



Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Partnership

2023/24 Action Plan



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Executive Summary

2.1. Introduction

1. In March 2022 the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership (F&O LMP) undertook a Strategic Assessment of employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Area.
2. This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities identified continue to reflect key labour market issues in the area and was informed by analysis of information provided by statutory partners, as well as the result of ongoing district wide engagement and consultation across the council area.
3. Cognisance was also taken of the following documents:
 - Programme for Government
 - Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan

2.1.1. Programme for Government

4. The NI Executive is committed to developing a long-term, strategic Programme for Government that is based on a shared and strategic vision for the future which aims to improve wellbeing for all.
5. In 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive held a public consultation on its Programme for Government draft Outcomes Framework. The draft Framework contains nine strategic Outcomes which, taken together, will set a clear direction of travel for the NI Executive and provide a vision for the future of all citizens.
6. Figure 1 below sets out the Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework.



Figure 1: Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework

7. Draft outcomes relevant to the work of the Labour Market Partnership include:

- **Outcome 3: ‘We have a more equal society’** - promoting inclusion and tackling disadvantage;
- **Outcome 6: ‘We have more people working in better jobs’** - creation and development of more opportunities and better jobs, and addressing underachievement alongside skills shortages;
- **Outcome 8: We care for others and help those in need’** - improving the quality of life for people with disabilities, promoting positive attitudes to older people and tailoring support to enable them to participate fully in society, and tackling disadvantage by supporting people to build a route out of poverty.

8. The Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Partnership will work to ensure the Action Plans it develops use an Outcomes Based Approach that support the achievement of relevant Programme for Government outcomes and that improve on indicators that relate to employability and skills. The following themes have been identified:

- Economic inactivity rate excluding students;
- Long term unemployed;
- Youth unemployment;
- Disability;
- Skilled Labour Supply; and
- Economic Shock

2.1.2. Supporting the delivery of the Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan

9. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council published the 2030 Community Plan, which seeks to enhance collaboration to deliver the following shared vision for the district:

“Our district is a welcoming, shared and inclusive Fermanagh and Omagh District, where people and places are healthy, safe, connected and prosperous; and where our outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage is cherished and sustainably managed”



Figure 2: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Community Plan

10. The delivery of an effective Labour Market Partnership Action Plan for 2023/24 will seek to make a positive impact on five of the eight Community Planning Outcomes, namely:

- Outcome 1: “Our people are healthy and well, physically, mentally & emotionally”;
- Outcome 2: Older people lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives;
- Outcome 3: “Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient and empowered”;
- Outcome 4: “Our people have the best start in life, with lifelong opportunities to fulfil their potential”; and
- Outcome 5: “Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking”.

11. In particular, the 2023/24 Labour Market Partnership Action Plan will make a direct positive impact on the following themes:

- An improvement in skilled labour supply, measured by:
 - a reduction in the percentage working age achieved below NVQ Level 4
 - An increase in the number of all person gross median wage;
- An reduction in economic inactivity, measured by:
 - % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate; and
- An increase in the disability employment rate, measured by:
 - % Employment rate of people with disabilities

12. A Turning the Curve Exercise was undertaken in relation to the current Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Partnership Action Plan Themes and programmes were considered based on the outcomes they delivered.

2.1.3. Purpose of this document

13. The purpose of this document is to summarise the findings of a strategic review undertaken during February and March 2022, and to set out Fermanagh and

Omagh (F&O) Labour Market Partnership's Action Plan and proposed budget for 2023/24.

14. Subject to approval by the Regional Labour Market Partnership, this Action Plan will be implemented by Council officers and their appointed delivery partners under the oversight of the F&O Labour Market Partnership.

2.2. Summary of the Strategic Action Plan for 2023/24

15. The 2023/24 Plan will be funded by Department for Communities (DfC) to implement the key activities outlined in Table 1 below.

Strategic Priority 1	To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area.
Key Activities:	LMP Delivery and Development
	Strategic Planning: Review of 2022/23 Action Plan; Carry Out a Strategic Assessment for 2024-2027 and develop an Action Plan 2024/25
	Capacity Building: Member Training/Case Studies
Strategic Priority 2	To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally
Key Activities:	Develop & deliver:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'Gamified' essential skills learning programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Transport Academy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sectoral Employment Academies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A female entrepreneur programme.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A registered childminder training academy
Key Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An employer-led Disability Employment Programme..
Strategic Priority 3	To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.
Key Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Apprenticeship Brokerage programme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini Jobs Fairs

Table 1: Outline of Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership's key activities.

3. Findings from the Consultation Process

3.1. Consultation scope

16. In the course of developing the 2022/23 Action Plan, over 20 key labour market stakeholders were engaged in a series of one-to-one interviews and online workshops to gain insight into the specific priorities and needs of the labour market in the Fermanagh and Omagh District. Figure 3 below summarises the stakeholder groups involved.

Stakeholder Engagement

Sectors / Stakeholders engaged:

- Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Health & Social care
- Agri-food
- Retail
- Tourism & Hospitality
- Digital / IT
- Logistics
- Enterprise
- Education
- Childcare
- Disability

Did not engage:

- Construction



Figure 3: LMP stakeholder consultation groups

3.2. Key messages from stakeholder engagement

3.2.1. Feedback from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council employers

17. Figure 4 summarises some of the key messages from employers in the Fermanagh and Omagh area.

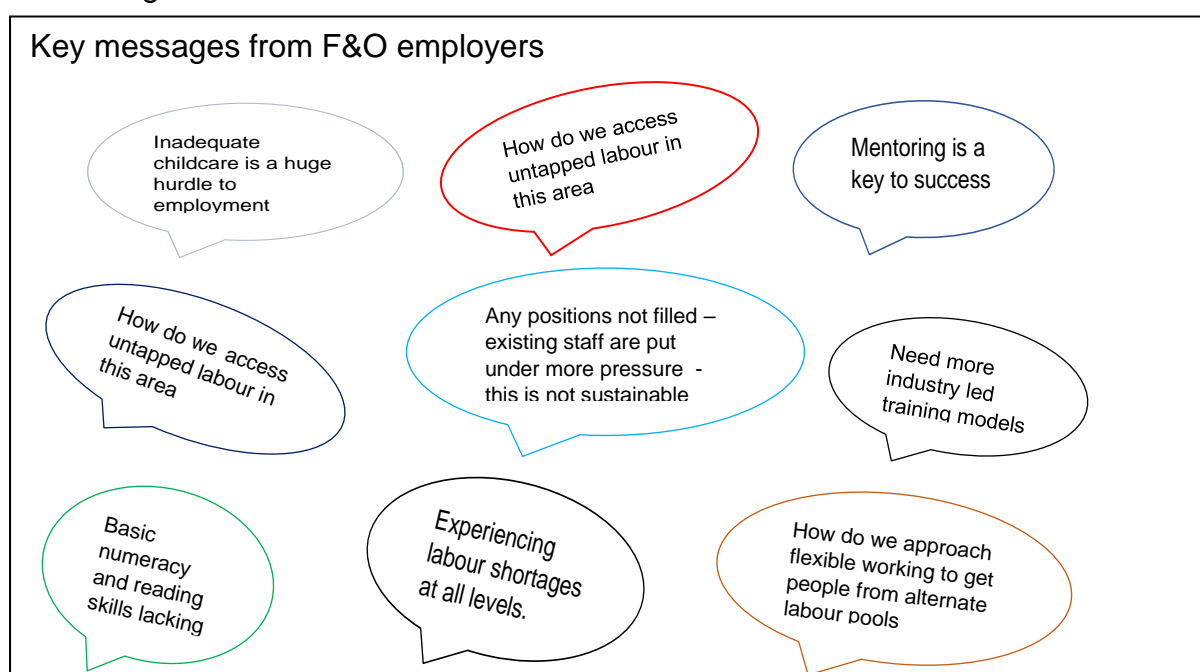


Figure 4: Key messages from Fermanagh & Omagh employers

18. Engagement with local employers confirmed for the most part that labour and skills shortages exist at all levels and across almost all sectors.
19. This Action Plan recognises that the small sample of businesses engaged in the consultation process provides a limited opinion on the current needs of any given sector, however a broader annual survey of local business skills and labour needs, as a piece of key market research, is currently being delivered under the 2022/23 F&O LMP Action Plan and will be used to develop the three year Strategic Assessment and the 2024/25 F&O LMP Action Plan.
20. Key priorities noted by local employers for the 2023/24 Action Plan, include:
- The need for industry-focused education and training delivery;
 - Addressing basic literacy and numeracy, with several examples referenced of locally resident employees who were deficient in these basic skills;
 - Supporting Industry to be more flexible in its approach to the labour market, to create opportunities to improve access to a broader pool of untapped labour in the local market (economically inactive local residents); and
 - An increase in the number of apprenticeships.

3.2.2. Feedback from employability and skills partners

21. Discussions with labour market employability and skills partners highlighted the importance of adequate investment in mentorship and pastoral care throughout the programme to support those furthest removed from the labour market to engage, fully participate, and see programmes through towards a successful outcome.
22. In this context, one-to-one mentoring is considered a key investment within the 2023/24 Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership Action Plan. This mentoring will be fundamental in supporting those furthest from the labour market return to work and will be considered a critical success factor for the deliverability of the planned outcomes from the overall LMP Action Plan.

4. Findings from the Statistical Assessment

4.1. Overview of the Fermanagh and Omagh District labour market

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council region is the least populated Local Government District in Northern Ireland (116,800 residents¹), with an aging population demographic, increasing by 4% from 2011 to 2021.

