



**Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership
Strategic Assessment 2024-2027
Action Plan 2024-2025**



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Executive Summary

Introduction

A strategic assessment was undertaken, in February 2024, by Pinnacle Growth Group (PGG) on behalf of Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership (FO LMP), to review employability outcomes and local labour market conditions in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) area.

The aim of the strategic assessment was to clearly identify the challenges within the Fermanagh and Omagh labour market and detail the priorities to be addressed, ensuring alignment with employability and labour market challenges within the area. It was guided by an analysis of data supplied by statutory partners, coupled with insights gained from continuous engagement and consultation throughout the Council area. Attention was given to strategic assessment outcomes and existing local provisions to ensure the three-year Strategic Plan 2024-27 will positively impact the Fermanagh and Omagh labour market and ensure that future Action Plans developed by FO LMP over the next three years reflect challenges and opportunities present within the Fermanagh and Omagh district.

Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership

Established as a formal partnership in May 2022, the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnerships aim is:

‘To help improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by working through coordinated, collaborative, multi-agency partnerships, achieving regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions and helping to connect employers with employees’.

FO LMP comprises of the mandatory core partners outlined in the Department for Communities LMP Code of Practice, along with other essential key stakeholders considered necessary to broaden the knowledge and expertise required to build on existing structures locally whilst operating in a holistic streamlined and joined up way.

Partners include representatives from each of the following organisations:

- Careers Service NI
- Disability Action
- Enniskillen Jobs and Benefits Office
- Fermanagh Learning Community
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Invest NI
- Manufacturing NI
- NI Food & Drink
- Omagh Jobs and Benefits Office
- Omagh Learning Community
- South West College
- Western Health and Social Care Trust

FO LMP, through the development of local annual Action Plans, enables regional objectives to be achieved whilst being adaptable to meet the needs of local labour market conditions.

Strategic Context

To ensure that the Strategic Assessment Plan is strategically aligned to wider programmes and initiatives, the following documents were reviewed:

- Programme for Government
- Fermanagh & Omagh 2030 Community Plan
- Fermanagh and Omagh Draft Corporate Plan 2024-28
- Mid South West Region Economic Strategy
- Emerging Inclusive Economy Action Plan 2024-29
- 10X Economic Strategy
- 10X Skills Strategy
- NI Skills Barometer
- Fermanagh and Omagh Local Monitor of Labour and Skills Demand 2022/23

Programme for Government

In 2021, the Northern Ireland Executive brought forward an outcomes-based Programme for Government that focused on delivering target outcomes for societal wellbeing and to deliver real and positive change. The Northern Ireland Executive held a public consultation on a draft Outcomes Framework for the Programme for Government, comprising of nine strategic Outcomes, which are displayed below.



Figure 1 - Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework

A key focus of the Programme for Government (PfG) is on delivering sustainable skills and employment for people by supporting personal development opportunities for everyone, creating and developing more opportunities and better jobs, addressing underachievement alongside skills shortages.

From the draft Outcomes Framework outlined, the following Outcomes are relevant to the work of the FO LMP:

- **Outcome 3:** ‘We have a more equal and inclusive society’ - promoting inclusion and tackling disadvantage.
- **Outcome 5:** ‘Everyone can reach their potential’ - creation and development of more opportunities and better jobs and addressing underachievement alongside skills shortages.
- **Outcome 6:** ‘Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon neutral’ – use of sustainable development approach to progress economic and social ambitions, importance of a regionally balanced economy.
- **Outcome 8:** ‘We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives’ - 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.

The FO LMP will work to ensure the Action Plans developed use an Outcome Based Approach that support the achievement of relevant Programme for Government outcomes and relate to the improvement of employability and skills indicators.

Fermanagh & Omagh 2030 Community Plan

Developed by the Fermanagh & Omagh Community Planning Partnership, the Fermanagh & Omagh 2030 Community Plan seeks to work towards the achievement of delivering the following shared vision for the district:

‘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.’

The Community Plan is underpinned by three themes and six long-term outcomes as illustrated in Figure 2:

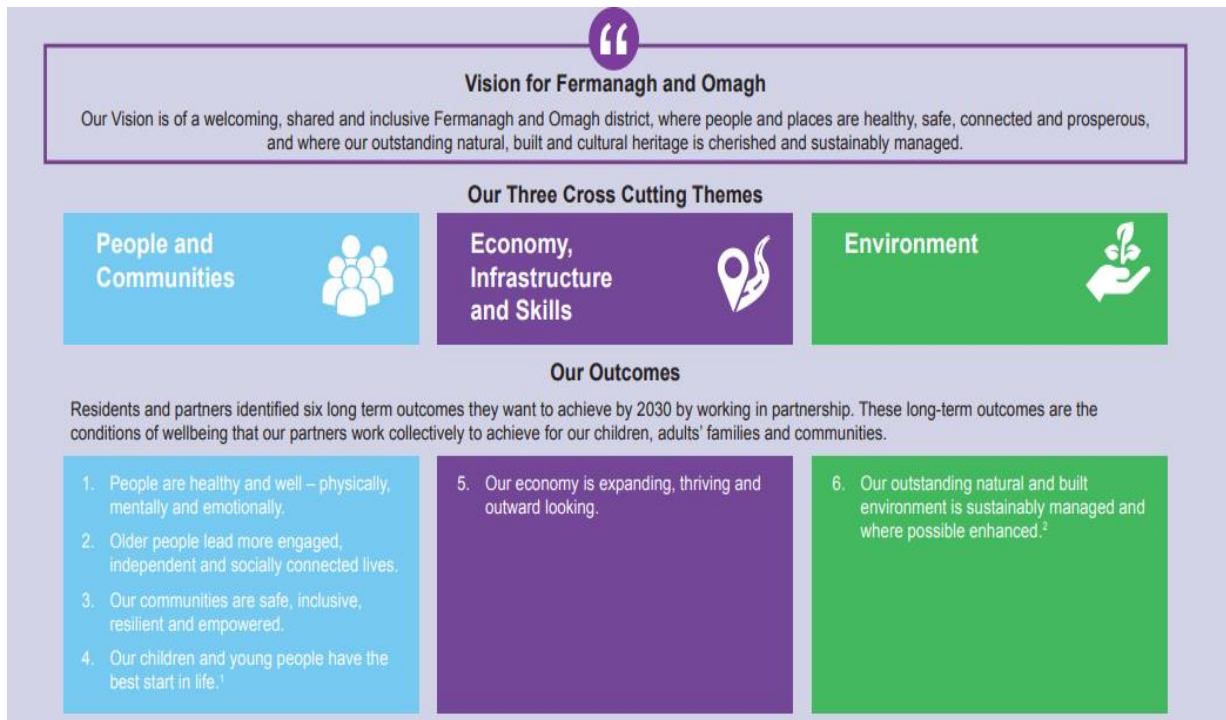


Figure 2 – Community Plan 2030 Themes & Outcomes

The delivery of an effective Labour Market Partnership Action Plan for 2024/25 will seek to make a positive impact on the following four outcomes of the Community Plan:

- Outcome 1 – Our people are healthy and well, physically, mentally & emotionally.
- Outcome 3 – Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient, and empowered.
- Outcome 4 – Our children and young people have the best start in life.
- Outcome 5 – Our economy is expanding, thriving and outward looking.

Each of these areas are in strong alignment with the Strategic Priorities of the FO LMP, which is targeting improved employability outcomes, skills provision and labour market conditions through specific activities listed within the Action Plan.

Fermanagh & Omagh Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028

The draft Corporate Plan sets the strategic direction for Fermanagh and Omagh District Council for the next four years and identifies the priorities that the Council believes will ensure the Fermanagh and Omagh district will thrive and succeed.

The Corporate Plan is directly aligned to the outcomes outlined within the Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan and reflects the Council's commitment to ensure a sustainable, inclusive district where people and places are healthy, safe, connected and prosperous.

Each of the identified target outcomes for the Fermanagh & Omagh 2030 Community Plan extend to the Corporate Plan. The activities detailed within the FO LMP's Strategic Objectives, through the delivery of the Fermanagh and Omagh Action Plan 2024/25, will support the achievement of these identified target outcomes.

Mid South West Regional Economic Strategy

Comprising of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon District Council and Mid Ulster District Council, the Mid South West (MSW) region developed a Regional Economic Strategy to support the case for wider funding from the UK Government.

With a headline ambition to 'raise productivity and in so doing create better paid jobs for our residents and close the productivity gap between MSW and the rest of NI', the strategy is focused on four thematic intervention areas:

- 'Future Proofing' the Skills Base
- Enabling Infrastructure
- Boosting Innovation and Digital Capacity
- Building a High Performing Visitor / Tourist Economy

The first intervention area of focus aligns strongly with the work of FO LMP. The Regional Economic Strategy highlights the needs and challenges facing the labour market across the MSW and proposes actions to support further development of the skills base across the region:

- Policy changes to the 'off-the-shelf' apprenticeship offer
- Extend the range of Higher-Level Apprenticeships (HLA) and degree apprenticeships available in MSW
- Greater focus on shared apprenticeships schemes in MSW
- Supporting the renewed policy focus on apprenticeships as part of the post pandemic recovery plans
- Initiatives to promote career attractiveness

An increased strategic focus on enhancing delivery, quality and awareness of available apprenticeship opportunities within the Fermanagh & Omagh district aligning with Strategic Priorities to 'improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally' and to 'promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.'

