awards to CPPs in both the Lowlands and Uplands Scotland (LUPS) and the Highlands and Islands (H&I) Programmes. The initial focus of the evaluation is on the LUPS Programme where implementation is more advanced.
- 1.2 Thirteen CPPs received funding in the LUPS Programme via European Social Fund (ESF) Priority 1 – Progressing into Employment and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Priority 3 - Urban Regeneration.

Baseline Report

- 1.3 This baseline report assesses the development of ESF and ERDF programmes by North Lanarkshire Partnership. It is one of a series of baseline reports on the 13 CPPs in the LUPS Programme.
- 1.4 The baseline reports are based on a review of the ESF and ERDF application forms (and supporting documents) and on the findings of depth interviews with CPPs. An interview schedule was developed with input from the Scottish Government and the CPPs to guide these interviews.

North Lanarkshire Partnerships' European Structural Fund Programmes

- 1.5 The total value of European Structural Funds to North Lanarkshire Partnership is approximately £6.9million – the second largest grant among the 13 LUPS CPPs. A summary of North Lanarkshire's programmes is shown below.

ESF Priority 1 and ERDF Priority 3 in North Lanarkshire

Programme	European Structural Fund award	Eligible match funding	Intervention rate	Number of projects
ESF Priority 1 – Progressing into Employment	£4,295,608	£5,250,187	45%	40
ERDF Priority 3 – Urban Regeneration	£2,631,004	£4,057,548	39%	9

- 1.6 The ERDF programme is substantial and is the largest of the 13 LUPS CPPs. The programme involves significant capital projects including a social economy business centre in Airdrie, a schools vocational training centre at Glencryan in Cumbernauld and two e-learning centres at Motherwell and Wishaw.

Report Structure

- 1.7 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
- development of the CPP programmes;
 - partnership working;
 - monitoring and evaluation (including additionality, attribution and good practice);
 - progress to date; and
 - conclusions.

2 Development of the CPP programme

- 2.1 North Lanarkshire has a significant history of accessing European Structural Funds covering previous Objective 2 and 3 programmes as well as initiatives such as the Equal Access Development Partnership. This experience was harnessed in the development of the CPP programmes. In addition, North Lanarkshire was one of the seven designated Workforce Plus areas and it also benefits from the Fairer Scotland Fund and the Deprived Area Fund. The area benefits from long established employability and regeneration structures and activity such as the Partnership itself, Routes to Work and Routes to Inclusion.
- 2.2 North Lanarkshire developed its partnership bids following the inclusion of the approach in the LUPS programme documents. The Partnership felt the development process was undertaken with a degree of uncertainty in terms of the number of CPPs that would be supported and the value of funding available.
- 2.3 The existence of a Partnership Hub was highlighted as a key factor that enabled partners to react quickly and collectively to the opportunity. The Hub had initially been established approximately one year earlier for a Big Lottery Fund initiative but had continued as a means of allowing partners to react to new opportunities. A working group was established in August 2007 to write the ESF and ERDF bids. The group was led by North Lanarkshire Council and had good partner representation including the voluntary sector - via CVS North Lanarkshire - and the further education sector - via Cumbernauld College. Individual members of the group had significant experience of European Structural Funds and this was seen as a benefit in writing the bids.
- 2.4 The development process was informed by two reviews: a sustainability review of existing European funded activity, and research by an external consultant on employability issues. The employability research was highlighted as particularly important as it concluded that although partnership working was strong partners' behaviour was driven by funding and there was competition for finance and clients within North Lanarkshire. An Integrated Employability Framework was subsequently constructed to emphasise an outcome driven approach rather than a funding driven approach. The Framework covers the spectrum of employability support including: client engagement and assessment, case management, onwards referral, employer engagement and aftercare.
- 2.5 Proposed activity included in the CPP European programmes was based on an assessment of capacity and need within the context of the Framework rather than an open bidding process. A substantial figure (£400,000) was set aside in the ESF programme as the Job Brokerage Fund for voluntary sector organisations to engage and progress people to a stage where they can progress to mainstream employability services.
- 2.6 The services have been marketed under the banner "*North Lanarkshire's Working*". An informative and professional looking website has been



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developed (which acknowledges the support of European Structural Funds). The information emphasises the seamless employability services which are available via the programmes. A service directory has been produced detailing all the services available locally at the various stages of the Framework. The directory has reportedly been well received both by local workers and beneficiaries.