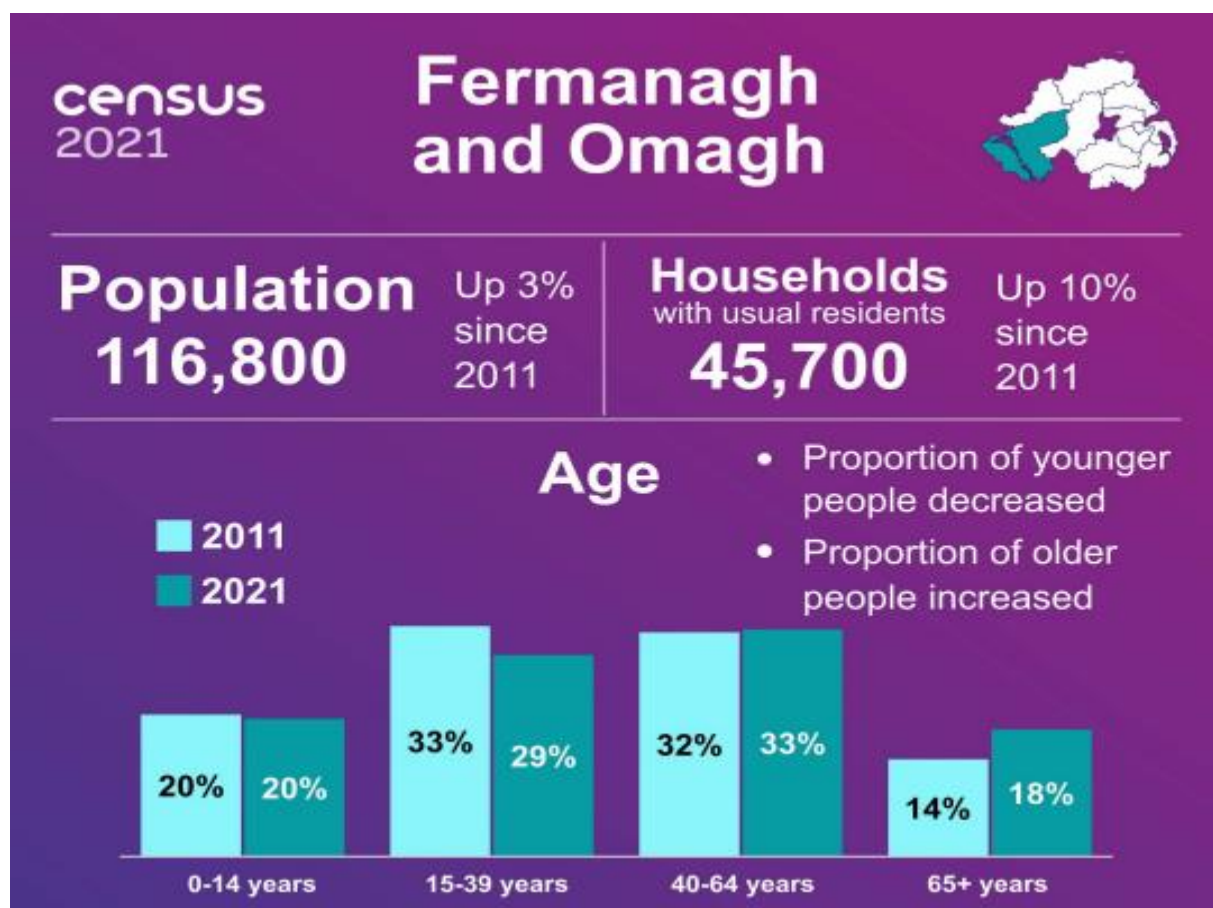


Figure 5: Population of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area

23. Despite being a highly entrepreneurial region with over 8,455 registered businesses² (94.3% of which are micro or small businesses), the region suffers economic inactivity rates of 25%³).

24. Figure 6 illustrates the profile of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's working age population with approximately 50,500 economically active residents in employment and 12,900 residents (excluding students) economically inactive.

¹ Source: NISRA, NINIS. 2021.

² Source: IDBR publication, 2022

³ Source: NISRA, Labour Market Status, 2020.

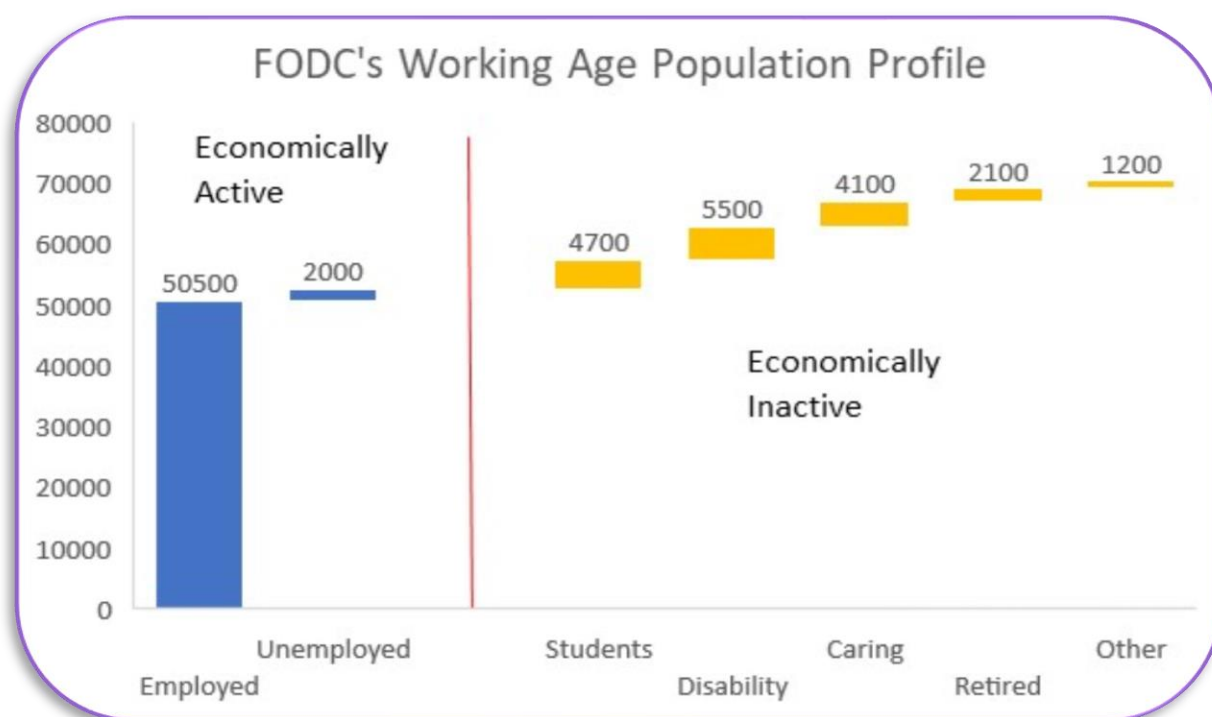


Figure 6: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Working Age Population Profile

Source: NISRA, 2021

4.2. Long Term Unemployment - Claimant Count⁴

25. Prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area experienced a small but steady increase in claimant count numbers during 2019. The exact drivers of this pre-Covid trend are not well understood, but could possibly be linked to the growing percentage of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area resident working population with no or low qualifications (See Section 4.4 below), 14.5% of the working age population have no qualifications.
26. Similar to many other Council areas, Covid-19 caused a significant spike in Claimant Count in early 2020, when the claimant numbers rose from a pre-Covid baseline of 1,577 to a peak of 3,215 in May 2020, an increase of 104%.

⁴ Claimant Count refers to all people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) plus those Universal Credit (UC) claimants who were claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. Some claimants are wholly unemployed and seeking work, while others may be employed but with low earnings that make them eligible for unemployment related benefit support