10X Economic Strategy

The most recent economic strategy for Northern Ireland, published in May 2021, is the 10X Economy, which outlines 'an ambitious vision for the transformation required to support the growth of the Northern Ireland economy over the next decade'. The target objectives for the 10X Economy are grouped within three pillars: innovation, inclusive growth, and sustainability. The pillar of inclusive growth aligns with the work of the FO LMP, with objectives including:

- Close the employment gap between men and women; people with disabilities and people without; and the most deprived area of NI and the least deprived area of NI.
- Increase the proportion of the working age population with qualifications at level 3 and above from 57.2% (2020) to 70%-75%.

Each of these actions are in alignment with the focus of the FO LMP. Within the Strategic Priority to 'improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally', the LMP has actively deployed measures to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities, reduce the gender employment gap and increase the skilled labour supply.

Skills for a 10X Economy

To complement the 10X Economy, a dedicated strategic framework for the development of the wider skill system in Northern Ireland. The framework comprises of three Strategic Goals:

- Increasing the proportion of individuals leaving Northern Ireland higher education institutions with first degrees and post-graduate qualifications in narrow STEM subjects
- Increasing the proportion of the working age population with qualifications at level 2 and above
- Increasing the proportion of the working age population with qualifications at level 3 and above.

Similar to the 10X Economy, the Strategic Goals of the Skills for a 10X Economy are in alignment with the focus of the FO LMP. Both have a focus on increasing the skills base through initiatives targeted at increasing the qualification levels within the working population to support improved employability outcomes and labour market conditions.

NI Skills Barometer

The Skills Barometer is a tool developed by the Ulster University Economic Politics Centre that predicts the skills needed by new workers in Northern Ireland over the coming decade.

The 2021 update predicts that almost two-thirds of (37%) of new workers will require NQF level 6 and above qualifications. At this level, the largest undersupply for new workers is expected to be in STEM subjects.

It is predicted that almost 12% of new workers will require NQF level 4-5 qualifications with the most in-demand subjects to be Health, Public Services and Care; Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies; and Business Administration, Finance & Law. Together these top three subjects account for almost half (48%) of labour demanded at this level.

At the lower end of the spectrum only 8% of new worker demand will be at National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 2 and below (5 GCSEs A*- C or less).

It is forecast that the largest undersupply for new workers will be for those mid-level skills (NQF level 3-5). This is believed to be as a result of relatively few qualifiers entering the market with these qualifications, rather than an excess demand.

There is a need to improve levels of lifelong learning in Northern Ireland, the UK has lower levels of lifelong learning participation than other comparative countries¹.

In this context, it will be important to ensure FO LMP's investment supports the realisation of the 10x Economic Vision in the Fermanagh and Omagh area.

Local Monitor of Labour and Skills Demand 2022/23

In 2022/23 Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership completed a local employer engagement exercise to ascertain the current labour market requirements and skills needs in the region. Key observations included:

- Fermanagh and Omagh employers are optimistic for continued economic growth;
- Demand for labour will continue to increase with 84% of respondents predicting an increase in their employee headcount in the next three years;
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract staff;
- A significant number of job vacancies remain unfilled;
- Four key sectors account for 81% of the job vacancies – Health and Social Care, Manufacturing and Engineering, Tourism and Hospitality, and Retail have the highest demand for labour;
- 49% of respondents are open to doing more to employ those with disabilities, flexible working needs, no qualifications, or ex-offenders but require help to do so;
- 12 skills were identified that were considered to remain prominent over the next three years with the following identified as the top six priority:
 - Administrative,
 - General Operatives,
 - Basic ICT skills,
 - Housekeepers & chefs,
 - Trades,
 - Tech & Automation.

Economic Mission

Economy Minister, Conor Murphy MLA, in identifying how the challenges of low employment rate, low productivity, low wages, and severe regional balances can be overcome, set four key objectives as part of a new Economic Mission to:

1. Increase the proportion of working-age people in **Good Jobs**
2. Promote **Regional Balance**
3. Raise **Productivity**
4. Reduce **Carbon Emissions**.

¹ OECDs Skills Strategy NI

Through the FO LMP, tailor made action plans designed to address local labour market challenges will contribute to achieving these objectives by supporting residents into better paid jobs, providing opportunities for everyone to earn a living, implementing programmes to improve work-relevant skills, including upskilling workers and support sustainable growth.

Methodology

To complete the development of the Strategic Assessment and Action Plan for the FO LMP, specific methodologies were deployed to complete a statistical audit and stakeholder consultation exercises. The methodologies for each area are detailed further below. The primary aim of this endeavour was to comprehensively understand the challenges encountered by employers and the local community in FODC, explore existing resources in employability and skills, and anticipate future needs. At the forefront of this undertaking was the central objective to develop a tailored LMP Action Plan that aligns effectively with the identified needs.

Statistical Audit

Pinnacle Growth Group (PGG) completed a statistical audit by first reviewing economic data from the previous Action Plan to generate a foundational baseline. Research was then conducted on the most recently available economic datasets to provide an updated understanding of the current state of the Fermanagh & Omagh labour market and the performance of key indicators against Northern Ireland averages.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was undertaken to ensure that the Strategic Assessment and Action Plan developed for the FO LMP was informed by insights into the various challenges and needs within the local labour market together with how the FO LMP can support overcoming these challenges and addressing key needs. Stakeholders engaged included:

Labour Market Partnership Members

- Western Health & Social Care Trust
- South West College
- Omagh Learning Community
- NI Food & Drink
- Manufacturing NI
- Omagh Jobs & Benefits Office
- Invest NI
- Fermanagh Learning Community
- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- Enniskillen Jobs & Benefits Office
- Disability Action
- Careers Service NI

Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Stakeholders

- ARC Health Living Centre
- Fermanagh Rural Community Network
- Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
- NOW Group
- Omagh Enterprise Company
- Fermanagh Omagh Enterprise
- REAP Programme
- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council – Neighbourhood Renewal Officer, Access Inclusion Officer & Community & Wellbeing Manager

Industries & Sectors Consulted

- Arts & Entertainment
- Construction
- Education & Training
- Food & Drink
- Healthcare & Social Care
- Hospitality
- Legal Services
- Manufacturing
- Motor Trade
- Professional Services
- Retail, Wholesale & E-Commerce
- Tourism

Stakeholders in the Fermanagh and Omagh labour market were engaged through three approaches:

Engagement Method	Stakeholders Engaged
Focus Group	LMP Members
Interviews	LMP Members & Labour Market Stakeholders
Survey	Businesses within the Labour Market

Table 1 - Consultation Methods

Focus Group/One-to-One Interviews

Engagement with the focus group and one-to-one interviews with LMP members focused on each of the LMP's three Strategic Priorities and their views of the previous Action Plan. These methods were chosen as they enabled direct engagement and generation of high levels of qualitative information that would support and contribute to development of the most effective Strategic Assessment and Action Plan. Engagement assisted with the capture of information on what was viewed to be key needs and challenges facing the local labour market, the effectiveness of past and current initiatives and programmes to address needs and challenges, areas for improvement in future delivery and emerging trends and challenges impacting the labour market.

Survey

Local businesses in the Fermanagh & Omagh area were consulted via an online survey. This method was chosen as it enabled high levels of engagement within a short time frame, with high levels of quantitative data produced to enable efficient analysis of the generated datasets.

The survey focused on assessing awareness of the LMP within the Fermanagh & Omagh area, their employment concerns and focuses, their skills gaps and requirements and areas of support that the FO LMP can facilitate.

Findings – Statistical Audit

Overview of Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Area

Fermanagh & Omagh is the lowest populated Local Government District (LGD) in Northern Ireland, accounting for 6.1% of the total population, or 116,822. This figure has rose by 3.2% (or 3,700) since the previous census in 2011, though this was well below the NI average of 5.1%² (NISRA NI Census, 2021).

Alternatively, it has the largest land area which emphasises the rurality of the area. This, along with limited transport networks reduces residents' accessibility to local services, including where they access jobs.

Across the age demographics for the LGD, the key finding was that the population in Fermanagh & Omagh was ageing, with the proportion of younger people falling and the proportion of older people increasing. Figure 3 highlights a fall in those aged 15-39 Years (33% to 29%) and a rise in those aged 40-64 Years (32% to 33%) and 65+ Years (14% to 18%)³.

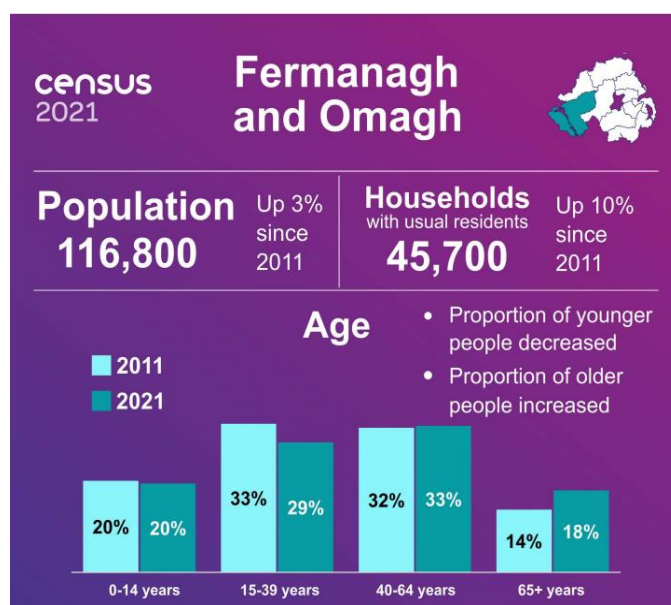


Figure 3: Population of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area

²: NISRA, Census 2021, 2022.

³ NISRA, Census 2021, 2022.

The critical insight from this dataset is that the population of working age (15-39 years and 40-64 years) has decreased over the ten-year period from 65% in 2011 to 62% in 2021. This trend highlights a strain on the labour market within Fermanagh & Omagh, with the available labour force decreasing.