- 2.7 Although official grant approval was not received until June 2008 some activities commenced 'at risk' in April 2008. To assist the cashflow of some partners match funding including the Fairer Scotland Fund was frontloaded; a specially convened Committee meeting was necessary to enable the Council to implement this.

Challenge Fund Applications

- 2.8 No Challenge Fund applications were submitted in North Lanarkshire outwith the main CPP bid over the same bidding time period. This demonstrates the Partnership's success in engaging all partners including the voluntary sector and the FE colleges. The Partnership highlighted the risk that partners took in backing the CPP bid and not submitting their own elements as separate bids ('twin tracking'). Whilst there is no clear evidence of reduced costs, the Partnership approach signifies greater efficiency in use of resources, however it is not possible to prove this without a counterfactual.
- 2.9 Two projects developed after the CPP programme was approved have been submitted – Ravenscraig Regeneration Project from Remploy and Gowkthrapple Regeneration Hub from North Lanarkshire Council.

ESF Priority 1 and ERDF Priority 3 Challenge Fund Approvals

Project	Organisation	Status	ESF/ ERDF value	Priority
Ravenscraig Regeneration Project	Remploy Ltd	Stage 1 accepted Sep '08	£1,470,519	ESF Pr1
Gowkthrapple Regeneration Hub	North Lanarkshire Council	Stage 1 accepted Sep '08	£220,000	ERDF Pr3

Scottish Government Guidance

- 2.10 The Scottish Government, as Managing Authority (MA) for European Structural Funds has implemented a robust compliance procedure in the 2007-2013 programme of European funding. The need for further development of compliance arose from feedback concerning European Commission audits in previous programmes. The National Rules around eligibility of funding were developed in line with the changes to the operational programmes, and projects have been advised to refer to those when considering eligible activity. ESEP, as Intermediate Administration Body (IAB) offer advice to CPPs on technical and eligibility issues, any



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queries which require clarification are sent to the MA via a specific national rules e-mail address for comment. Any decision taken by the MA is then fed back to CPPs on an individual basis by the IAB and also at the CPP liaison meeting if the query affects all CPPs. There is a clear line of communication from CPP through the IAB to the MA for decisions to be taken on eligibility issues and the process has been highlighted to CPPs at numerous CPP liaison meetings. ESEP provide detailed feedback to eligibility queries from CPPs on a regular basis.

- 2.11 We have highlighted above the Partnership's view that the application process was entered in to without full knowledge of the anticipated number of bids that may be approved or the scale of resources available. It was stated that guidance on these issues could have been clearer. More generally, the Partnership felt guidance tended to be reactive and greater direction on operational issues would have been useful.
- 2.12 It is important to note that North Lanarkshire Partnership welcomed the detailed discussions that took place with ESEP regarding the content of the ERDF bid.

Horizontal themes

- 2.13 The horizontal themes of equal opportunities, environmental sustainability and social inclusion are satisfactorily covered in the ESF and ERDF applications. The Partnership stated – as others have – that the whole programme is focused on promoting social inclusion and that all partners promote equal opportunities. North Lanarkshire is one of a limited number of CPPs to include initiatives aimed at breaking down gender based labour market barriers via the inclusion of men into childcare and women into construction initiatives and they are commended for this. Recent analysis of MIS data by the Partnership demonstrated that it is achieving employment outcomes at similar rates for all target groups. In addition, the Partnership has emphasised an awareness of the need to further increase the numbers from target groups accessing services.
- 2.14 The target for the proportion of ESF participants expected to come from North Lanarkshire's BME community (3%) is higher than the proportion of the working age population accounted for by BME people at the 2001 Census (1%) suggesting the positive engagement of this group. The gender of ESF participants is split 55:45 (male:female) – although not an equitable split it is more balanced than some CPPs.
- 2.15 In terms of environmental sustainability, the Partnership highlighted practical examples of how partners are trying to minimise their environmental impact.
- 2.16 Ongoing information on the implementation of the horizontal themes by projects is gathered via monitoring.