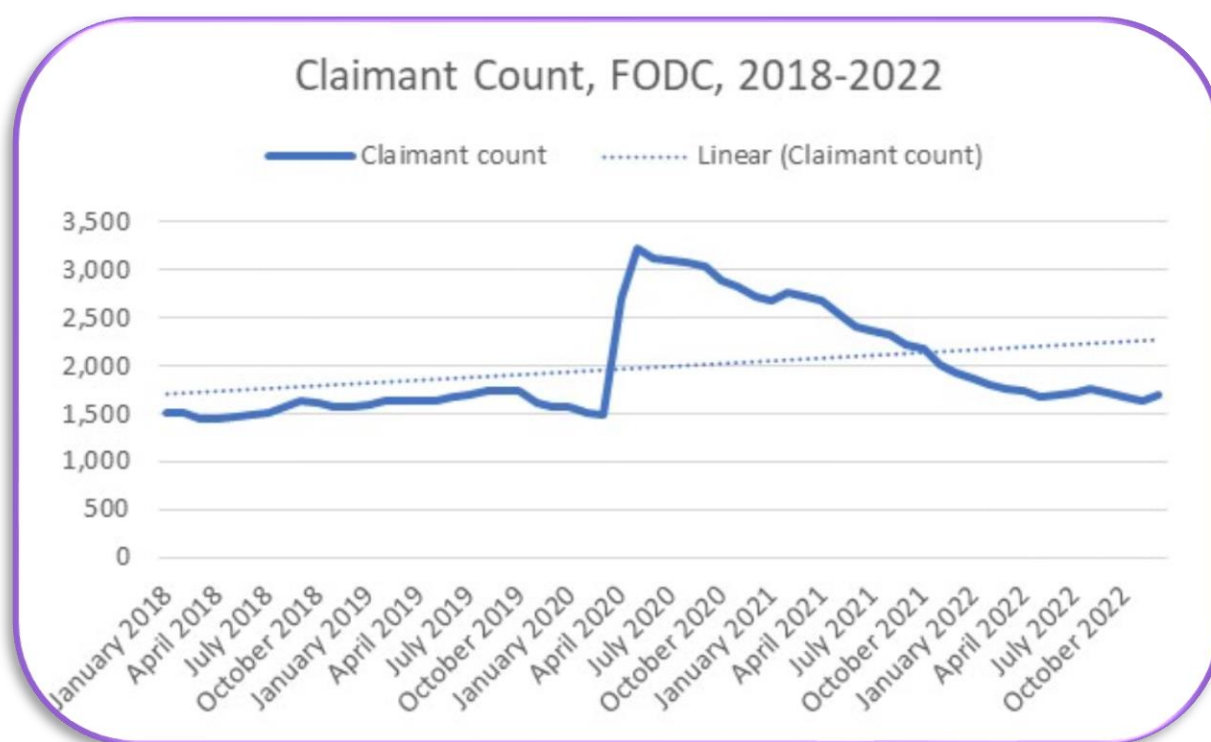


Figure 7: FODC Claimant Count numbers 2022

Source: NISRA, Claimant Count Monthly Data

27. Despite analysts concerns at the time, the ending of the Government's Furlough scheme in September 2021 had minimal impact on employment. Claimant Count numbers have fallen steadily since the peak, and based on the most recent published figures at the time of this report sits at 2.4% of total claimants within Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area (1,690 claimants, Dec 2022) compared to 2.2% pre-covid.

28. Compared to other Council areas this represents a relatively successful recovery from Covid-19 in Claimant Count terms, however, reducing Claimant Count numbers to levels below the pre-pandemic period will remain a key focus for Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership's 2023/24 Action Plan.

4.3. Youth unemployment

29. Youth unemployment, as a percentage of total unemployment in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, peaked in 2020 at 21.7% (Figure 8). Since then this level has decreased, falling to a four-year low in 2022 at a rate of 15.2%. Although 2023 shows a slight increase, youth unemployment is still nearly 3% below 2018 levels.

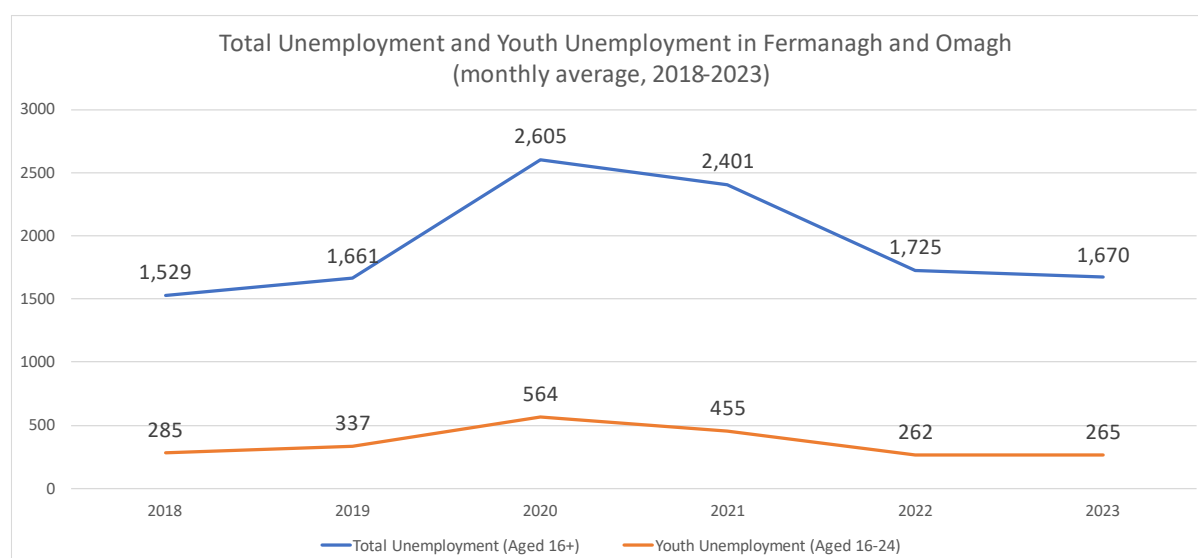


Figure 8: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Area Youth Unemployment
Source: NOMIS March 2023

4.4. Skilled Labour Supply - Qualifications

4.4.1. Qualification level of residents in Fermanagh and Omagh, aged 16 – 64.

30. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area is the second poorest performing Council area in relation to the percentage of residents with no qualifications, with 14.5% of the working age population holding no formal qualifications in 2021⁵, compared to an NI average of 11.9%. Derry City and Strabane have the highest proportion of working age residents with no qualifications (15.1%).

31. Figure 8 shows the change in the level of qualifications of working age residents in the Fermanagh and Omagh between 2009 and 2021.

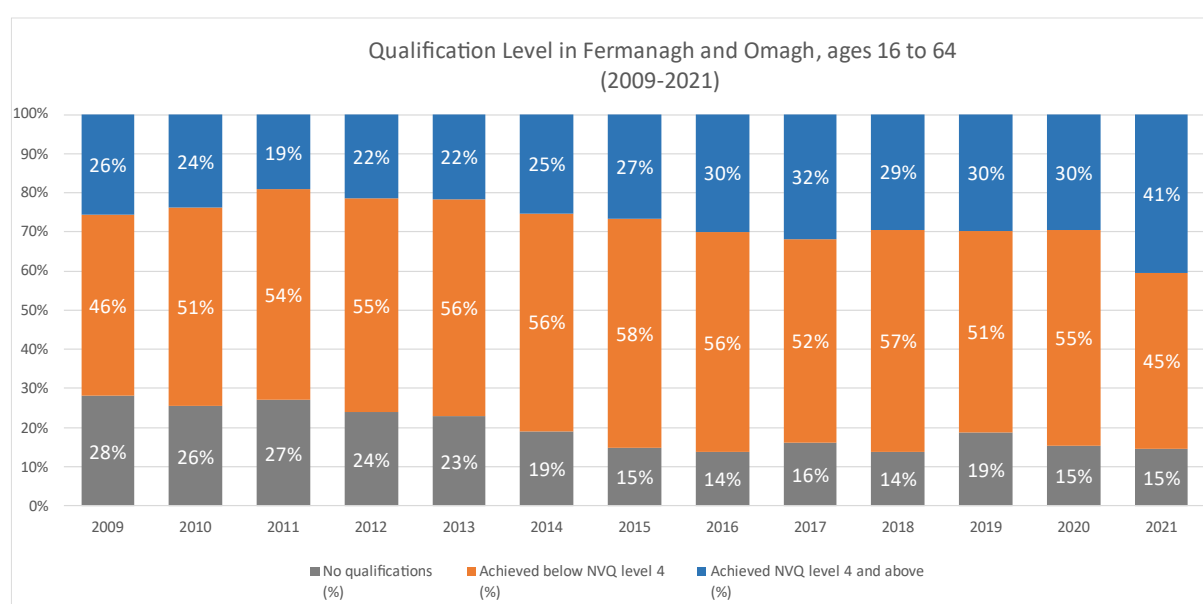


Figure 9: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council region's qualification level, ages 16 to 64
Source NISRA Labour Force Survey, 2021

⁵ Compared to a Northern Ireland average of 11.9%. Source: NISRA Labour Force Survey, 2021.

32. Contrary to the high level of residents with no qualifications in the Fermanagh and Omagh area, there has been a significant increase (11%) of working age residents holding qualifications at NVQ level 4 and above between 2020 and 2021. This accounts for 40.5% of the economically active population of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, just 1.6% below the Northern Ireland average (42.1%), and rates as the sixth best performing council overall.

4.4.2. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Area Median Full Time Pay

33. Figure 10 shows that Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area's median full time pay rates have tracked in line with the overall median full time pay rates in Northern Ireland over the past five years, and whilst a small gap exists to the Northern Ireland rates, pay in the district is considered to be competitive in the context of what is the most rural and least populated region in Northern Ireland.⁶ The Full Time Annual Median Gross Pay (place of work) for Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022 was £27,896 compared to the Northern Ireland rate of £30,000⁷.

34. Through investment in initiatives, Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership will endeavour to ensure those moving into employment following participation on the LMP programmes will to do so at a rate equal to or above the current living wage.