This contrasts with the strong business base active within Fermanagh & Omagh, with the number of VAT and/or PAYE registered businesses rising from 8,455 in 2022 to 8,575 in 2023⁴ (Figure 4). With the adverse economic conditions experienced in 2023 (e.g. War in Ukraine, political uncertainty in Northern Ireland, Cost of Living Crisis), this suggests a resilient business community with ongoing employment and skills development opportunities.

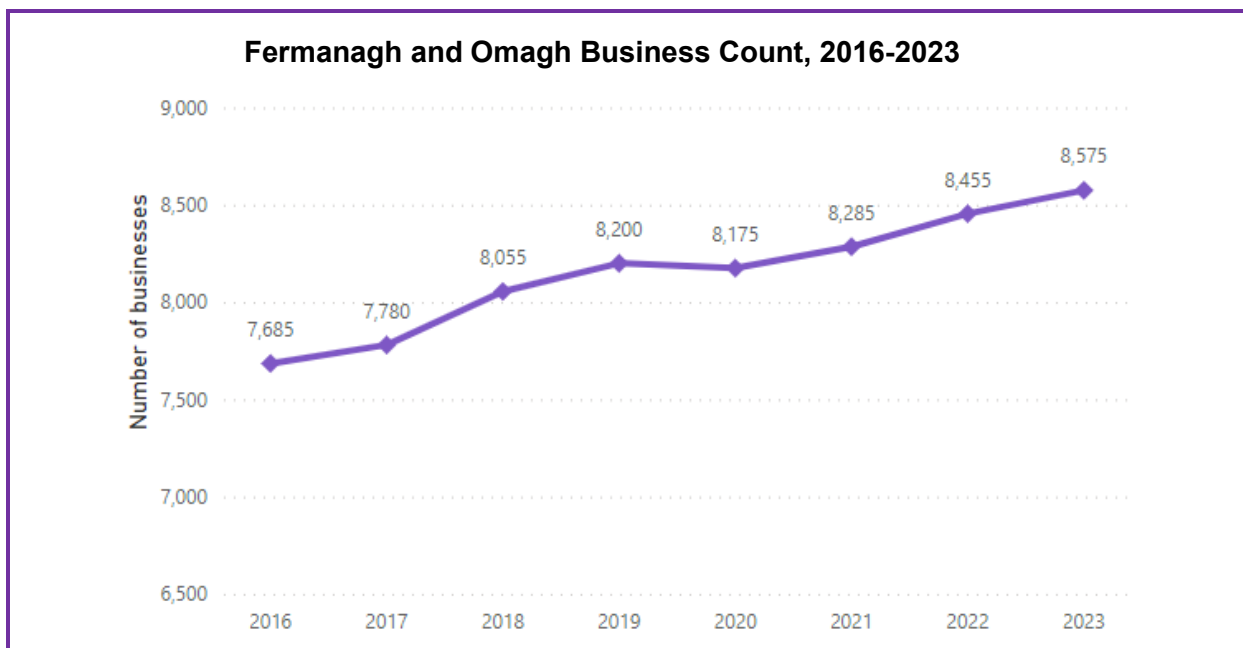


Figure 4, Fermanagh and Omagh business growth 2016-2023

Fermanagh and Omagh has the fifth largest number of businesses of all the LGD's and has the most businesses of all LGD's in the Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing sector, with 10.4% more businesses than Mid Ulster who have the second largest in this sector.

Construction accounts for the second highest number of businesses with Fermanagh and Omagh, yet ranks seventh compared to the rest of the LGD's.⁵ While property ranks ninth, all other industries within Fermanagh and Omagh have the least number of businesses in comparison to other LGD's, ranking either tenth or eleventh.

⁴ NISRA, Inter Departmental Business Register, 2023

⁵ NI Local Labour Market Insight – IDBR Business, 2023

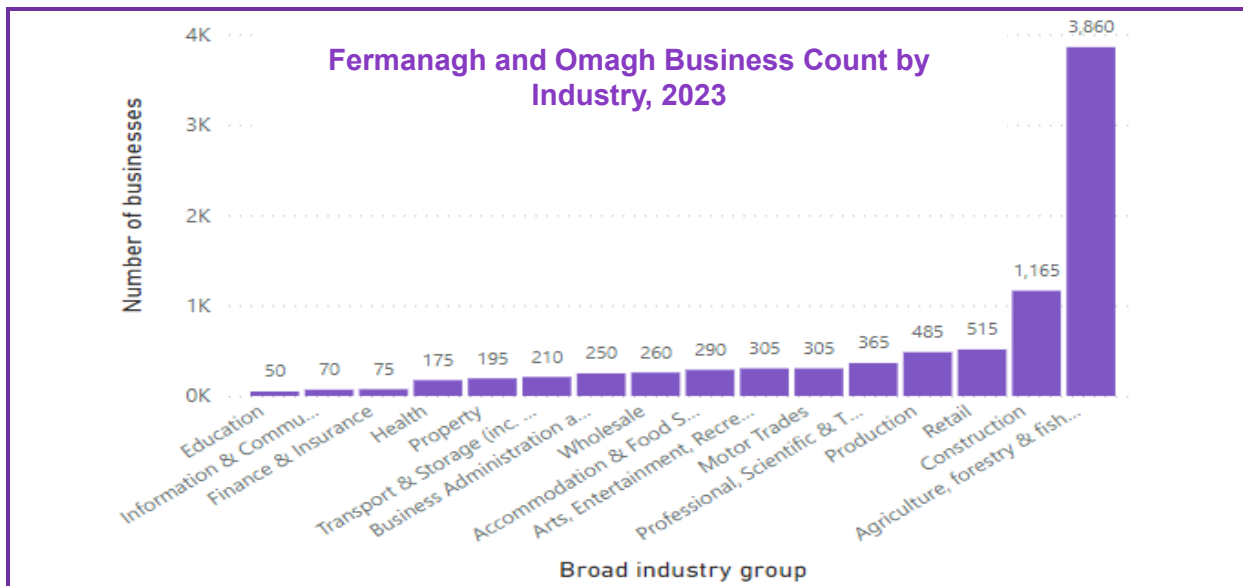


Figure 5 - Fermanagh and Omagh Business Count by Industry, 2023

Of the 8,575 businesses within Fermanagh and Omagh, 94% are micro businesses (employ less than nine staff) with 47.4% (4,065) of these who do not employ any staff (Figure 5).

Compared to larger businesses, micro businesses are unlikely to have HR teams to focus on the recruitment of staff. Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership, over the next three years, will need to develop and/or promote any recruitment initiatives that will assist micro businesses in the recruitment of staff.

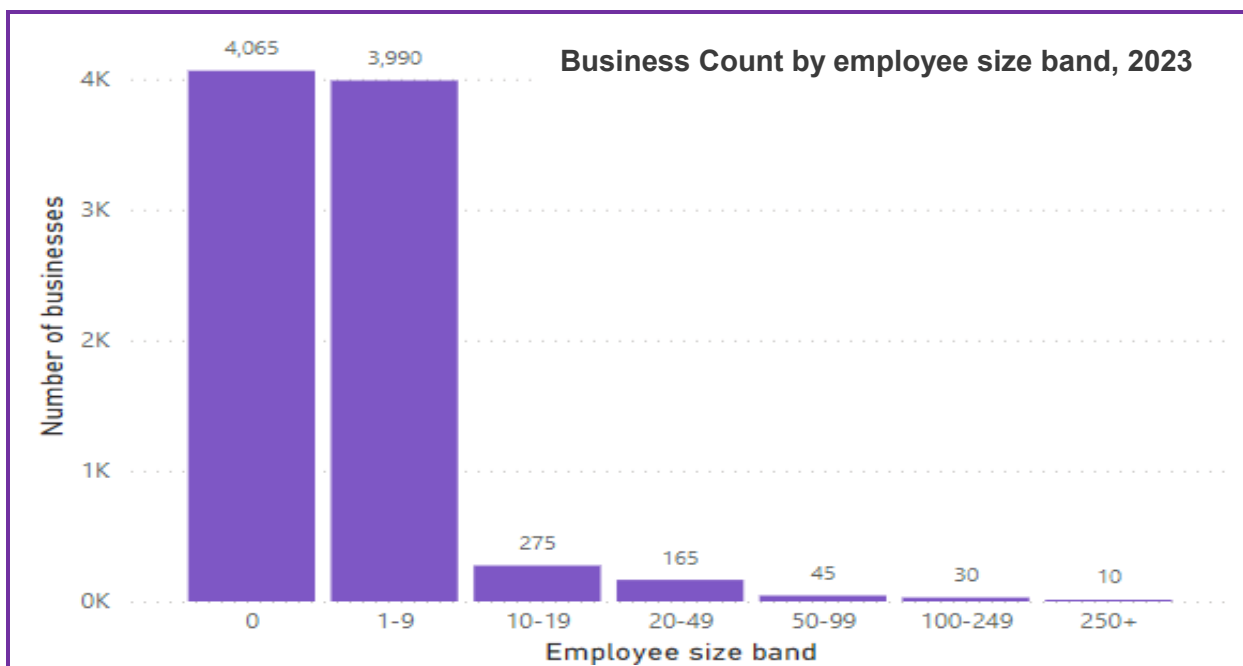


Figure 6 - Fermanagh and Omagh Business Count by Number of Employees 2023.

Contrary to Figure 5, Fermanagh and Omagh Business Count, where Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing has the largest number of businesses, they only employ 4.1% of Fermanagh and Omagh's working age population as illustrated in Figure 7.

