



Guidance on the delivery of social value through provision of training and employment opportunities, in-work progression and skills development, while implementing Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) projects.






PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

- This guide has been designed to support contractors working on BRCD projects who have identified skills gaps or needs, by signposting relevant employability and skills provision.
- Contractors should use the guide to access the most appropriate provision available to help deliver on the BRCD's inclusion ambitions.
- Contractors must complete the BRCD Employability and Skills notification template as and when job/work placement or skills opportunities are identified, to enable the BRCD Employability and Skills team to connect contractors to appropriate sources of support, or to consider developing new, or revised provision.

- Contractors are required to engage with the BRCD Employability & Skills team upon appointment and throughout the contract when job/work placement opportunities are identified.

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RECRUITING TALENT

 The offer	 Overview	 Benefits to employers	 Accessing support
<p>Labour Market Partnerships (LMPs)</p> <p>Exist in each council area to offer a range of targeted support to meet local residents' and the business community's specific employability and skills needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of employability support to help get more people into meaningful employment. • Interventions may include work experience, upskilling support, employment academies (see below) etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a wider pool of upskilled and reskilled talent in areas relevant to available employment opportunities. • Access to talent within specific council areas. • Co-ordinated employability and skills interventions within specific council areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by local council LMP teams. • Contact local councils. (See page 11).
<p>Employment Academies</p> <p>Intensive, short-term training programmes aimed at reskilling or upskilling individuals towards specific employment opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of job specific skills support targeted towards the unemployed or under-employed aligned to identified employment opportunities. • Training is designed in partnership with employers to ensure skills development aligns directly to available job opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a wider talent pool up/ reskilled in areas specific to their employment opportunities. • Free access to academies for employers, however they must have available job opportunities and invest time in working with the academies team to tailor training provision etc. • Construction Employment Academies specifically aimed at re-upskilling unemployed and underemployed people offered through BRCD collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by local councils • Contact local councils. (See page 11) or contact the BRCD Employability and Skills team.





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<p>Apprenticeships NI (AppsNI)</p> <p>Offers employers an opportunity to take on an apprentice, or to improve existing employees' skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive range of apprenticeship provision available - aligned to occupational roles across sectoral areas. • Paid jobs, offering hands-on work experience along with off-the-job training - an opportunity for individuals to 'learn while they earn'. • More than 150 Level 2 and 3 apprenticeships currently available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to bring in and develop new talent. • Access to employees as they are continuing to develop their skills. • Funding to support the costs of training an apprentice - specific eligibility requirements may apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs) • Contact FE College contacts provided (page 11) or visit https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/assured-skills-academies
<p>Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs)</p> <p>Work-based programmes designed around employers' needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLAs offer recognised training and Level 4 to Level 7 qualifications to new and existing employees in a new job role. • There is a growing range of HLA provision spanning sectoral areas and occupational roles. Currently, there are over 60 HLA qualifications to choose from. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to train staff to the required level so they have strong technical and good employability skills. • Enables employers to fill higher level skills gaps within their organisation, increasing business productivity. • Opportunity to train staff with the required industry specific technical and employability skills, testing both academic and occupational proficiencies to build better businesses for the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by Further Education Colleges, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University • Contact FE Colleges (page 11) • Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University (page 14) • Or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/higher-level-apprenticeships





RECRUITING TALENT

 The offer	 Overview	 Benefits to employers	 Accessing support
<p>Assured Skills Academies</p> <p>Intensive employer led, pre-employment training programme designed to upskill individuals and help them compete for guaranteed job vacancies in expanding businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academies are traditionally focused upon occupational roles requiring graduate level qualifications, providing a pipeline for new hires. Training is informed by employers and designed to align with skills needs linked to upcoming employment opportunities. Assured Skills Academies are fully funded by the Department for the Economy (DfE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to inward investors or existing Invest NI client employers considering expansion. Free of charge to employers, subject to DfE Approval. Access to a pool of talent that has been specifically upskilled or reskilled to align with employer needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs), Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) Contact FE or University (pages 13-14) or visit https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/assured-skills-programme
<p>Student Placements / Work Experience</p> <p>A range of work shadowing, placement and internship opportunities of varying durations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities may be paid or unpaid, depending upon the programme employers are engaging with. Eligibility requirements may exist for specific placement programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer access to new resources through the skills and knowledge of students Offers employers an opportunity to profile themselves to potential future employees Facilitates greater collaboration between employers, FE Colleges, Universities etc increasing awareness and access to wider support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs), Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) Contact FE or University (pages 13-14) or visit https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/careers/careers-events/ Or www.ulster.ac.uk/employability/jobs-and-placements/placement