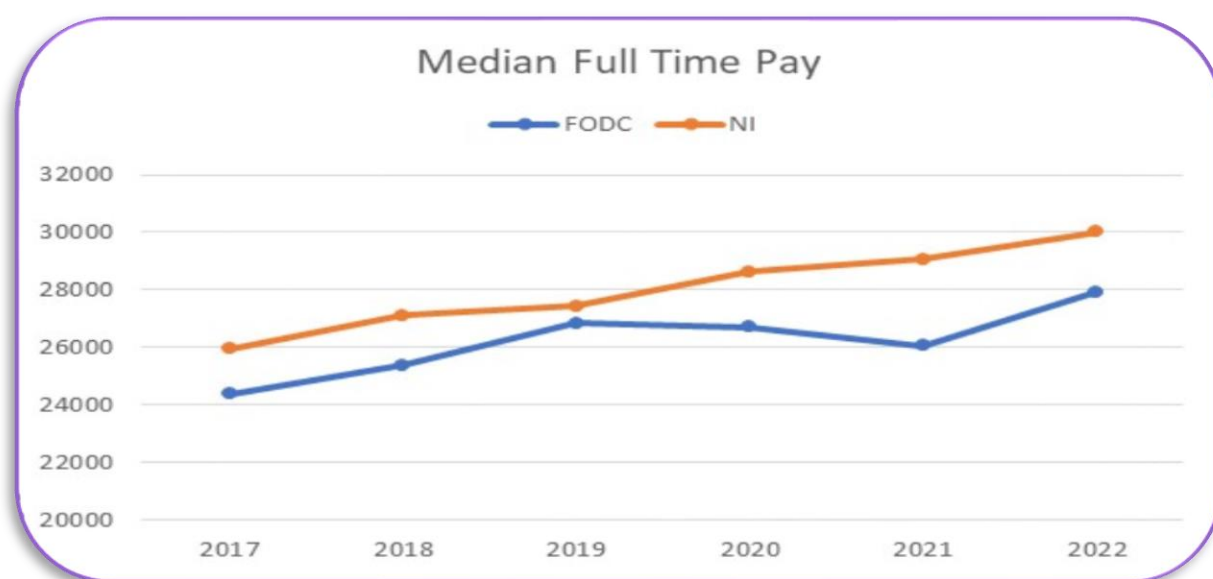


Figure 10: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area Median Full Time Pay Rates (NISRA, ASHE)

35. Comparing level of qualifications (Figure 9) with Median Full Time Pay (Figure 10) suggests there is a clear correlation between higher qualifications and better paid employment, as both the rate of pay and level of qualifications NVQ Level 4 and above, within Fermanagh and Omagh area, show a significant increase from 2021.

36. A key concern however to the Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Partnership is the percentage of the working age population within the Fermanagh and Omagh

⁶ Source: NISRA, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

⁷ Source: NISRA, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

area who have no qualifications. The exact drivers behind this negative trend is not well understood however research conducted by Ulster University ⁸ has shown a clear correlation between lower educational attainment and parental worklessness, poverty and lone parent-hood.⁹

37. Three of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area's Super Output Areas (SOA) are in the top 100 most deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland.¹⁰

38. Following a sudden spike in 2019 this level is gradually improving however feedback from local employers in relation to numeracy and literacy issues with employees, would point to a priority need to invest in activities that promote essential skills development and improved education outcomes which will lead to better career opportunities and progression into higher paid employment.

4.5. Economic inactivity

4.5.1. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council - a region with one of the highest economic activity rates

39. In 2021 FODC's economic activity rates ranked joint third highest of all the Northern Ireland regions compared to being joint fourth lowest 2020.

40. Economic inactivity rates have improved by 6% from 2020 and 2021 and sit 2% better than the Northern Ireland average.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Number
Lisburn and Castlereagh	22%	21%	17%	20%	22%	21400
Ards and North Down	22%	26%	25%	27%	24%	22200
Antrim and Newtownabbey	20%	20%	21%	25%	24%	20900
Fermanagh and Omagh	30%	27%	33%	31%	25%	17300
Mid and East Antrim	26%	26%	24%	27%	25%	20800
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	25%	23%	26%	27%	26%	33900
Mid Ulster	23%	24%	22%	24%	27%	25700
Newry, Mourne and Down	32%	31%	24%	24%	29%	33400
Belfast	31%	33%	31%	31%	30%	63600
Causeway Coast and Glens	34%	29%	30%	32%	30%	25500
Derry City and Strabane	37%	34%	30%	38%	32%	29400
Northern Ireland	28%	27%	26%	28%	27%	314100

Figure 11: Economic inactivity by LGD

Source: NISRA, Labour Force Survey

⁸ Source: Ulster University, Economic Policy Centre, Sub Regional Skills Barometer 2019, West

⁹ Source: Ulster University, Lone parents are linked to factors which adversely affect childhood education

¹⁰ Devenish (44), Lisanelly 2 (46), Lisanelly 1 (47). Source: NINIS, NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017.

41. Exact drivers for 25% of the working age residents in FODC who are economically inactive are not fully understood, but contributing factors are likely to include:

- the educational attainment profile of residents with particular reference to those with low or no qualifications;
- the disability employment gap; and
- the gender employment gap in the area.

4.5.2. Addressing the Economic Activity Gender Gap

42. As at 2020, the gender gap of those in employment in the Fermanagh and Omagh area stood at 12.3%, which is significantly higher than the Northern Ireland average of 9%. In 2021 however, the gap lessened to 9% (NI average 6%) however this has some way to go before it returns to 2017 levels of 5.5%.

43. Figure 6 (pg.11) shows approximately 31% of the economic inactivity rate (exc. Students) represent carers, a role often, but not exclusively, undertaken by females in the households.

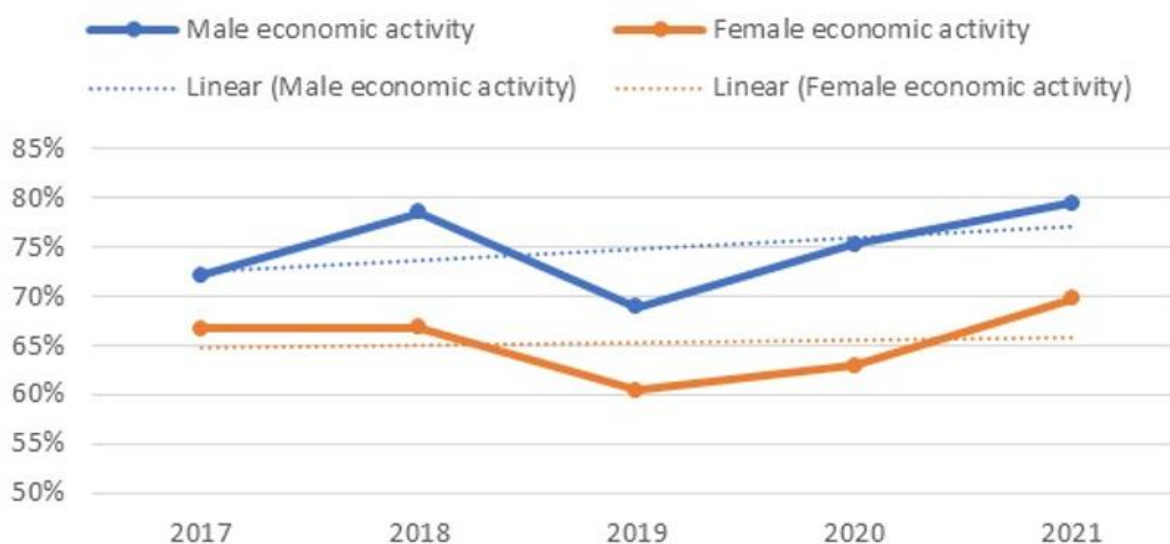


Figure 12: FODC's growing economic activity gender gap

Source: NISRA, Labour Force Annual Report

44. The Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership 2023/24 Action Plan provides an opportunity for the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership to turn the curve on this trend by investing in targeted initiatives that encourage more women to return to work.

45. Over 74% of parents in the region state inadequate access to affordable childcare provision to be a key issue.¹¹ An initiative that leads to improved access to affordable childcare provision could also facilitate improved female participation through employment.

¹¹ Source: Employers for Childcare, Northern Ireland Childcare Survey, 2021.

46. Self-employment may also offer women the opportunity to contribute to the economy by tailoring their working week to fit around other demands on their time.

4.6. Disability

47. This Strategic Assessment has considered an analysis of the Disability Employment Gap across the eleven council regions – calculated as the difference in employment rates for those individuals with a recorded disability, compared to those with none.

48. Figure 13 shows that Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area has a particularly poor employment rate amongst people with a disability and records a Disability Employment Gap of 46%.

	Employment Rate		Disability employment gap
	People with disabilities	People without disabilities	
Causeway Coast and Glens	42.9%	76.2%	33.3%
Lisburn and Castlereagh	47.7%	82.1%	34.4%
Ards and North Down	44.3%	81.3%	37.0%
Newry Mourne and Down	37.1%	77.0%	39.9%
Belfast	37.2%	78.1%	40.9%
Mid and East Antrim	38.8%	80.0%	41.2%
Derry City and Strabane	34.7%	77.3%	42.6%
Fermanagh and Omagh	35.3%	81.3%	46.0%
Antrim and Newtownabbey	37.8%	84.3%	46.5%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	31.5%	81.2%	49.7%
Mid Ulster	24.0%	78.9%	54.9%
NI	37.3%	79.6%	42.3%

Figure 13: FODC's disability employment gap

Source: NISRA, Labour Market Status, 2021

49. In this context, and as disability and ill-health accounts for approximately 43% of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area's economically inactive (excluding students)¹² (Figure 6), Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership will invest in initiatives that support improved economic participation from those individuals with long term health and/or disability needs.

4.6.1. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council region's apprenticeships

50. An area where Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's area has shown steady performance improvement over time has been in the creation of employed apprenticeships. Figure 14a shows a steady increase in apprenticeship numbers in the region over time with a significant increase of more than 250 apprenticeships between 2020 and 2021. Figure 14b confirms that Fermanagh and Omagh District Council region's rate of apprenticeship growth has kept pace with the overall growth rate in Northern Ireland and shows a trend of improved % market share over time.

¹² Source: NISRA, Food for Thought bespoke data request, 2020.