Public Administration, Education and Health are the largest employers (36%) followed by Distribution, Hotels and Restaurants (16.7%). Despite this, there are still a large number of vacancies within these sectors with Education continually experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining suitably qualified classroom assistants.

Construction, in which Fermanagh and Omagh are ranked as the seventh largest business sector across all LGD's, is the third largest employer within Fermanagh and Omagh. Similar to Education, many employers within the construction industry are struggling to recruit suitably skilled employees, which in turn has an adverse effect on their business growth.

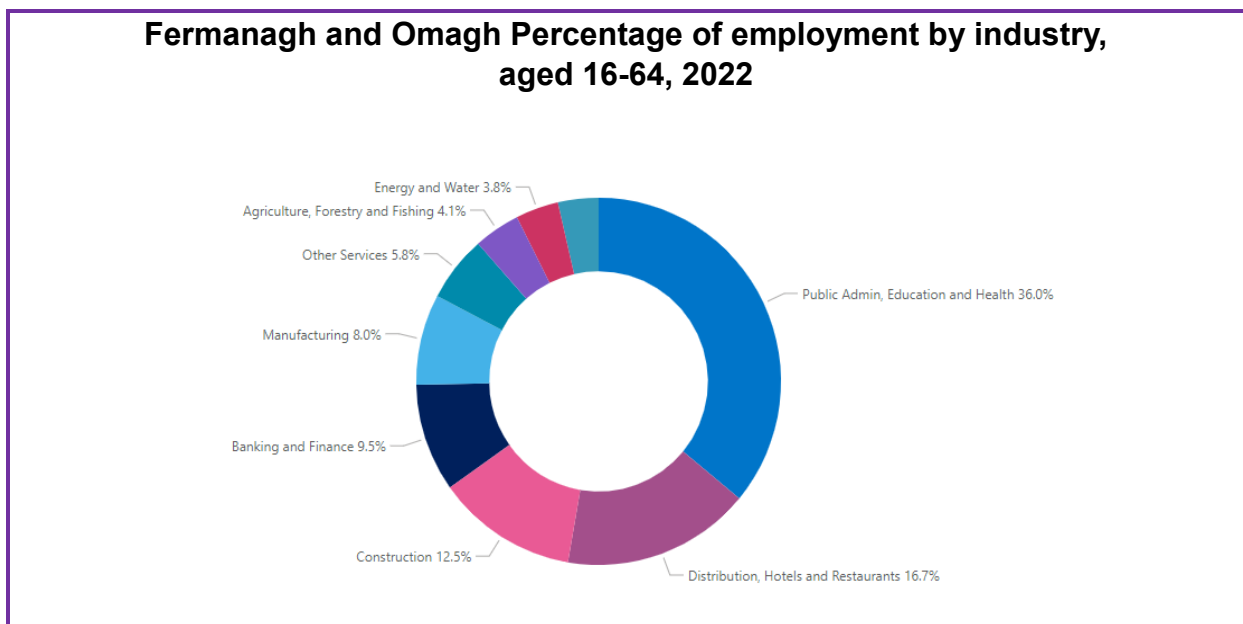


Figure 7 - Fermanagh and Omagh Percentage of employment by industry

Employment Rates and Claimant Count

The demographic challenge influencing the Fermanagh & Omagh labour market impacts employment and economic inactivity rates. Figure 8 illustrates the profile of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's working age population (16 – 64 year old) with approximately 50,500 residents in employment and 13,000 residents (excluding students) being recorded as economically inactive⁶.

⁶ NISRA, Labour Market Status, 2022

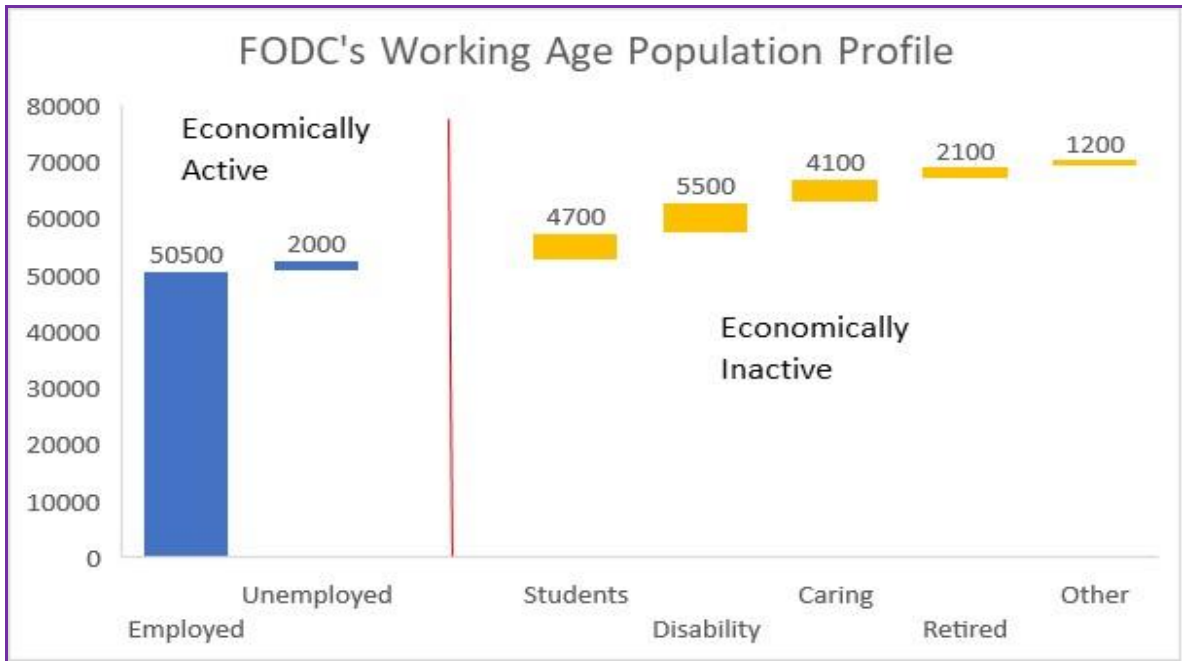


Figure 8 - Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Working Age Population Profile (NISRA, 2021)

The employment rate in Fermanagh & Omagh has increased in recent years, rising above the Northern Ireland average, as illustrated in Figure 9.

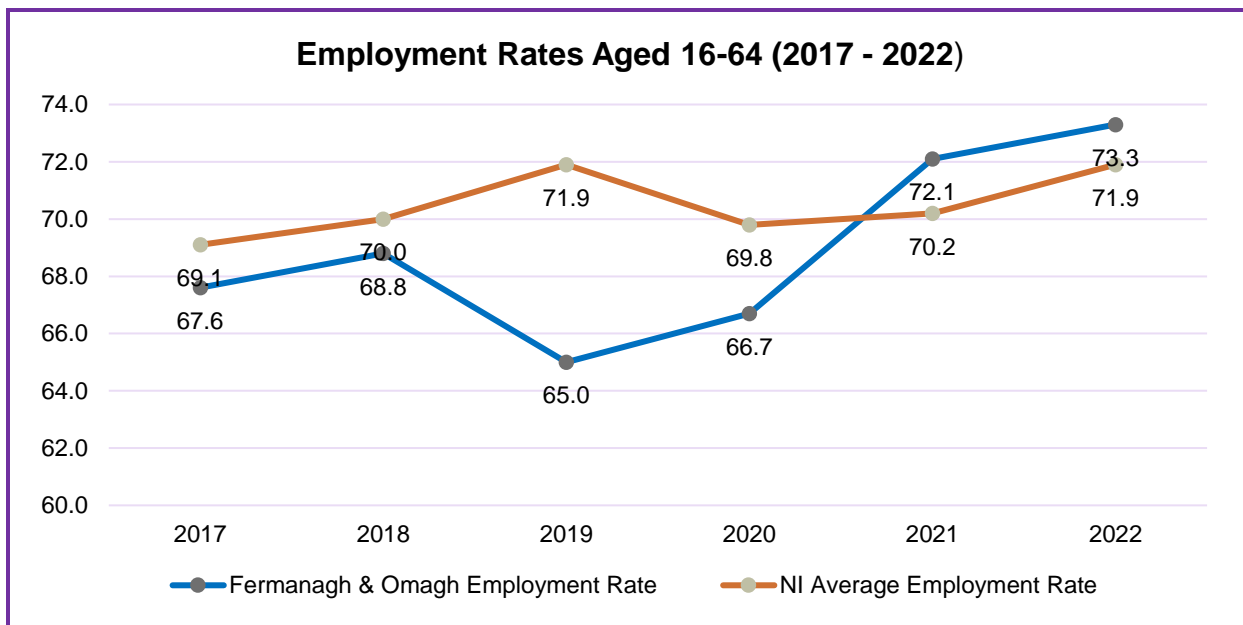


Figure 9 - Employment Rates Aged 16-64 (2017 - 2022)

Over the past 15 years, Fermanagh & Omagh area has become increasingly significant in contributing to the Northern Ireland economy. Despite facing challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, employment numbers have steadily risen, showcasing the resilience of local businesses in maintaining their workforce. Notably, Fermanagh & Omagh boasts a slightly higher employment rate of 73.3% for 16-64-year-olds compared to the Northern Ireland average, indicating a relatively robust

labour market even during adverse economic conditions. With employment steadily increasing over the past decade and accounting for 6% of total employment in Northern Ireland, the region showcases resilience. Moreover, key sectors such as construction and tourism contribute significantly to employment, with over 16.7% in distribution, hospitality and restaurants, and over 12.5% in construction (Figure 7).