3 Partnership Working

- 3.1 Partnership working is very strong in North Lanarkshire, in our opinion. A range of organisations have been involved from the outset and have demonstrated a strong commitment throughout.
- 3.2 Jobcentre Plus is an active partner in North Lanarkshire unlike a number of other CPP areas. At a strategic level, involvement has allowed the organisation to target its own resources to greatest effect and avoid duplication. Frontline advisors in the organisation have reportedly found the service directory particularly useful.
- 3.3 The three local colleges – Motherwell, Cumbernauld and Coatbridge – have all been involved throughout. The colleges initially recognised that there were benefits to their participation in the programme in terms of finances and partnership working. Ongoing involvement has brought additional benefits in terms of a detailed understanding of the Framework and other service partners.
- 3.4 The voluntary sector is also reportedly co-operating more as a result of their involvement in the programme. The inclusion of a ring fenced fund in the programme to which voluntary sector organisations bid was novel and resulted in 16 organisations providing wraparound employability support.
- 3.5 Overall, the partners reported a very strong sense of co-operation and trust and the evidence we have seen supports this. European funding was seen as a catalyst but the strength of partnership working has progressed at a strategic and operational level. At the operational level there are reportedly better connections between services and smoother transitions for participants. At the strategic level, partners have a joint commitment to the Integrated Employability Framework and there are now clearly defined and understood stages of employability support. Partners have agreed to work together on the next round of European Structural Funds rather than submit separate Challenge Fund bids. It has also allowed the partners to react quickly and collectively to new opportunities such as the Future Jobs Fund.
- 3.6 A Steering Group oversees the programme and it meets every 6 weeks. All partners are represented on the Group. The Group sits within the overall structures of North Lanarkshire Partnership.

CPP Network

- 3.7 North Lanarkshire representatives have been very active in the CPP Network. North Lanarkshire Partnership was instrumental in getting the Network set up and now chairs the meetings.



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- 3.8 The Network is valued in North Lanarkshire as it provides an opportunity to share experiences across CPPs and to engage with the Scottish Government on operational and strategic issues. It allows the CPPs to have a collective voice.

4 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 4.1 Monitoring is the responsibility of three Performance and Finance Officers (2 FTE) who have support from the Programme Co-ordinator. There are varying levels of experience of European Structural Funds within the team.
- 4.2 The monitoring systems appear to be robust. All projects submit quarterly monitoring forms which have been designed to complement ESEP requirements. The forms are reviewed for compliance on participant and financial matters and followed up accordingly.
- 4.3 A Hanlon tracking system has been introduced following a tendering process. All partners with the exception of Jobcentre Plus use the system and there are approximately 160 staff registered to use the system. The on-line system contains information on all beneficiaries who can be tracked as they move through the Integrated Employability Framework. Double counting should not be an issue. There is a degree of flexibility in the information partners record to meet their varying requirements although there is a minimum level as some elements are compulsory. The voluntary sector partners use the system and initial resistance has been addressed through capacity building support which was well received by the sector. Cumbernauld College uses the system but also uses its own system which adds to their workload.
- 4.4 A Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-group meets every nine weeks to review performance and spending. Membership of the sub-group is representative of the Partnership.

Additionality and attribution

- 4.5 The ESF/ERDF applications highlight the additional outputs that will be delivered as a direct result of Structural Fund assistance. For example, the ESF application highlights the additional outputs of 2,402 participants supported, 1,688 participants gaining a qualification, 818 participants entering employment and 790 participants entering education or training. The figures were calculated by the Partnership from an assessment of what would in all probability have been delivered in the absence of European funding (the counterfactual). We have not verified the robustness of these figures.
- 4.6 The consultees were very positive about the additionality of the partnership approach which underpins the CPP programme. The Partnership highlighted how partners worked more strategically and collectively as a direct result of the CPP programme.