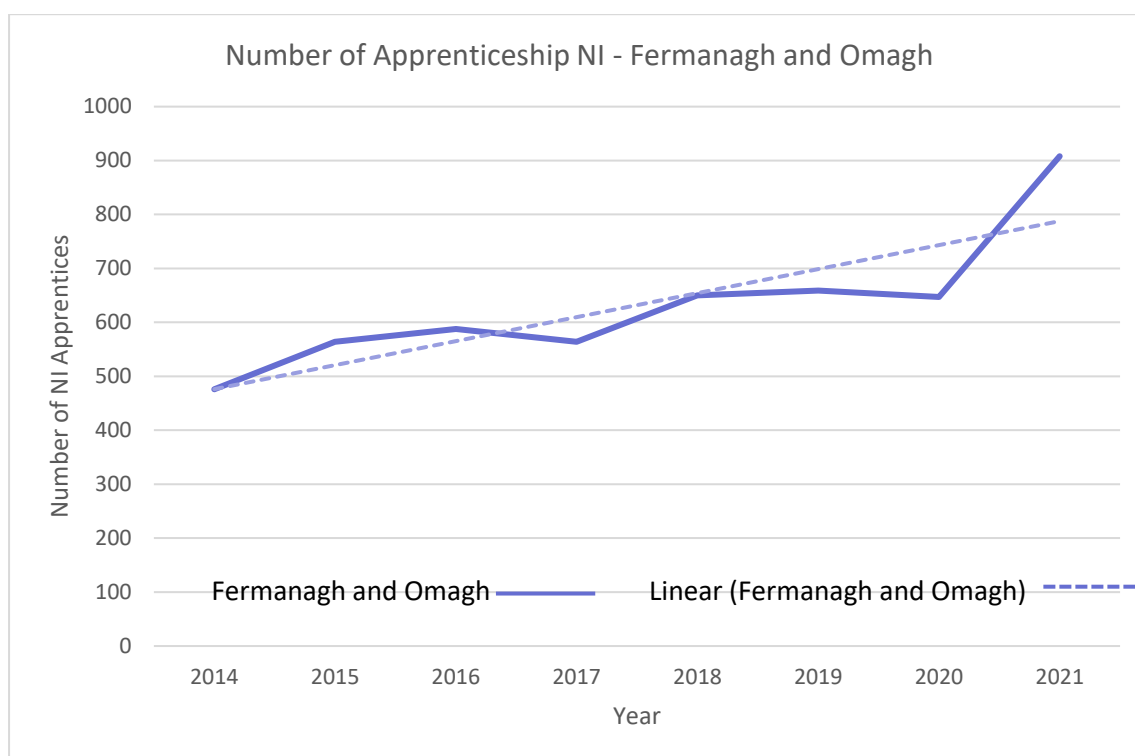


Figure 14a: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Apprenticeship NI numbers

Source: NISRA, Participants on Apprenticeship NI

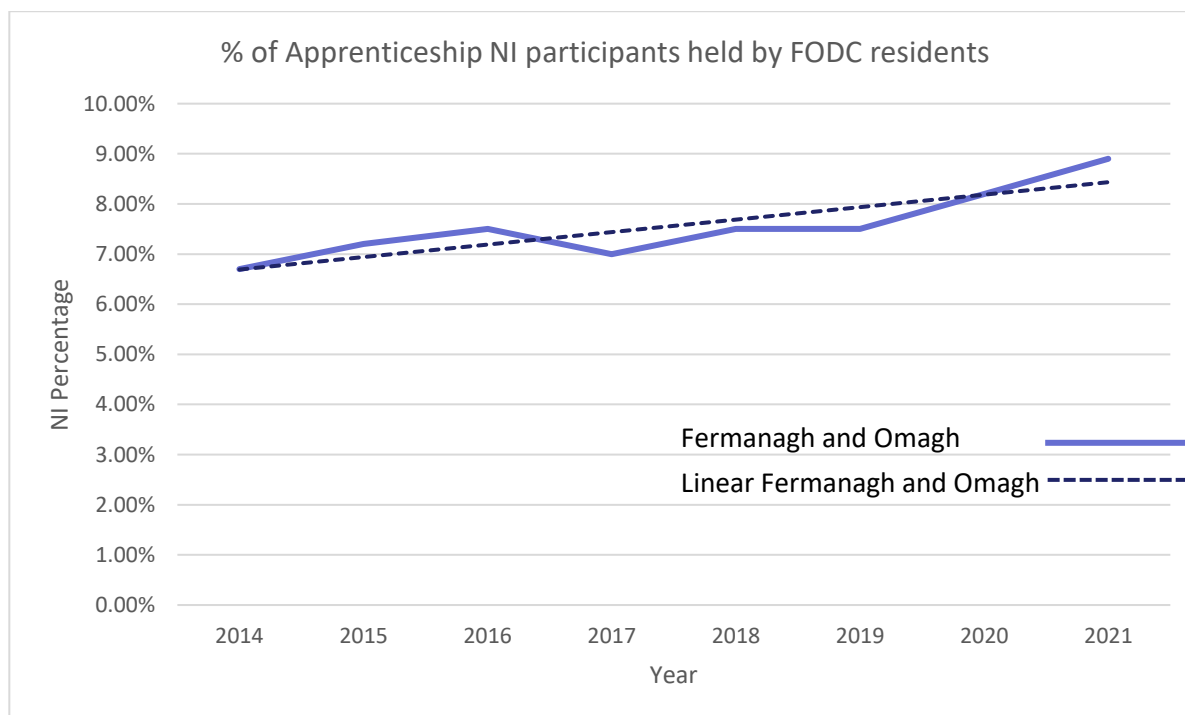


Figure 14b: % Apprenticeship NI market share

Source: NISRA: NINIS, Participants on Apprenticeship NI

51. Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership and the employers consulted within this strategic assessment consider the Apprenticeship model to be well suited to meet the needs of both FODC residents and local employers in the region. The Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership 2023/24 Action Plan will

consider how the Apprenticeship model can be further developed in the council area.

5. Defining strategic priorities

52. In developing its 2023/24 Action Plan, Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership has focused on strategic priorities that best support the identified needs of the region. “Turning the Curve” exercises have focused on three key themes, namely:

1. **Skilled labour supply** – the area is the second lowest performing Council district for residents of working age with no qualifications. A total of 60% of residents have a qualification of NVQ Level 4 and below. This highlights the need for initiatives to be designed to improve the level of qualifications within the working age population. The Full Time Annual Median Gross Pay (place of work) for Fermanagh and Omagh in 2022 was £27,896 compared to the Northern Ireland rate of £30,000
2. **Economic inactivity (exc students)** – by addressing the growing gender gap in economic activity. Recent figures would indicate female economic activity within Fermanagh and Omagh has started to turn the curve since 2019 however the area needs to continue to address its 9% gender gap¹³. By decreasing female inactivity it will decrease the overall economic inactivity of the FODC area
3. **Disability** – which makes up 46% of the regions economically inactive (excluding students) populations.

¹³ Source: NISRA, Labour Market Status 2022.

5.1. Defining the interventions for 2023/24

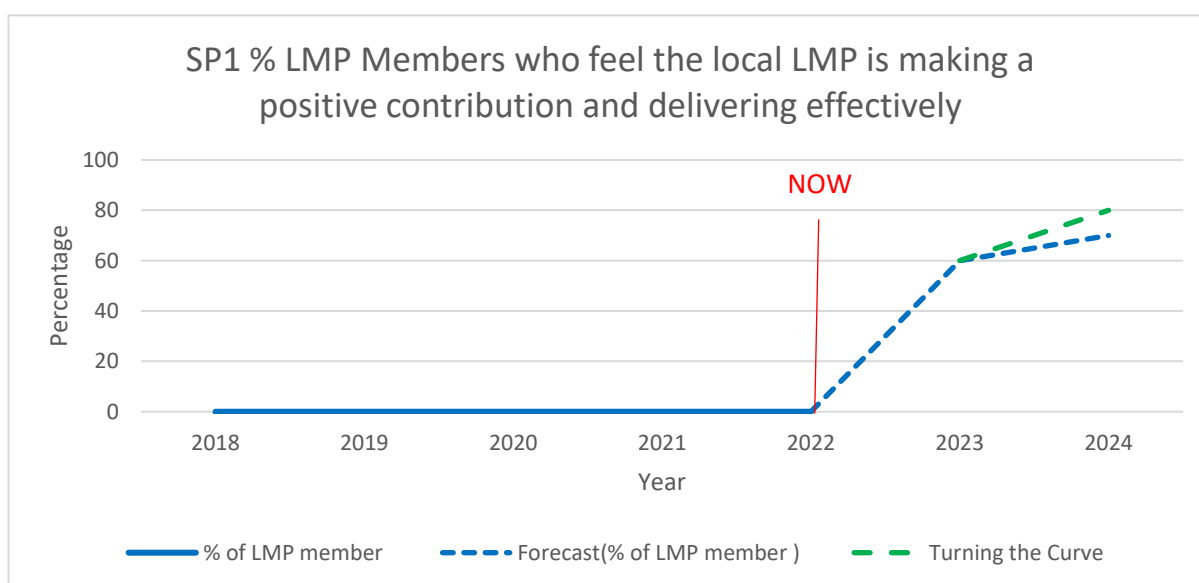
53. **To Note:** with reference to the Turning the Curve exercises, the term “Now” refers to the assessment of the most recently available data made at the time of the review.

5.1.1. Turning the curve: SP1: LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)

1. Understanding the baseline.

INDICATOR: % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively.

Currently there is no baseline for this indicator therefore turning the curve is based on zero with the aim of increasing the percentage of LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively to 100% by 2027.