During 2022/23, 2,660 employment vacancies were notified to the Department for Communities in the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area. It is important to note these do not take into consideration non-reported vacancies within the area. With claimant count levels consistently low, 1,670 recorded in 2023, local employers are finding it increasingly difficult to find suitably skilled labour to fill these positions therefore it is important the FO LMP work closely with employers to identify the relevant skills gap and develop initiatives within the FO LMP Action Plan to address these.

Economic Inactivity

As illustrated by Figure 108, over the past five years, the economic inactivity rate for the Fermanagh & Omagh District reached a peak of 33.1% in 2019 before dropping by 7.9% by 2022 to 25.2%⁷. While there was a small rise in 2022, it was the second consecutive year where Fermanagh & Omagh’s economic inactivity rate was below the Northern Ireland average. This moved Fermanagh & Omagh from fourth best performing LGD on economic inactivity in 2021 to joint seventh, though the gap to the highest performing LGD (Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council) has narrowed from 3.5% to 3.1%⁸.

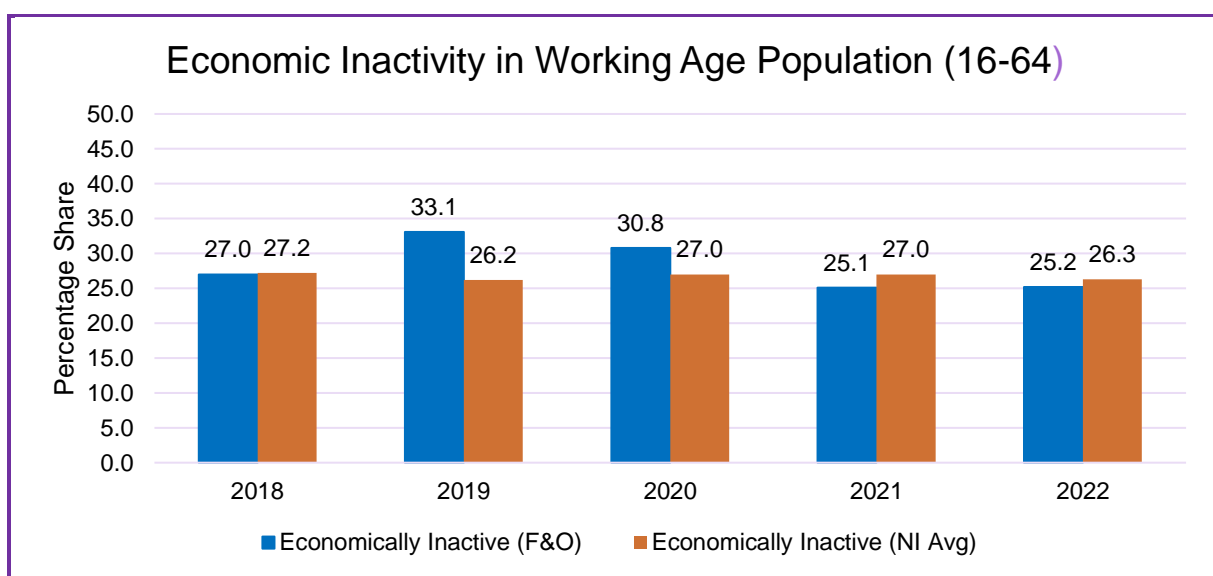


Figure 10 - Economic Inactivity in Fermanagh & Omagh Working Age Population (16-64)

Economic inactivity has been a long-standing issue in NI and covers a broad range of groups from students, early retirees, individuals with family or caring responsibilities

⁷ NISRA, Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts 2009-2022

⁸ NISRA, Labour Market Status, 2022.

and those dealing with long-term sickness or disability. A final group is 'other', including those discouraged from labour market participation, believing there are no available jobs, have given no reason or those who don't require employment⁹.

In 1981, almost one-fifth (18%) of the NI population were inactive due to reasons of looking after the family home. In the latest Census 2021 this figure had fallen to just 6% for NI and similar for Fermanagh and Omagh. This is largely linked to the increasing educational attainment and labour force participation for women over the same period which has been vital in expanding the workforce over the last number of decades. Despite these improvements major challenges remain within this group as over 30%¹⁰ of Fermanagh and Omagh's economically inactive population are carers, which Figure 11 illustrates. Despite being the best performing LGD this is still quite a substantially high figure and FO LMP will have to develop initiatives to reduce this further.

Although not exclusively, the caring role is often associated with the female of the family. Reasons why they have decided not to move into/return to employment can be related to the lack of accessible and affordable childcare, flexible work patterns and availability of part time work.

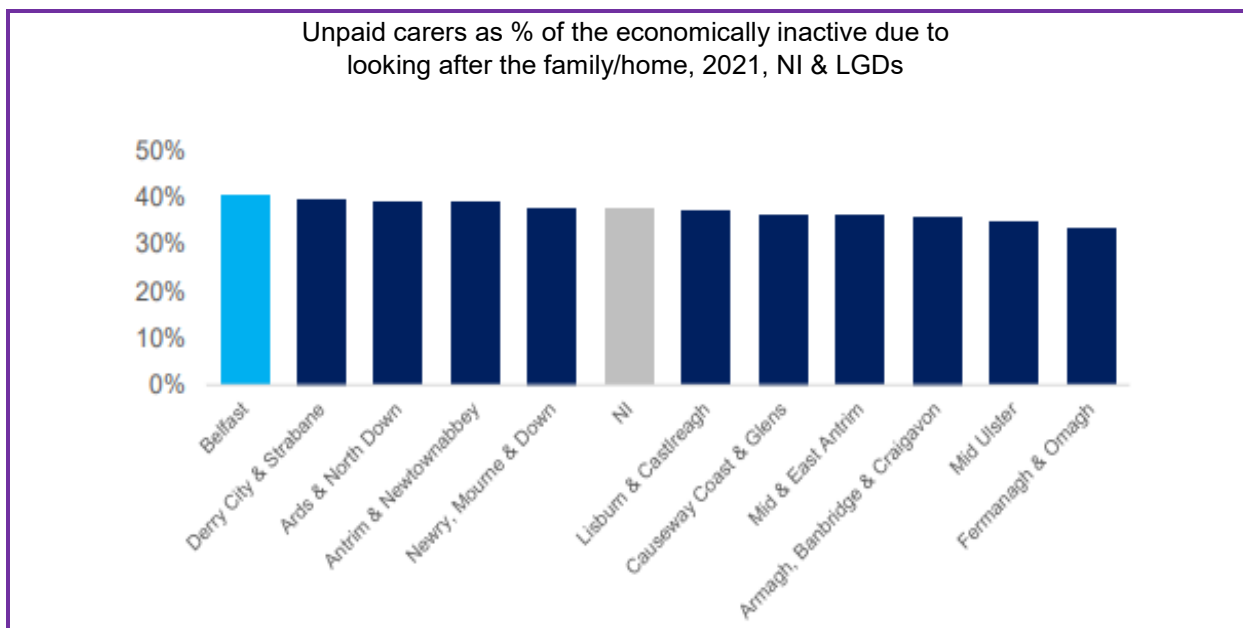


Figure 11: Unpaid carers as % of the economically inactive due to looking after the family/home, 2021, NI & LGDs¹¹

¹⁰ University of Ulster: Economic Inactivity – Who? What? Where? Why?

¹¹ University of Ulster: Economic Inactivity – Who? What? Where? Why?

Gender Economic Inactivity

The gender economic inactivity gap further highlights the need to implement initiatives within the FO LMP Action Plan to support females back to employment.

The gender economic inactivity gap within Fermanagh and Omagh has been in decline since 2020 however, it is positioned third worst performing LGD across Northern Ireland with an economic inactivity rate of 9.6%.

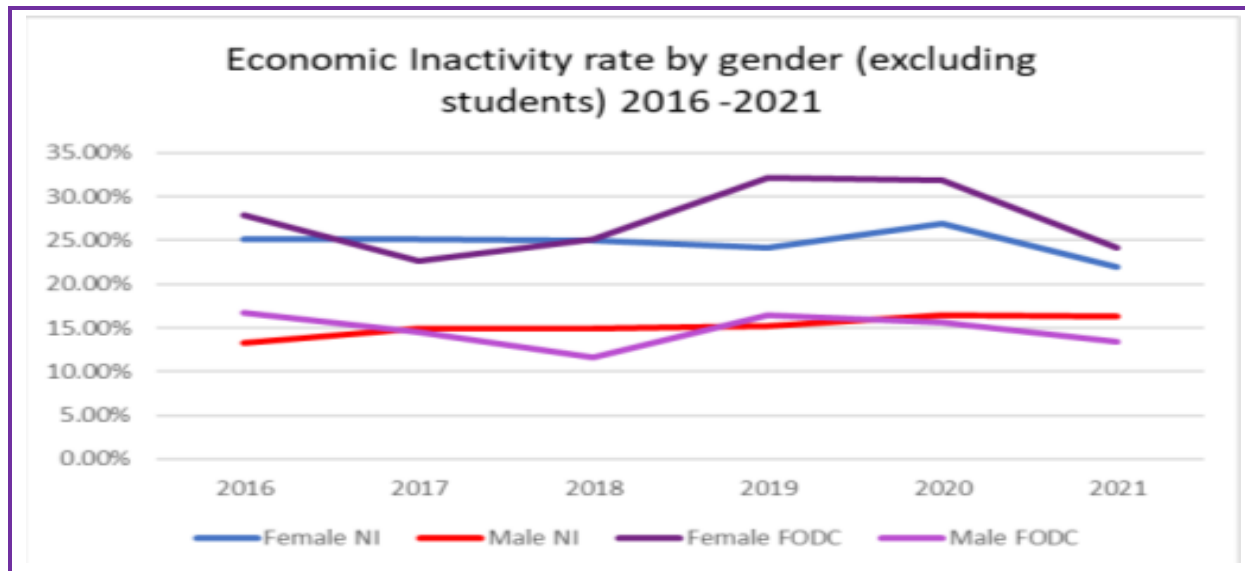


Figure 12 – Economic inactivity rate by gender (excluding students) 2016–2021

In contrast, when gender economic inactivity gap is explored further, Figure 13 shows there was a slight decrease of 0.5% between 2021 and 2022 within Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area now at a rate of 8.7%, with male employment sitting at a rate of 77.5% compared to female employment of 68.8%.¹² Although employment for both males and females increased over this period the male employment rate increased at a slower rate than the female employment rate (0.5%).