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5 Progress to Date

ESF

- 5.1 By the mid-point of the original timescale (31 March 2009), progress against targets in North Lanarkshire was generally strong. Five of the eight indicators had achieved more than half of their targets including three that had achieved 70% or more of their target: the number of participants receiving support, the number of participants with multiple deprivations supported, and the number of participants in the NEET group.
- 5.2 Progress against the number of participants entering employment was broadly on track at 57% however progress against the number of participants entering education and training and gaining a qualification was less than 10%. We understand that a notification of change has been submitted to change the number of participants entering education and training.
- 5.3 The number of participants in employment six months after leaving was only 16% of the target but we would expect there to be a time lag with this output.

Progress against ESF targets to 31 March 2009

Indicator	Progress to 31/03/09	Target	Proportion achieved
Number of participants receiving support	3,911	4,765	82%
Number of participants with multiple deprivations	2,604	3,713	70%
Number of participants in the NEET group	874	1,049	83%
Number of participants with disabilities or health difficulties	593	1,122	53%
Number of participants entering employment	947	1,664	57%
Number of participants entering education and training	50	1,596	3%
Number of participants gaining a partial or full qualification	223	3,075	7%
Number of participants in employment six months after leaving	178	1,111	16%

- 5.4 It should be noted that performance to date in North Lanarkshire is relatively strong compared to a number of other CPPs.

ERDF

- 5.5 Progress against ERDF targets is also relatively strong. The job brokerage initiatives target has been met and the related target on individuals moving into employment – the real tangible impact of the initiatives - is 43% towards target. The two ICT/e-learning facilities and one childcare facility have also been established and the number of social enterprises supported has already exceed the target.
- 5.6 On a less positive note, there had been no progress against the area of business space created/modified, and the number of gross jobs created. The link to capital projects is acknowledged as the reason for the above and it is possible that the targets can be achieved by the end date.

Progress against ERDF targets

Indicator	Progress to 31/3/09	Target	Proportion achieved
Number of job brokerage initiatives supported	5	5	100%
Number of ICT and e-learning facilities supported	2	2	100%
Number of childcare and other community facilities supported	1	1	100%
Area of business space created or modified (m ²)	0	731	0%
Increase in the number of individuals gaining employment through job brokerage schemes	851	2,000	43%
Number of social enterprises supported	13	12	108%
Number of gross jobs created	0	56	0%

Exit Strategy

- 5.7 North Lanarkshire Partnership has agreed that a partnership bid will be submitted in the next application round to continue implementation of the Integrated Employability Framework. The Partnership view is that the Framework is well established and will continue to provide the context for employability services in the area.
- 5.8 As previously highlighted, North Lanarkshire's ERDF programme is more substantial than other CPPs. The Partnership see the continuation of both the ESF and ERDF elements as mutually supportive and we understand this has been discussed with ESEP following recent guidance that complementary bids are not essential in the next funding round.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 North Lanarkshire Partnership has worked collectively to develop ESF and ERDF programmes that are both comprehensive and strategic, in our opinion. From the outset, the Partnership has successfully engaged partners including North Lanarkshire Council, FE colleges, the voluntary sector and Jobcentre Plus. A history of partnership working, European funding and employability initiatives has undoubtedly aided the process as did an initial assessment of the needs and services in the area.
- 6.2 The impact of this strong partnership working has been evident at both the operational and strategic levels. The Partnership highlighted examples of joined up working among frontline staff and improved awareness of services, as well as an improved ability within the Partnership to react to new opportunities.
- 6.3 Performance to date has been relatively strong in North Lanarkshire both in terms of progress against targets and in comparison to a number of other CPPs.
- 6.4 In our opinion, a number of individual elements of the programme are noteworthy including the overarching Integrated Employability Framework, the "*North Lanarkshire's Working*" branding and the ring fencing of funding for the voluntary sector.
- 6.5 The positive experience of the partnership approach to date has led North Lanarkshire Partnership to seek to continue implementation beyond March 2010.

Progress Update Report

Introduction

Overall, North Lanarkshire Partnership appears to have made very good progress implementing their Integrated Employability Framework. As highlighted in our baseline report the Framework was a comprehensive programme utilising substantial ESF and ERDF resources to deliver ambitious targets. The tables appended to this report show that the ESF/ERDF grant has been spent and targets for outputs and results have by and large been delivered.