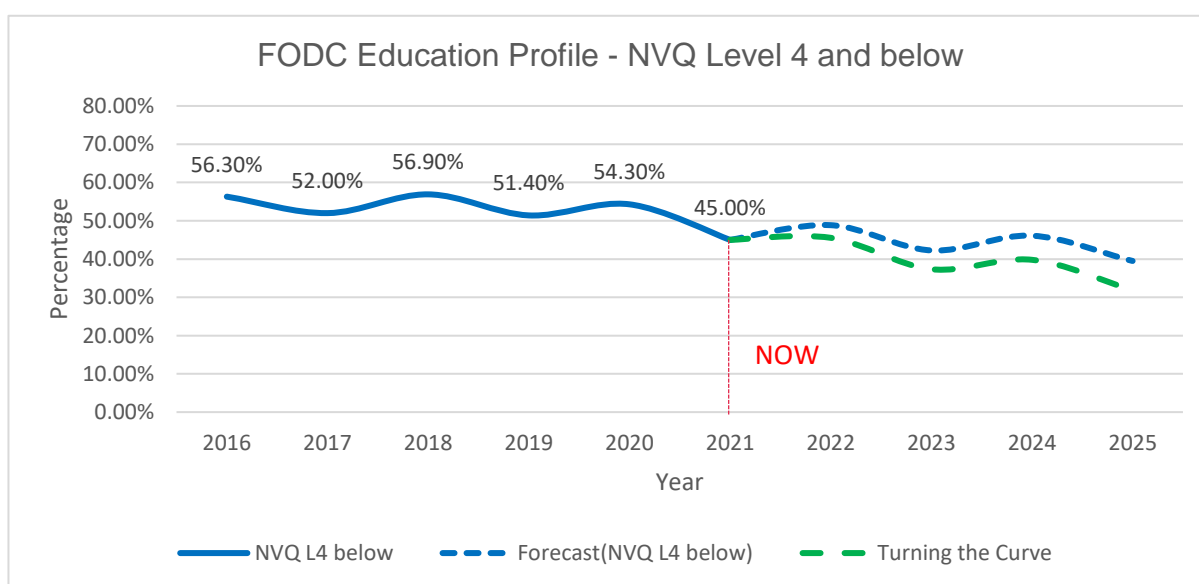
5.1.2. Turning the curve: Skilled labour supply

Understanding the baseline.

INDICATORS: FODC % working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4
FODC # All Person Median Gross Pay (£) Full Time/Part Time

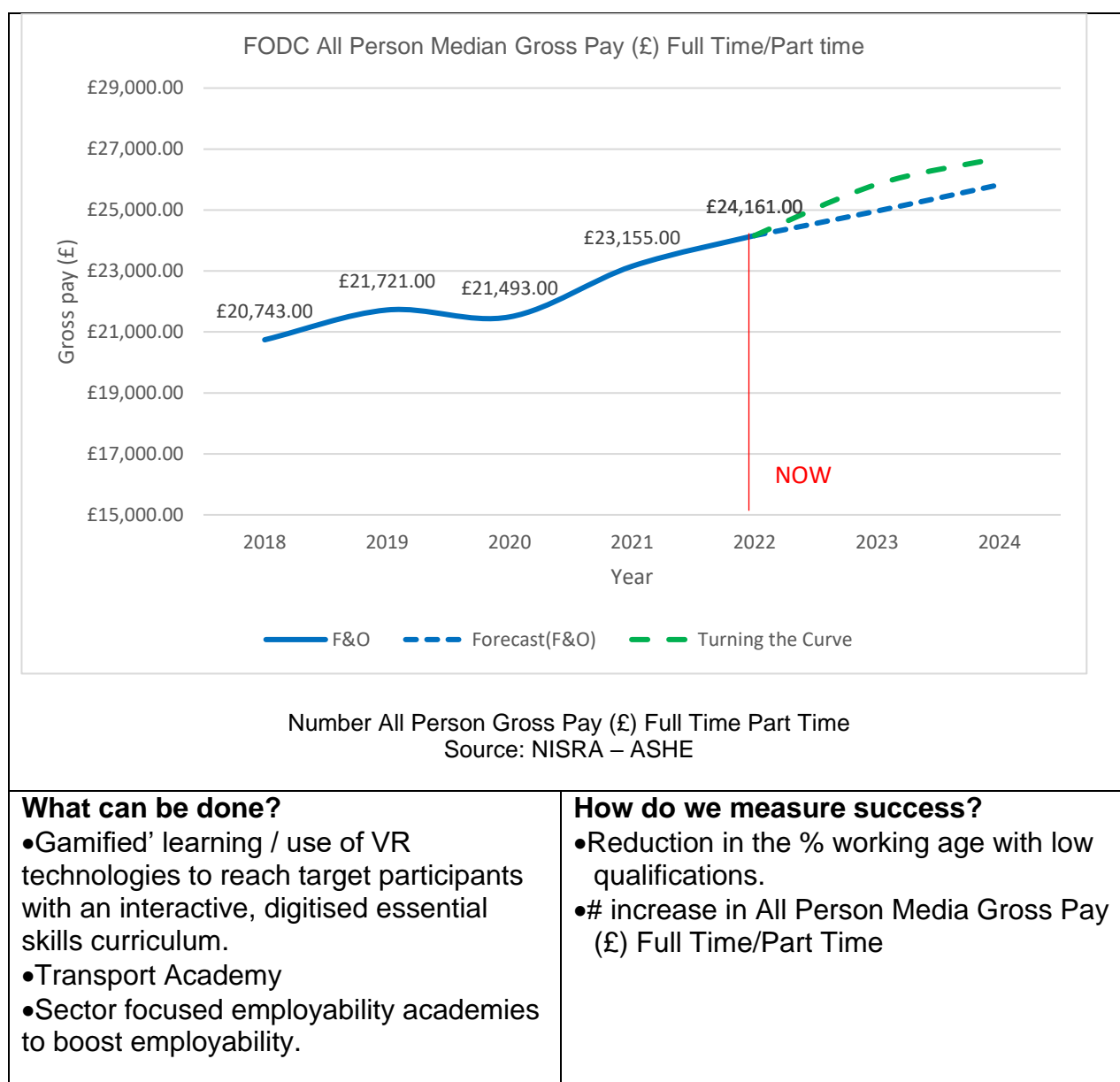
Between 2020 and 2021 Fermanagh and Omagh has experienced a substantial reduction in the percentage of its working age population with a qualification NVQ level 4 and below. This decline may be explained by the 10% increase of those who held a qualification NVQ Level 4 or above however, this increase may also be as a result of more employers offering staff the opportunity to 'work from home' following Covid 19 and many residents who previously relocated in search of a better job may have now returned home to work.

Whilst it is important that the rate of those educated to NVQ Level 4 and below continues to decrease as people obtain higher educational levels and move into better paid jobs, it is also important that those who have no qualifications progress to this level.



FODC % working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4

Source: NISRA, Labour Force Survey



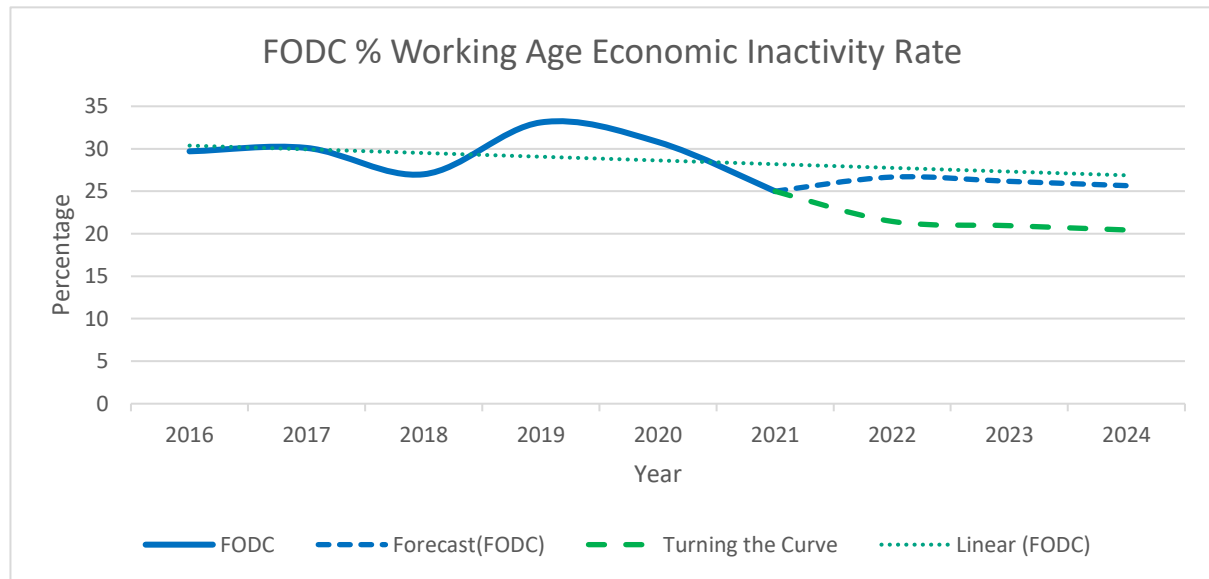
5.1.3. Turning the curve: Economic Inactivity

Understanding the baseline.

INDICATOR: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate

The rate of economic inactivity has reduced significantly from 2020 however it still remains high with approximately a quarter of the working age population economically inactive. One rationale for this may be linked to the Fermanagh and Omagh area being considered a retirement destination, and the fact that a high percentage of the workforce are public sector employed and able to avail of early retirement options.

A 9% gender gap in employment highlights the need for initiatives to encourage females back into the workplace. Long term drivers of reducing female economic participation in Fermanagh and Omagh are unclear however 31% of the economically inactive (exc. Students) are carers which is often (but not exclusively) carried out by the female in the household with a high proportion of parents in the Fermanagh and Omagh area citing access to affordable childcare is a key issue.