¹² Local LMI Dashboard

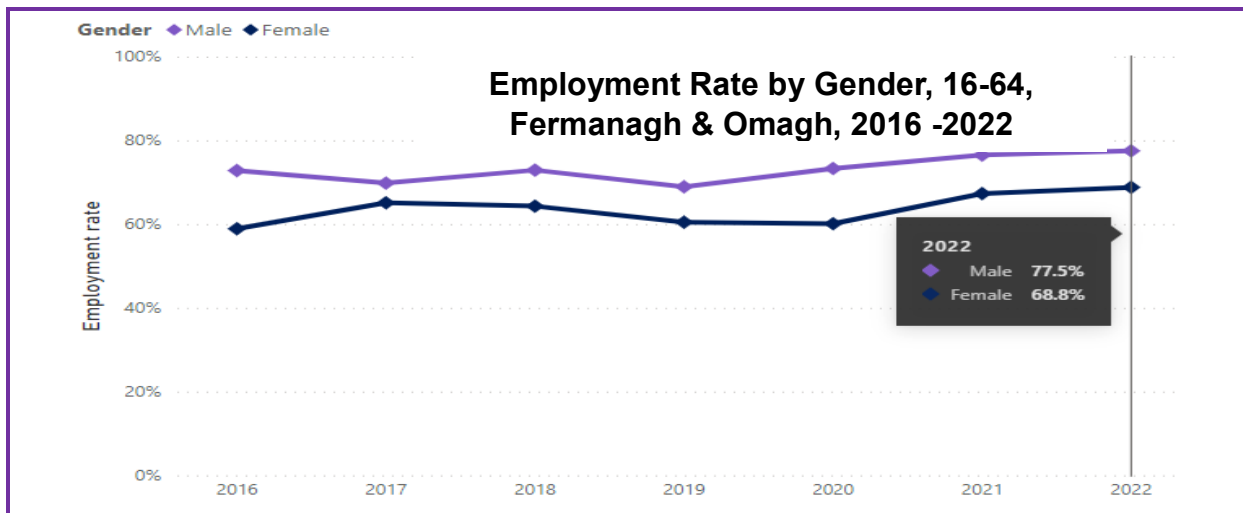


Figure 13– Fermanagh and Omagh Gender Employment Rate, aged 16-64, 2016-2022.

The Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership 2024/25 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 and support more women back to work.

During 2022/23, the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market partnership delivered a successful Female Entrepreneur Programme with 15 out of 17 participants starting their own businesses within six months of completing their training. This self-employment provided women the opportunity to contribute to the economy by tailoring their working week to fit around competing family demands.

Furthermore, as the lack of affordable childcare is well documented as an issue across Northern Ireland, the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership could consider the delivery of a childminder training programme to increase the number of available affordable childminders in the area.

Qualifications

An important factor in improving economic inactivity data is improving the skills level of the population, ensuring that there is a clear pathway to upskill individuals to allow for progress to more skilled and higher paid jobs. The chart below displays the level of qualification for working age population in Fermanagh & Omagh from 2018 to 2022.

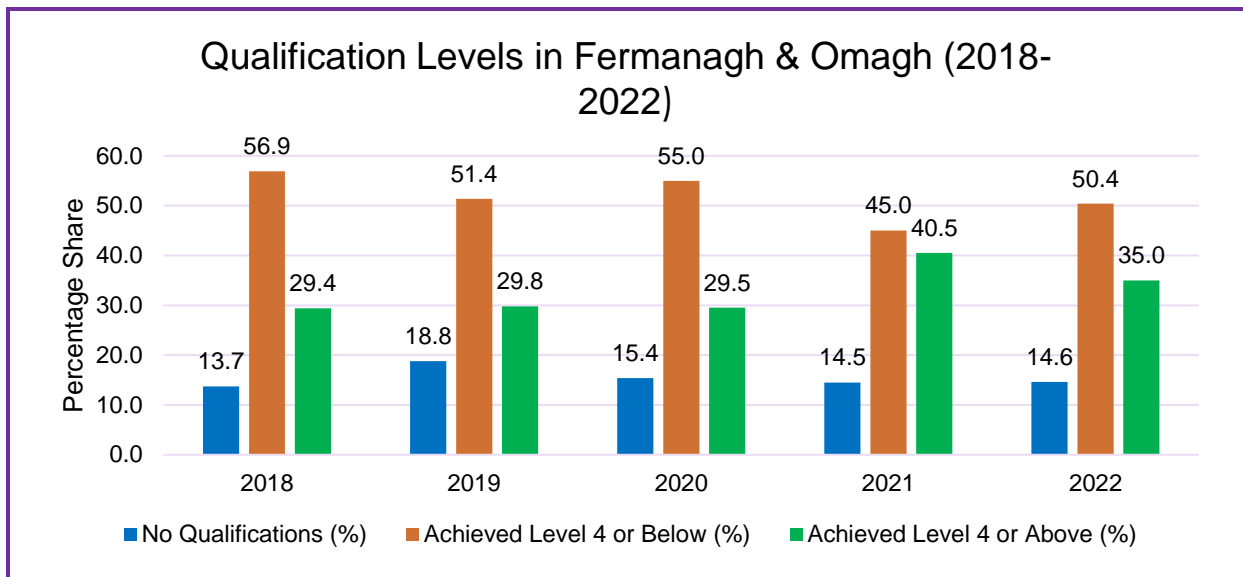


Figure 14 - Qualification Levels in Fermanagh & Omagh (2018-2022)

In 2022, there was a small change in the percentage of individuals with no qualifications (rise of 0.1%) and while this maintained at the lower levels since a peak of 18.8% in 2019, Fermanagh & Omagh are still above the Northern Ireland average by 1% and joint fourth lowest performing LGD¹³.

There has been a marked increase in individuals achieving a qualification at Level 4 or below, rising by 5.4% from 2021, suggesting a future rise to return to a pre-pandemic peak of 56.9% in 2018. Fermanagh & Omagh performed above the Northern Ireland average (47.6%) in 2022 and were third highest, with only four LGD's recording a rate of 50% or higher¹⁴.

Conversely, there was a decrease from the peak in 2021 of individuals achieving a qualification at Level 4 or higher, dropping from 40.5% to 35.0%. Factors such as financial burdens, travel costs and fees could have played a part in the highlighted decrease. However, the figure remains well above previous levels from 2018 to 2020. Fermanagh & Omagh was below the Northern Ireland average for 2022 (38.8%) and only Causeway Coast & Glens returned a lower figure (31.4%)¹⁵.

Creating a culture of life-long learning represents a significant challenge for Northern Ireland as a whole with the OECD Skills Strategy NI 2020 report stating that participation in lifelong learning in NI is comparatively low and adults in Northern Ireland have lower skills levels than those in Ireland, UK and most other OECD countries.¹⁶

¹³ NISRA, Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts 2009-2022

¹⁴ NISRA, Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts 2009-2022

¹⁵ NISRA, Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts 2009-2022

¹⁶ OECD Skills Strategy NI 2020

Median Full Time Salary

The median full-time salary for Fermanagh & Omagh has historically fallen below the Northern Ireland average. However, 2023 brought a change with the Fermanagh & Omagh median rising to £27,446.

This increase of 13.6% was the highest in Northern Ireland and well above the national average of 7.2%¹⁷. As illustrated in Figure 15, the average median salary in Fermanagh & Omagh has tracked below the Northern Ireland average¹⁸. Fermanagh & Omagh recorded the third highest median full-time salary in Northern Ireland, rising from eighth highest in 2022.

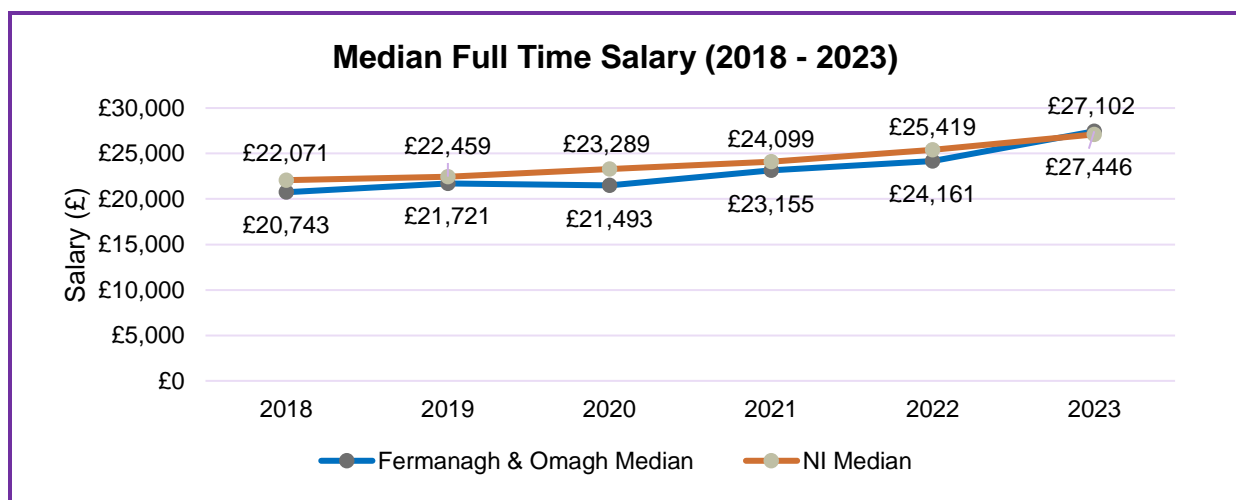


Figure 15 – Fermanagh and Omagh Median Full Time Salary (2018 - 2023)

A key objective for the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership will be the development of initiatives that support lifelong learning to upskill and reskill adult learners for better paid jobs and raise the median full time salary further.

