

SKILLS BOOTCAMPS AND GREEN SKILLS UPDATE

1. ISSUE

1.1 Updating the Cumberland Scrutiny and Overview Committee on delivery of the Skills Bootcamp programme and support for the development of green skills in Cumbria.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the Cumberland Scrutiny and Overview Committee notes:

a) progress in delivering Wave, 3 Wave 4 and preparing for Wave 5 Skills Bootcamps activity; and

b) the activity that CLEP is undertaking to support 'green' skills.

3. BACKGROUND

Skills Bootcamps

Introduction

3.1 Skills Bootcamps are part of the Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee and Plan for Jobs, and of the eligibility and structure of the programme. This report therefore focuses on programme delivery in Cumbria.

Wave 3 (2022/23)

3.2 In 2022/23 CLEP launched the local delivery of the Skills Bootcamp programme in Cumbria, on behalf of the Department of Education (DfE) with a contract value of £975,362. This provided places for 334 learners, 82% of whom completed their course, which is in line with the target in the Grant Offer Letter, with 71% of whom have achieved a positive outcome.

3.3 In August DfE announced that performance wise, CLEP was positioned 4th nationally.

3.4 The final grant amount spent was £694,930.21 with confirmation that any outstanding finance for the remaining milestones 2 and 3 could be used on additional Wave 4 provision. At the close of Wave 3, the total remaining balance was £112,773.92.

Wave 4 (2023/24)

3.5 CLEP's 2023/24 Grant Offer Letter was issued with a grant value of £1.2 million. This was subsequently varied to include the remaining provision from Wave 3 to give a total 2022/23 & 2023/24 delivery budget of £1,447,781.52.

3.6 The number of places available is a minimum of 300 across CLEP's 10 delivery partners. To date, 390 starts (Milestone 1) have been contracted, which considerably exceeded the minimum target. Most Milestones have been achieved with a further 7 courses starting throughout January 2024. Additional funding has been allocated to successful delivery providers and all providers contracts will be completed by March 2024.

3.7 In terms of delivery to date 292 (Milestone 1) starts have been recorded, 146 learners have completed their courses (Milestone 2) and 87 learners have achieved a positive outcome (Milestone 3).

Examples of positive outcomes include:

- Start-up business making bespoke 3D printed items including company logo keyrings.
- Start-up business making 3D printed scale buildings for project planning.
- Self-employed heating engineer taking on new projects in Air Source Heat Pumps, based on new skills in designing plumbing and heating systems for new construction projects, preparing estimates and consulting with clients providing technical support.
- Unemployed construction learner starting a new position in a local building firm.
- Current work force taking on new responsibilities, including a teacher now able to help students with 3D printing.
- LGV driver starting new role at £28,000 per annum.
- Large employer supported staff obtained NEBOSH Qual and all have taken on new responsibilities within their current roles supporting the site's safety agenda in line with requirements stated by the Office of Nuclear Regulations (ONR)

3.8 Two providers have reported challenges in finding work opportunities for newly skilled job seekers. For example, within the construction industry it has been challenging to place newly skilled Construction Supervisors (experienced in managing). Another provider has struggled to secure interviews for learners despite strong employer engagement. SME interest in interviews has been poor and difficult to secure, given the other pressures on their businesses.

3.9 One positive example of employer engagement has been the strong leadership and management support from Sellafield, including support to work with the local supply chain. CLEP will continue to work with providers to ensure that all non-employer supported learners get the support needed.

Wave 3 and 4 Financial Overview

3.10 The combined Wave 3 and Wave 4 delivery advance has now been exhausted. The process of claiming funding payments from DfE in arrears via an Annex C is underway. The claims prepared to date are as follows:

October	£57,056.64
November	£128,751.06
December	£60,866.76

3.11 Currently, the remaining potential drawdown balance is £654,895. However, given the changeable nature of the programme and its dependence on people to complete provision and achieve a positive outcome, we anticipate not spending the entirety of this financial drawdown by approximately 10%. Reasons for this vary but include a higher proportion of employer contributions than first anticipated, drops out rates including learners not being successful at interview and additionally providers failing to sufficiently evidence an outcome. ***The key success of the programme is based on learner outcomes.***

Wave 5 (2024/25)

3.12 In June 2023, CLEP was advised that DfE had approval for Wave 5 Skills Bootcamps grant funding in the 2024/25 financial year. CLEP held an employer workshop on 5 September 2023 to gauge demand for specific sector skills, followed by a questionnaire that was also sent to delivery partners. This was in recognition of the fact that employer engagement remains central to the provision as this is an employer led programme.

3.13 In September 2023 CLEP submitted its proposal for Wave 5 grant funding for a total of 400 places to meet employer demand in Construction, Digital, Logistics, Project Management and Manufacturing. Green Skills were included as part of these sectors.

3.14 In December 2023 CLEP's Westmorland and Furness as Accountable Body received the Grant Offer Letter with a value of the full application £1,715,146 including management costs of £180,360. CLEP has prepared the tender documentation and will work with colleagues in Cumberland Council to agree arrangements to manage the contracting process.

Green Skills - Wave 4

Air Source Heat Pumps

3.15 CLEP has funded 63 places in Air Source Heat Pumps via The Gas Rooms based in Kendal. Mostly aimed at self-employed heating engineers and SMEs. This is a nationally accredited course. Gareth Gore, owner of Lakes Plumbing and Heating, said: "You've got to continue to move and grow your business in my view. And the way that the markets are shifting in our industry we need to be looking at the green technologies. The funding is there, grab it and go for it".

3.16 Trainer John Ladell said: "It's giving the many self-employed engineers access to qualifications that were previously unaffordable. It should help to ensure the local industry is equipped to install air source heat pumps in Cumbria and help meet the Cumbria Net Zero by 2037 target. It's also increased our engagement with local engineers, which is important to us as a local training centre."

Sustainable Construction

3.17 20 entry level places have been provided for learners who are looking for a new career. The programme offers current green skills training with a Level 2 Award in managing business responses to environmental challenges, with the addition of career and employability sessions to support learners into a new role. The outcomes of this programme are yet to be realised.

3.18 In addition to these specific courses there are a range of other programmes , which build in green skills. These include Civil Engineering and Housebuilding which includes current training on managing environmental building needs, Lean Manufacturing and Engineering & Bridging. The Project Management.

Green Skills - Wave 5

3.19 Green skills have been absorbed into all provision, with tender responses expected to include 'green skills'.

3.20 During Wave 5, CLEP anticipates that the following courses will be delivered:

- Sustainable construction
- Air Source Heat Pumps
- Photo Voltaic
- Electric Vehicle

3.21 Additionally, the wider provision will cover Engineering & Manufacturing, Sales, Marketing & Procurement, Project Management and HGV Logistics, as well as digital.

4. Retrofit Programme

4.1 The Net Zero report confirmed that CLEP has received £100,000 of funding from the NW Net Zero Hub pilot to support retrofitting delivery.

4.2 This is being delivered by the FE Colleges in Cumbria with Lakes College leading this consortium. The programme will deliver:

- 200 Training Needs Analysis completed with employers.
- 25 staff undertaking CPD training.
- 20 employers will support curriculum development.
- 75 employers will feedback on whether testing training is providing learners with the skills that they need.

4.3 The programme needs to be delivered by 31 March 2024 and as such the benefits of the delivery activity should materialise quickly.