FODC % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NISRA Labour Force Survey)

Source: NISRA, Labour Force Survey

What can be done?

- Female entrepreneurship programme to encourage women to start their own business and become self-employed.
- Registered Childminder Training Academy

How do we measure success?

- Improvement in % working age economic inactivity rates.

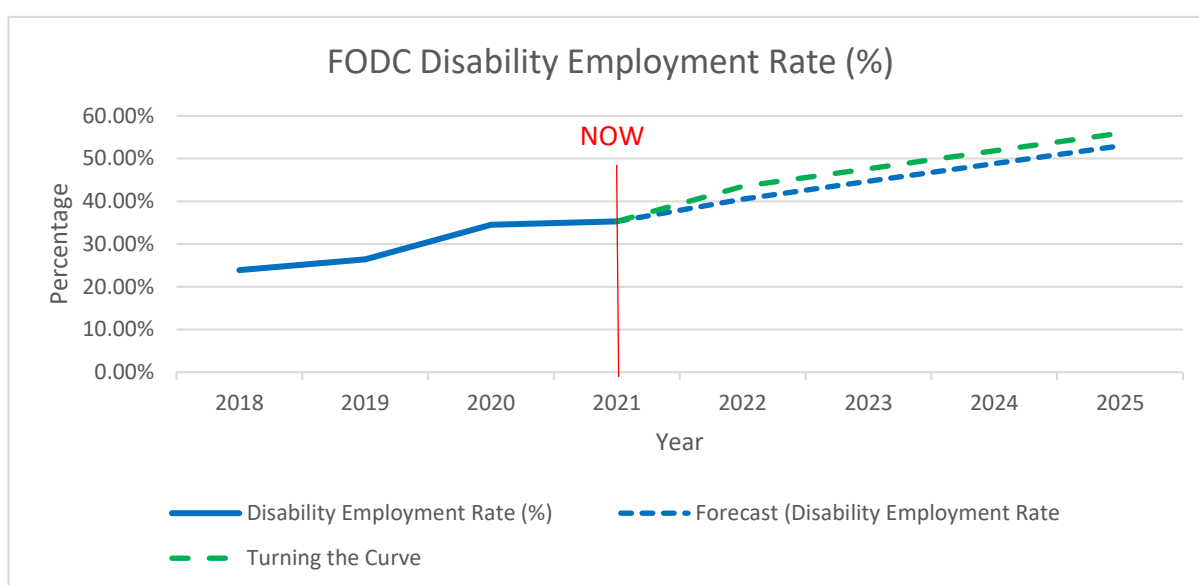
5.1.4. Turning the curve: Disability

1. Understanding the baseline.

INDICATOR: % Employment rate of people with disabilities

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area are experiencing an aging population demographic and a correspondingly high proportion of the economically inactive are in the 50 – 64 age group. In addition to this a high percentage of economic inactivity is due to ill health & disability (43% excluding students).¹⁴

Addressing the disability employment gap of 46% within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area is of vital importance to the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership.



% Employment rate of people with disabilities

Source: LMI LFS Tables

What can be done?

- Engage residents who have a long term health issue/disability and employers on an employer-led disability employment programme.

How do we measure success?

- Improvement in % employment rate of people with disabilities.

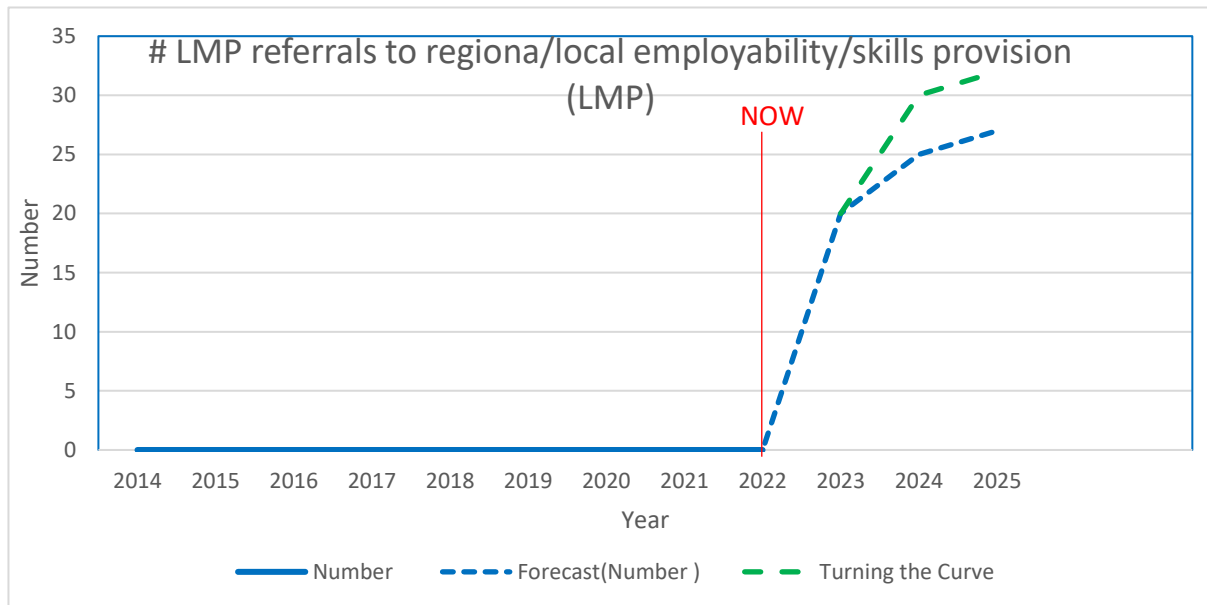
¹⁴ Source: NISRA, Labour Force Annual Report 2020.

5.1.5. Turning the Curve SP3: Increased Awareness

1. Understanding the baseline.

INDICATOR: LMP referrals to regional/local employability/skills provision

The level of apprentices have been steadily increasing in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area since 2014 with a significant increase between 2020 and 2021. To build on this and address the number of employer vacancies in the area the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership will pilot an online apprenticeship programme.



6. Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership 2023/24 Action Plan

6.1. Alignment to strategic priorities

54. The F&O LMP Action Plan has been designed to align with the Strategic Priorities (SPs) defined by DfC in the development of the LMP programme, namely:

- **Strategic Priority 1** – To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area - actions & associated costs relating to the formation and administration of the LMP, and its ability to determine future labour market needs;
- **Strategic Priority 2** – To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally - Local initiatives to “turn the curve” and address specific points of need as identified in this strategic review; and
- **Strategic Priority 3** – To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally - promotion and referral to existing regional initiatives.

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

6.2. Baseline information

56. The F&O LMP Action Plan will impact on the following set of indicators from the baseline position stated below.

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2022/2023 Baseline	
Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area	Theme: LMP delivery and development Indicator: % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)	% of LMP member who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP).	
		2021	0%
		2022	0%
		2023	60%

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2022/2023 Baseline																					
Strategic Priority 2 To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	Theme: Economically Inactive Indicator: % Working Age Economic inactivity Rate (NISRA – Labour Force Survey)	FODC % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (Labour Force Survey) <table><tr><td>2016</td><td>29.7%</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>30.1%</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>27.0%</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>33.1%</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>30.8%</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>25.0%</td></tr></table>	2016	29.7%	2017	30.1%	2018	27.0%	2019	33.1%	2020	30.8%	2021	25.0%									
	2016	29.7%																					
	2017	30.1%																					
2018	27.0%																						
2019	33.1%																						
2020	30.8%																						
2021	25.0%																						
Theme: Skilled Labour Supply Indicator: % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA) Indicator: # All Person Median Gross Wage (NISRA)	FODC % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA) <table><tr><td>2016</td><td>56.3%</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>52.0%</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>56.9%</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>51.4%</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>54.3%</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>45.0%</td></tr></table> FODC # All Persons Median Gross Wage (£) Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE) <table><tr><td>2018</td><td>£20,743.00</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>£21,721.00</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>£21,493.00</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>£23,155.00</td></tr><tr><td>2022</td><td>£24,161.00</td></tr></table>	2016	56.3%	2017	52.0%	2018	56.9%	2019	51.4%	2020	54.3%	2021	45.0%	2018	£20,743.00	2019	£21,721.00	2020	£21,493.00	2021	£23,155.00	2022	£24,161.00
2016	56.3%																						
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2020	£21,493.00																						
2021	£23,155.00																						
2022	£24,161.00																						
Theme: Disability Indicator: % Employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS)	FODC’s % employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – Labour Force Survey) <table><tr><td>2016</td><td>24.4%</td></tr><tr><td>2017</td><td>30.6%</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>23.9%</td></tr><tr><td>2019</td><td>26.4%</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>34.5%</td></tr><tr><td>2021</td><td>35.3%</td></tr></table>	2016	24.4%	2017	30.6%	2018	23.9%	2019	26.4%	2020	34.5%	2021	35.3%										
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2019	26.4%																						
2020	34.5%																						
2021	35.3%																						
Strategic Priority 3:	Theme: Increased Awareness Indicator: # LMP referrals to existing regional/local	#LMP referrals to existing regional/local employability/skills provision (LMP)																					

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution (Source)	2022/2023 Baseline	
To support delivery of Employability NI	employability/skills provision (LMP)	2016	0
		2017	0
		2018	0
		2019	0
		2020	0
		2021	0