Disability

Northern Ireland has experienced rising rates of self-reported long-term sickness and disability between 1981 and 2021. This has been largely associated with a higher incidence of older men with a number of contributing factors. Firstly technological jobs replacing traditional skills, has had a disproportionately impact on lower skilled workers, mostly men. Second a move towards a stricter unemployment system over the longer term saw many individuals transfer to more passive incapacity-related benefits and finally, improvements in diagnosis coupled with reduced stigma around issues of mental health may have contributed to an increased confidence to self-refer¹⁹.

¹⁷ NISRA, Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings by Local Government District (by place of residence), 2023

¹⁸ NISRA, Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings, by Local Government District (by place of residence), 2018 - 2022

¹⁹ University of Ulster: Economic Inactivity – Who? What? Where? Why?

Disability/Long term sick accounts for over 42% of Fermanagh and Omagh's economically inactive population (excluding students) (Figure 8 pg:17).

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Figure 16 – Disability Employment Gap 2020-2022

Figure 16 shows the economic activity of people both with and without disabilities in Fermanagh & Omagh and Northern Ireland. Over the past three years, the economic activity gap between those with and without disabilities in Fermanagh & Omagh has widened from 41.5% in 2020 to 51.3% in 2022, with the small growth in those with disabilities (0.6%) significantly lesser than those without disabilities (10.4%)²⁰. The widening gap may be attributed to the increased employment rate of those without disabilities in Fermanagh & Omagh, which rose above the Northern Ireland average at an increased rate in 2021 and 2022.

Reducing the disability employment gap needs to remain a strong focus of the Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership by working with employers to develop inclusive and accessible labour market opportunities for those with long-term health conditions/disabilities who report they would like to work.

Apprenticeships

Fermanagh & Omagh has previously recorded a steady growth in the creation of employed apprenticeships. As per NISRA, Fermanagh and Omagh experienced a gradual growth of participants on Apprenticeships NI between 2014 – 2020 with the number of apprenticeships significantly increasing in 2020/21, with 250 active apprenticeships. Recording on ApprenticeshipsNI, NISRA recorded that “Electrotechnical”, “Food Manufacture” and “Construction” are the three most popular frameworks for the current occupancy quarter, with males accounting for 76% of current participants²¹. The proportion of male participants is highest in the Level 2/3 Apprenticeship group at 93%²².

Data recorded between the period of 2021/22 highlights that there were 855 apprenticeships in the Fermanagh & Omagh area, showcasing a significant increase from 2020/21. The table below highlights the number of apprenticeships throughout each of the council areas.

Statistical Bulletin, Apprenticeships NI, Quarterly Statistics from August 2013 to July 2022

²⁰ NISRA, Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts, 2021-2022

²¹ NISRA, Apprenticeships NI, Quarterly Statistics, August 2013 – July 2022

²² NISRA, Apprenticeships NI, Quarterly Statistics, August 2013 – July 2022

Local Government District ⁽⁴⁾	Total	Level 2	Level 2/3	Level 3	Level not assigned
Antrim and Newtownabbey	709	348	59	302	0
Ards and North Down	582	271	24	287	0
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	965	445	65	455	0
Belfast	1,190	525	111	554	0
Causeway Coast and Glens	844	394	53	397	0
Derry City and Strabane	1,139	703	10	426	0
Fermanagh and Omagh	855	389	21	445	0
Lisburn and Castlereagh	473	211	37	225	0
Mid and East Antrim	719	312	68	339	0
Mid Ulster	1,135	525	115	495	0
Newry, Mourne and Down	985	465	35	485	0
Not Known ⁽⁵⁾	90	55	2	33	0
Total	9,686	4,643	600	4,443	0

Table 2 - Apprenticeships in Northern Ireland (2022)
Source: NISRA, Apprenticeships NI 2023

Youth Unemployment

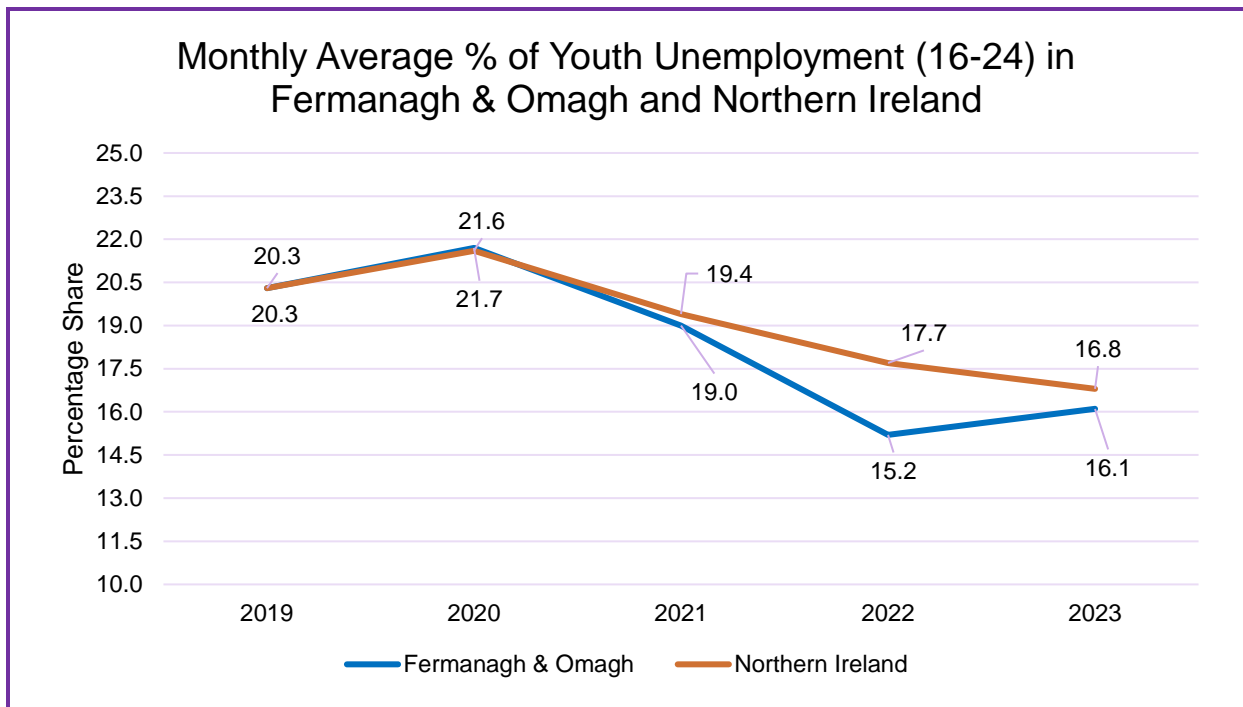
According to NOMIS statistics, youth unemployment figures peaked in 2020 at 21.7%, though this was largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic, before falling in 2021 to 19.0%²³. There was a significant decrease in 2022, falling to 15.2%²⁴. 2023 showed a slight increase to 16.1% though figures remain low in comparison the Northern Ireland average²⁵. As shown through the chart below, Fermanagh & Omagh remains below the Northern Ireland average for youth unemployment as a percentage of total unemployment, with 2023 a third consecutive year below the average²⁶.

²³ NOMIS, Claimant Count 2019-2023

²⁴ NOMIS, Claimant Count 2019-2023

²⁵ NOMIS, Claimant Count 2019-2023

²⁶ NOMIS, Claimant Count 2019-2023



Findings – Stakeholder Engagement

LMP Members

Feedback during consultation with LMP members highlighted the success of recent programme and initiative delivery (e.g. Transport Academy, Female Entrepreneur Programme, Employer Led Disability) while noting the challenges that have impacted delivery of other programmes (e.g. delays in receipt of letter of offer, procurement of delivery agents, event delays).

Members welcomed the positive impact programme activity has had on enhancing employability outcomes and reducing economic inactivity in the local labour market, and are keen to build on the progress made.

Due to the rurality of the Fermanagh and Omagh area, the limited transport network and access to affordable childcare, members acknowledge the need to continue to support those furthest from the labour market through the provision of barrier payments to cover travel, subsistence and/or childcare costs.

All LMP members had a strong awareness of the demographic and socio-economic challenges affecting the labour market, such as a shrinking labour market and skills shortages.

They are aware of their role in contributing to the design of strategic approaches to overcome these challenges.

While there was an awareness of the impact of such challenges on high performing industries in the Fermanagh & Omagh area such as manufacturing, construction and agri-food, the need to focus on emerging and growing sectors such as digital technologies, cyber security and the tourism industry was also noted.

Moving forward, members were in consensus of the need to better promote career pathways within key industries and sectors to those of school-leaving age, showcasing skills development opportunities and developing a pipeline of local talent for recruitment into the Fermanagh & Omagh labour market.