DEVELOPING WORKFORCE SKILLS

 The offer	 Overview	 Benefits to employers	 Accessing support
Skills Focus Free tailored skill training to increase workforce skills to Level 2 (GCSE) and above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aimed at the specific skills needs of small businesses and social enterprises with fewer than 250 employees -additional eligibility criteria may apply. • Tailored skills solutions can be designed to meet bespoke business needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funded skills interventions aligned to bespoke business needs. • Helps employers address skill deficits and to develop skills to meet future growth plans. • Bolsters staff morale and supports career progression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs) • Contact FECs (page 11) or visit https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/business-support/skills-focus-programme
Skill Up Up to 7,000 places on free short courses supporting individuals to re-skill and upskill.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses are mainly delivered online and focus on key areas including digital skills, green technologies, leadership and management (among others). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to free skills training in key areas supporting workforce upskilling. • Enables employees to develop new skills which are accessible to employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs), Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) • Contact FECs (page 11) or visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/skillup • Contact QUB https://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/skill-up-flexible-skills-fund/
Business Growth Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils offer a range of business growth support targeted to small and social enterprises businesses in their council area to improve their competitiveness and grow. • Support offered will include one to one mentoring and workshops in a range of areas aimed at addressing business challenges, improving sustainability and growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to resources with specialist knowledge and expertise. • Aimed at improving businesses owners/ management teams technical knowledge/skills in key business areas to address and drive forward business improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your local council (page 11)





DEVELOPING WORKFORCE SKILLS

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<p>Queen's University Belfast Business Support</p> <p>Range of Executive Education Programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.leadershipinstitute.co.uk • And www.qub.ac.uk/schools/QueensManagementSchool/Study/ offer a range of Executive Education Programmes of varying durations. • Information on eligibility requirements and costs can be found on the university's website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to access funded skills interventions aligned to bespoke business needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by QUB • Contact QUB (page 14) or visit https://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/
<p>Ulster University Business Support</p> <p>Range of courses accessible by local businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available courses include www.ulster.ac.uk/faculties/ulster-university-business-school/help-to-grow-management - a practical leadership and management training programme designed to help SMEs boost business performance, resilience and long-term growth. • Information on eligibility requirements and costs can be found on the university's website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to free skills training in key areas supporting workforce upskilling. • Enables employees to develop new skills which are accessible to employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by UU • Contact UU (page 11) or visit www.ulster.ac.uk/business/engagement

INNOVATING

 The offer	 Overview	 Benefits to employers	 Accessing support
<p>Innovate Us</p> <p>Tailored support to help small companies develop the skills to innovate and develop new products, processes and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailored skills development support unique to small companies' needs to enable them to innovate and develop new products, processes and services. • Available to small businesses or social enterprises with fewer than 50 employees -additional eligibility criteria may apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to specialist experts to help employers develop innovation skills. • Potential for increased workforce skills and technical capability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs) • Contact FECs (page 11) or visit https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/business-support/innovateus
<p>Connected</p> <p>Knowledge transfer programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge transfer programme that enables colleges and universities to work with businesses with the aim of supporting and encouraging innovation. • Support is aimed specifically at small and medium sized enterprises with less than 250 employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to specialist experts to help employers develop innovation skills. • Increasing your workforce's skills and technical capability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered by Further Education Colleges (FECs), Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) • Contact FE or university (pages 11) or visit https://www.connected.ni.org/about-connected

INNOVATING

 The offer	 Overview	 Benefits to employers	 Accessing support
Innovation Vouchers Up to £5,000 support available to projects that may lead to the development of a new or improved product, service, business model, or process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides expert support from a public sector knowledge provider, such as a university or college (NI and ROI) for businesses or potential entrepreneurs taking forward an innovation project. Eligibility requirements will relate to the project proposed to be undertaken by each business - information on eligibility can be found on the Invest NI website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to funding for specialist expertise for businesses wishing to advance an innovation project. Increases workforce's skills and technical capability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further information can be accessed through Invest NI at https://www.investni.com/support-for-business/innovation-vouchers
Innovation Support (Universities) Range of courses accessible by local businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University offer a range of research and development and innovation support. Further information on the suite of support available can be found on the university websites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to specialist experts to help develop innovation skills. Increases workforce's skills and technical capability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered by Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) Contact university (page 11) https://www.qub.ac.uk/Business/ https://www.ulster.ac.uk/business

PARTNER CONTACTS

To access Labour Market Partnership support and other guidance from our council partners, contact:



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To access support from our university partners, contact:



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🔗 https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1407655/41012-Ulster-University-Corporate-Engagement-Brochure-Final.pdf

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Images courtesy of Tourism Northern Ireland and other partners.

 #BRCityDeal

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City Council



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Newtownabbey**
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

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**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council



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