6.3. Action Plan

Strategic Priority 1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area		
Indicators: % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)		
Theme	Title of Programme/ Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities
LMP Delivery	SP1.1 LMP delivery and development Effective delivery of the LMP through the Members, appropriate structures and mechanisms	Bi-monthly LMP meetings scheduled with clear Terms of Reference. Sub-groups to be formed based on need as determined by the LMP. Undertake an annual survey of the LMP members to assess the extent to which they feel they have an improved awareness of the F&O labour market
	SP1.2 Strategic Planning	Carry out a Strategic Assessment for 2024-27 and develop an Action Plan for 2024/25
	SP 1.3 Capacity Building	Support LMP members in their role through, for example, training and case study visits, guest speakers, attendance at events and awareness raising of LMP activity

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
Skilled Labour Supply	<p>2.1 Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme</p> <p>Support for long-term unemployed or economically inactive through a project of activities designed to address and remove barriers to help move them closer to the labour market / improve employability.</p> <p>Statistics show 14.5%¹⁵ of FODC's working age population have no qualifications with some employers citing examples of local young people lacking basic literacy and numeracy skills and who are unable to follow basic instructions.</p> <p>Traditional classroom based learning is not suitable to all people especially those who are from the neurodivergent community or may have had a bad experience at school.</p> <p>This programme will offer a novel approach using digital technologies to encourage greater participation in Essential Skills training.</p>	<p>Gamified essential skills learning – use of innovative digital technologies and/or Virtual Reality (VR) technology to provide a new learning experience to deliver essential skills training in a format that can attract and engage young unemployed people or working age to acquire basic qualifications in English and Maths.</p> <p>Using software developed from delivery of this programme during implementation of the 2022/23 Action Plan, deliver a further two programmes (4 cohorts of 10) as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 students in basic literacy; and • 20 students in basic numeracy. <p>Deliver a mentorship programme to provide one-to-one specialist support to participants so their needs are assessed and they are inspired to participate, continue participation and supported into further training/employment.</p>

¹⁵ Source: NISRA – Labour Force Survey 2022

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
	<p>The provision of mentorship to participants in this academy in terms of one-to-one support pre-academy (support recruitment and encouragement onto academy), during academy (to include breaking down any barriers to participation) and post academy (to support into further training/employment)</p>	
	<p>SP2.2 Transport Academy</p> <p>To fulfil the shortage of HGV and Coach Drivers within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area.</p> <p>Bus and Coach NI identified 27 private coach companies in the F&O area with a combined fleet of 100 vehicles. Following a survey undertaken by Bus and Coach NI, vacancy levels against services operated currently operated are now 24% which would equate to approx. 24 Coach drivers required. These figures relate to the private sector only</p>	<p>HGV/Coach Driving academy targeting those who are unemployed or under-employed and those who want to skill up move closer to the labour market.</p> <p>25 participants for HGV academy</p> <p>20 participants for Coach Driving academy</p>

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
	<p>however Translink and Education Authority are also experiencing shortage.</p> <p>HGV drivers are also required for the Fermanagh and Omagh area which has been identified through the Council's own HR Service Area and other smaller local businesses.</p> <p>Evidence from one local JBO highlighted a demand for a HGV/Coach Driving academy due to receiving 49 requests over the past year from local unemployed residents who wanted to become HGV/Coach Drivers</p>	
	<p>SP 2.3 Sectoral Employment Academies Employment projects with direct and specific interventions to reskill in areas where demand exceeds supply.</p> <p>Employment academies have been identified based on vacancies highlighted by local employers. These employment academies will aim to improve local skilled labour and fill current vacancies.</p>	<p>Six accredited training courses to support those who are unemployed, economically inactive or would want to skill up move closer to the labour market.</p> <p>Participants endeavour to gain employment at a rate equal to or above the current living wage.</p> <p>6 x 6-week (4 x 5hr days/week) employment academies with 15 people per academy: •Electrical engineering.</p>

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
	One-to-one mentoring is considered a vital role within the delivery of these academies, supporting those furthest from the labour market to participate and move into employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Welding. •Basic Food Processing. •Tourism & hospitality •Health & social care •Digital skills <p>Each participant to receive one-to-one mentoring support and assist with the development of personal employability development plans, CV writing & mock interviews.</p>
Economic Inactivity	<p>2.4 Female Entrepreneur Programme</p> <p>Tailored support targeted at females who are economically inactive.</p> <p>Improve female economic activity by encouraging economically inactive women to start their own business through a capability-building programme for female entrepreneurs.</p> <p>The programme will work with female clients over a six month period, providing enhanced enterprise development support tailored to</p>	<p>Six month programme to support 15 female participants to explore and test new business ideas, improve enterprise skills, develop new networks commence trading and progress to starting a business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class based learning (including four days group training and presentations from four female start up role models) • One to one mentoring, estimate 4 days per participant (28 hours in total) • £1,500 support with start-up costs relevant to the business idea as approved by the course tutor in compliance with F&O LMP terms to be specified in the design of the tender specification for this project (e.g., IT or other necessary equipment).

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
	<p>address individual needs and barriers, enabling participants to commence test trading.</p> <p>F&O LMP's Invest NI members have been engaged in the development of this project proposal which will 'wraparound', complement and be additional to existing entrepreneur programmes including the emerging UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Council's Entrepreneurship Support Service.</p>	
	<p>2.5 Registered Childminder training academy</p> <p>The aim of this programme is to engage F&O unemployed or economically inactive participants to become economically active through the delivery of paid childminding services.</p> <p>Childminder training is relatively low cost to deliver but without a supported programme, unemployed or economically inactive</p>	<p>Registered Childminder training academy, classroom based to engage and recruit 25 participants into the programme to train to meet the minimum requirements as a registered child minder (achieving qualifications in Health & Safety; Child Protection and Pediatric First aid) and be supported through the registration process with the H&SC Early Years Team to ensure a successful outcome (support to include application paperwork, preparation for inspection visits, general encouragement and motivation to complete the programme).</p> <p>Registered participants will also receive one-to-one mentoring and support with equipment needed to safely deliver child-minding e.g. fire guards; stair gates, baby monitor etc.</p>

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
	residents are unlikely to engage. This programme will ensure participants are fully supported towards becoming Registered Childminders.	
Disability	<p>2.6 Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme Health & Disability is the single largest driver of economic inactivity in FODC.</p> <p>Many existing initiatives successfully focus on engaging people with disabilities to develop and address their employability needs, but few focus on preparing the employers on embracing, understanding and developing initiatives that improve employer engagement, understanding and participation in disability employment.</p> <p>The LMP will invest in an employer-led disability employability programme that aims to improve employer understanding of special needs and the support services available for employing an individual with a disability/long term health condition.</p>	<p>Six month Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme to increase the number of disabled people in paid employment.</p> <p>Recruit up to 20 local employers (senior management level) to participate on a targeted Employer- led focused disability education and awareness programme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide advice on available workplace support programmes and grants available to employers to support the employment of individuals with a disability/long term health condition; • Work with employers to identify potential work opportunities for prospective participants • Encourage employers to be more innovative in how job roles can be designed to be more assessable for participants with a disability/long term health condition • Work with employers to consider and support in the development of innovative approaches to the traditional recruitment and selection processes.

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

Indicators: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NIRA- Labour Force Survey); % Working age: Achieved below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA); # All persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA – ASHE); % Employment Rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – LFS).

Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
	Case studies will celebrate success and will be shared with other employers, employees, and key stakeholders at future employability events, and through social media.	<p>Recruit up to 20 participants from FODC area, with a registered disability, onto a work readiness programme providing employability skills training.</p> <p>Endeavour to place all participants successfully into work with the enrolled employers.</p> <p>Providing ongoing one-to-one mentoring support to both employers and participants over a six month period.</p> <p>Develop & publicise case studies.</p>

Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally		
Indicators: ~ LMP referrals to existing regional/local employability/skills provisions (LMP)		
Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
Increased awareness.	<p>3.1 Online apprenticeship brokerage service</p> <p>F&O LMP recognise the significant benefit the Apprenticeship NI programme has been to the FODC area's employers, with over 40% increase in apprenticeships through the scheme between 2020 and 2021.¹⁶</p> <p>The F&O LMP wish to invest in a programme that further drives the success of Apprenticeships in the area, by providing employers and participants with improved, tailored access to a database of local Apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>This programme will work in collaboration with DfE to ensure the project complements existing initiatives as a non-overlapping wraparound to initiative, and aims to work with employers to define new apprenticeship opportunities, work with local educators to deliver the training, and recruit locally to develop a pipeline of opportunities with high calibre candidates.</p>	<p>Pilot a facilitated online apprenticeship brokerage service that works with 25 local employers to identify and publicise new FODC employer apprenticeship opportunities and provides recruitment links with FODC resident participants who are interested in developing their skills and qualifications through on the job learning.</p> <p>Research has shown the approximate cost for an employer to avail of an apprenticeship brokerage service is £1,000.</p> <p>By participating on the online apprenticeship brokerage service local employers, especially SME's who make up nearly 95% of FODC businesses and who would not normally have the resources to avail of this service, will be able to participate on this programme at no cost to them.</p> <p>The apprenticeship opportunities will be designed to meet the specific needs of the F&O employers engaged in the programme and will be working towards obtaining a minimum Level 2 apprenticeship lasting 12 to 18 months with an overall aim of leading to permanent employment.</p>

¹⁶ 647 to 908 apprenticeships. Source: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/apprenticeshipsni-statistics>

Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally		
Indicators: ~ LMP referrals to existing regional/local employability/skills provisions (LMP)		
Theme	Aim & Description	Key Activities
Increased awareness.	3.2 Job Fairs To support the objective of the LMP with the overall aim to support those seeking work to move into education, employment or training through direct engagement with local employers, training providers and support organisations.	In partnership with JBO support up to 3 Job Fairs (one rural) in the FODC area.