ESF eligible spend to the end of March 2010 has slightly exceeded the approved grant although the claim will be limited to the approved amount. This has enabled a total of 8,903 participants to receive support which is 87% above the target; all outputs have been exceeded by at least 50%. Performance against ESF-related results is not as high as the outputs at this stage ranging from 47% (for the number of participants gaining a partial or full qualification) to 114% (for the number of participants entering employment). However, beneficiaries are still taking part in activities such as college courses and the Partnership fully expects the ESF-related results to meet the targets.

ERDF spend to the end of February 2010 was 97% of the approved grant. All outputs and result targets had been met with the exception of those related to the Wellwynd project which was delayed and has only recently completed the physical build.

The number of beneficiaries entering employment in both the ESF and ERDF funded activity is impressive. By February 2010, 2,270 ESF-funded participants had entered employment (114% of the target) and 1,911 individuals had gained employment through ERDF-funded job brokerage schemes (96% of the target).

Development of the model

North Lanarkshire Partnership's Integrated Employability Framework has provided a co-ordinated and comprehensive 'pipeline' for beneficiaries. While we understand that there have been some minor revisions to delivery, the model has essentially been delivered as outlined in the bid. A Notification of Change was submitted outlining mainly administrative changes.

The Partnership assessed need at the outset and commissioned services to address the parts of the Framework that they collectively identified and this approach appears to have worked well. The flexibility of the commissioning model was highlighted as a positive feature.

The Management Information System has been successfully adopted by partners and this has enabled effective tracking of beneficiaries, the results of which have been less duplication and more co-ordinated services for beneficiaries.

The Community Engagement Fund has worked very well and its funding was increased significantly for Phase 2. The Fund has been used by third sector organisations to engage beneficiaries and link them into the other services provided through the Framework.

The Partnership gained approval for Phase 2 to extend the Framework from April 2010 to June 2011. We understand that one of the delivery partners – a supported employment project overseen by North Lanarkshire Council’s Social Work - withdrew from the Phase 2 Framework as they felt the administrative burden was too great.

A bid has recently been submitted under Priority 5 to continue the Framework. To date, colleges have been a key partner in North Lanarkshire’s Framework and work was required to separate college activities so they could be included in the Scottish Funding Council’s P5 strategic programme. In terms of approach, it is noteworthy that North Lanarkshire Partnership’s P5 bid includes some contracting focusing on the later stages of the pipeline to complement the continued use of a commissioning model.

Partnership Working

The strength of partnership working in North Lanarkshire continues to be a defining feature of the ESF/ERDF programme, as it was at the outset. The Framework has engaged a wide range of partners including colleges, the third sector, Jobcentre Plus, and various Council services and the partners work well together to implement a joined-up approach to employability in North Lanarkshire. A high level of trust exists between partners and collectively they aim to minimise duplication and maximise the opportunities for beneficiaries to progress.

On a practical level, the use of the Management Information System by a range of partners appears to aid partnership working.

The Partnership reported that some partners have at times been frustrated by the release of funds although they have tried to minimise the impact and overall this has not been a barrier to partnership working.

North Lanarkshire has been one of the main CPPs heavily involved in the CPP Network and they highlighted the positive role that they see the Network fulfilling in bringing together the CPPs, ESEP and the Scottish Government.

Positive relationships with the Scottish Government and ESEP were reported.

Additionality

In its simplest form, the Partnership highlighted additionality in terms of an increased volume of beneficiaries which has been significantly greater than would have been the case without ESF and ERDF funding.

Further, the Partnership also highlighted the additionality that has been achieved by the increased integration achieved by the implementation of the Framework which has reduced service duplication and improved co-ordination. The Partnership also identified wider benefits in terms of partnership working that result from greater transparency and a better understanding of what all of the partners do.

The benefits of partnership working have been applied outwith European funding such as the speed and ability with which the Partnership responded to opportunities via the Future Jobs Fund.

Horizontal themes

The Integrated Employability Framework directly addresses social inclusion as it provides a pathway for disadvantage groups to progress towards employment and training.

In terms of equality of opportunity, our baseline report highlighted that North Lanarkshire was one of a small number of CPPs with activities to positively promote employment opportunities to under-represented groups. The men into childcare project, which was highlighted in our baseline report, has, we understand, faced some difficulties but remains an integral part of the Framework. The Partnership and the service providers have emphasised the importance of applying equal opportunities legislation and monitoring.

Although environmental issues have been less of a focus, the Partnership is considering how they can apply the lessons of Future Jobs Funded activity which focused on environmental issues into the Integrated Employability Framework.

Good Practice

An external consultant is undertaking a review of the approach to employability in North Lanarkshire which will highlight examples of good practice.

We highlight the branding of activity as “North Lanarkshire’s Working” as an example of good practice.

The Future

As highlighted above a Priority 5 bid has been submitted to continue the implementation of the Integrated Employability Framework. North Lanarkshire Partnership is aiming to maintain the benefits of the Framework including partnership working and a joint Management Information System in the future as some local provision will operate under the strategic programmes operated by the Scottish Funding Council, Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations.



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Data on Progress and Spend

Progress update March 2010

Name of CPP: North Lanarkshire

Part 1 ERDF update

1.1 Summary of Financial Performance in North Lanarkshire CPP ERDF Project to March 2010

Financial information expressed in £

CPP	Approved Eligible Expenditure	Approved Grant	Grant spent	% approved grant spent	Approved Completion Date
North Lanarkshire	£6,688,552.51	£2,631,004.00	£2,546,433.30	97%	30 June 2010

1.2 Analysis of approved ERDF indicators

ERDF output indicators

Approved Indicator	Approved CPP Target	Actual CPP Activity to March 2010	% Approved Target met by Actual CPP Activity to March 2010
Number of job brokerage initiatives supported	5	5	200%
Number of ICT and e-learning facilities supported	2	2	100%
Number of childcare and other community facilities supported	1	1	100%
Number of transport hub projects supported	0	0	N/A
Area of business space created or modified (m ²)	731	0	0%
Number of renewable energy and resource/ energy-efficiency projects supported	0	0	N/A

*N/A = not applicable

ERDF results indicators

Approved Indicator	Approved CPP Target	Actual CPP Activity to March 2010	% Approved Target met by Actual CPP Activity to March 2010
Increase in the number of individuals gaining employment through job brokerage schemes	2,000	1,911	96%
Increase in the number of individuals gaining employment through supported e-learning/ ICT facilities	0	0	N/A
Increase in the number of individuals gaining employment through supported childcare/ community facilities	0	0	N/A



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Approved Indicator	Approved CPP Target	Actual CPP Activity to March 2010	% Approved Target met by Actual CPP Activity to March 2010
Number of enterprises supported	0	0	N/A
Number of social enterprises supported	12	0	0%
Number of gross jobs created	56	0	0%

Part 2 ESF update

2.1 Summary of financial performance in North Lanarkshire CPP ESF Projects to March 2010

Financial information expressed in £

CPP	Approved Eligible Expenditure	Approved Grant	Grant spent	% approved grant spent	Approved Completion Date
North Lanarkshire	£9,521,211.01	£4,284,544.95	£4,284,544.95	100%	31 January 2010

2.2 Analysis of approved ESF indicators

ESF output indicators

Approved Indicator	Approved CPP Target	Actual CPP Activity to March 2010	% Approved Target met by Actual CPP Activity to June 2010
Number of participants receiving support	4,765	8,903	187%
Number of participants with multiple deprivations (i.e. those who qualify for 2 or more of the target groups)	3,713	5,792	156%
Number of participants in the NEET group	1,049	1,753	167%
Number of participants with disabilities or health difficulties	1,122	1,305	116%

results indicators

Approved Indicator	Approved CPP Target	Actual CPP Activity to March 2010	% Approved Target met by Actual CPP Activity to June 2010
Number of participants entering employment	2,000	2,270	114%
Number of participants entering education or training	981	697	71%
Number of participants gaining a partial (i.e. a completed unit towards a full qualification) or full qualification	3,074	1,442	47%
Number of participants in employment six months after leaving	1,111	946	85%