It was recognised that apprenticeships represent a viable vehicle for developing a long-term career pathway and that efforts should continue to promote these to those in secondary education. Connecting to this pathway, members noted that there is scope for integration with other skills development programmes, such as those previously or currently deployed by the LMP to upskill the labour force and progress individuals into higher skilled roles, generating a more sustainable skills pipeline. Members agreed that a more strategic approach to capture positive case studies of skills and career development stories within the local community would be highly influential in raising awareness of the available employment opportunities within the Fermanagh & Omagh labour market.

It was acknowledged that to deliver such Plans, a greater focus on communication, collaboration and cross-working is required amongst LMP members, labour market stakeholders and local businesses. Such an approach would promote achievement of mutual outcomes and goals through a more strategic approach to intervention delivery that maximises the best and most efficient use of available resources to address labour market needs where required.

Labour Market Stakeholders

PGG engaged with labour market stakeholders through one-to-one interviews. Generally, engaged stakeholders had an awareness and understanding of the role the LMP fulfilled within the Fermanagh & Omagh area. However, it was noted that this could be improved through further communications with the LMP to support development of closer collaboration, effective working relationships, and achievement of mutual objectives.

All stakeholders demonstrated an awareness of the demographic challenges facing the Fermanagh & Omagh labour market. Stakeholders felt that to address these issues, a sustainable, long-term approach should be prioritised and felt, to achieve this, targeted and strategic networking opportunities could support identification of sectoral specific challenges and allow for co-design in solution development and implementation. Stakeholders felt that such efforts should acknowledge, engage and support smaller businesses who more keenly feel impacts of labour market challenges than larger competitors and counterparts.

Stakeholders with experience as delivery agents reported that existing interventions that utilise a blended delivery approach (one-to-one & group formats) were most effective in having a positive and lasting impact on the labour market. It was generally agreed that this approach supported development of participant confidence, which was key to generating lasting positive impacts. It was also felt that to support long-term positive impacts, some level of financial incentive for participants may increase engagement levels amongst participants. However, it was also noted that this

approach should be balanced to support effective use of public funds and maximise positive outcomes for participants.

Business Survey

PGG completed a survey of local businesses within the Fermanagh & Omagh labour market to gain insight into the employability and skills landscape in the area. A total of thirty-three responses were obtained from respondents representing a variety of business sizes, mostly micro businesses (61%), small-sized businesses (27%), medium businesses (9%) and large-size businesses (3%).

Recruitment

Across respondents, there has been a clear need for recruitment over the past twelve months, with all respondents advertising for roles. A high majority of respondents (79%) had advertised for up to three roles in the twelve months preceding the survey, 9% advertised for four to six roles and 6% each for seven to nine roles or ten plus roles. In total, if extrapolated to the highest number in each range, a total of 134 roles were available across respondent businesses within the past twelve months.

Respondents were moderately successful in filling vacancies, with 85% recruiting up to three new staff in the previous twelve months. The remaining respondents recruited either four to six staff (9%) or ten plus staff (6%). There is a clear demand for staffing over the next twelve months. Most respondents (64%) intend to hire and are targeting up to three new staff (71%), with nearly a quarter targeting four to six new staff (24%).

Respondents were also clear on what positions they sought to fulfil, with a strong demand for both entry level (48%) and skilled (29%) staff. This indicates that there is a clear need for operational staff across the sample, rather than strategic staff, with under a quarter seeking to recruit staff in managerial (14%) or specialist roles (9%). This was reflected in respondents declaring the specific skill types needed, prioritising administration (10 of 33), general operatives (9 of 33) and sales & marketing (8 of 33). Respondents primarily advertise via two methods: social media (23 of 33) and word of mouth (17 of 33), reflecting both the increased uptake in modern advertising techniques and the importance of local connections in a rural district.

Support Experiences

Almost half (45%) of all respondents have not previously engaged with any organisation or programme that seeks to support employers with apprenticeships or placements for unqualified, unemployed or disabled workers. A third of respondents (33%) have had experience with organisations or programmes that provide support with apprenticeships or traineeships. A small number of respondents (10% each) have engaged with organisations or programmes that have supported those with disabilities gain work or employment or those that matched employers with unemployed people.

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in a range of support programmes that would assist them with employment. There was strong support for several options:

- Sourcing new employees through a Skills Academy whereby participants complete a training programme and/or qualification to gain work ready skills – 24 respondents (34%)
- A course to upskill or reskill current employees with new, in demand skills or qualifications – 17 respondents (24%)
- Sourcing new employees through a Skills Academy to support individuals with a disability into employment – 11 respondents (15%)
- Sourcing new employees through a Skills Academy for 'returners', specifically targeting individuals who have been out of the workforce for a period often due to caring for children, parents, or other dependents - 11 respondents (15%)

When participants were asked if they had previously heard of the FO LMP, 79% of respondents replied “No”, with the remaining either ‘Not Sure’ (12%) or Yes (9%). No respondent was aware of having any previous engagement with the FO LMP. A strong majority of respondents (82%) stated that their lack of awareness of LMP programmes or support prevented them from engaging before.

There is a need for more communication and promotion of the work of the LMP and the achievement of participants on the programme.

Future Needs

When asked how the Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Partnership could help businesses with employment and/or skills needs, there were varied responses. Most respondents (30%) said “increased awareness of the role of LMP in the local area”, a further 21% respondents would like “increased promotion of available support programmes and initiatives”. A further 45% was spread across three responses (15% each), including provision of relevant support programmes, increased engagement to better understand employability needs and increased collaboration with local market stakeholders.

Many respondents (42%) indicated that they foresee the skills they demand in the next few years changing due to various factors, such as Technology, AI, and Climate Change. Considering this, respondents were asked about future skills gaps. Respondents viewed “Data & Computing” to be the most in demand skill in the future, with 33% respondents identifying this as a priority and 30% respondents deemed “Digital Marketing” to be an important skill in the future. A further 22% of respondents envisage “Automation & AI” will be important in the future as it may be able to assist in some areas of lower paid work where access to employees may be more challenging.

To conclude, participants believed the Fermanagh & Omagh Labour Market Partnership could help their business with the following areas:

- Increased awareness of the role of LMP within the local area and further engagement with local businesses;

- Increased promotion of the support currently available and provision of relevant support programmes;
- More collaboration with local market stakeholders;
- Awareness and support of future skills needs such as, Data & Computing, Digital Marketing and Automation & AI.

Turning the Curve

AS a result of the Planning Exercise the following themes have been identified:

- Skilled Labour Supply
- Economic Inactivity
- Disability
- Unemployment

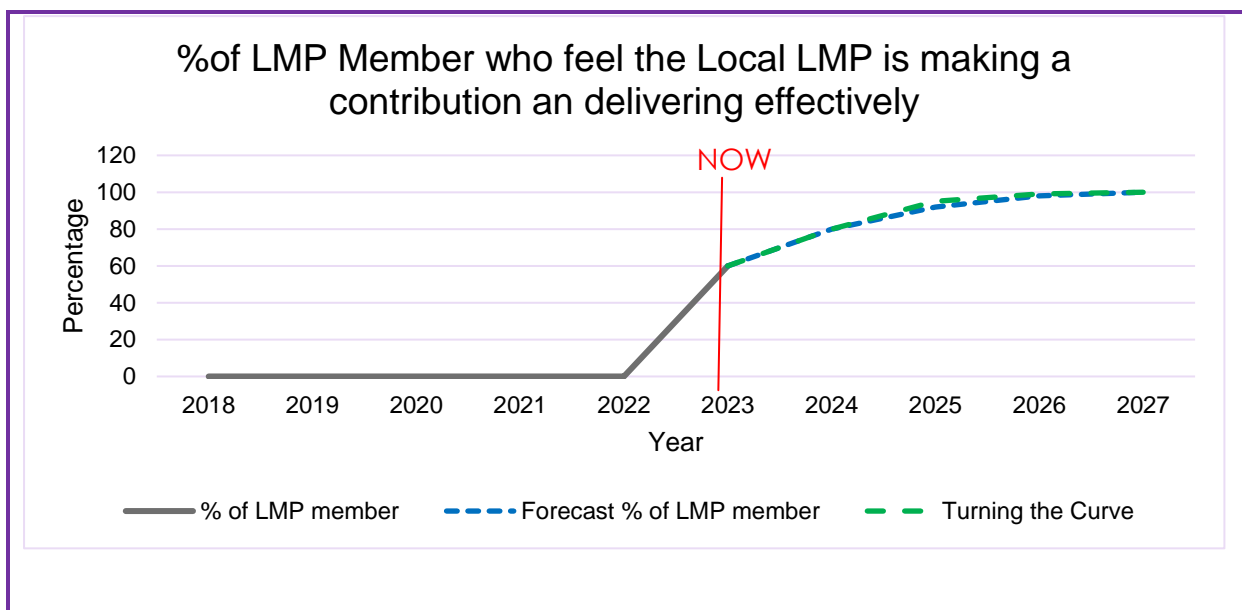
A Turning the Curve exercise was completed to consider LMP Action Plan priority themes, projects and programmes of work in relation to the desired outcomes.

To Note: the term 'NOW' on the Turning the Curve exercises refers to the assessment of the most recently available data at the time of the review.

Turning the Curve: SP1: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area

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

Rationale: Following the delivery of interventions and an increase in output activity, the percentage of LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively rose to 60% in 2023. With activity levels to continue increasing in 2024, it is forecast that this will increase to 80% in 2024.



Turning the Curve: SP2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally

Areas of Focus: Skilled Labour Supply, Economic Inactivity, Disability

Skilled Labour Supply

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

Rationale: The percentage of those within Fermanagh and Omagh achieving a qualification Level 4 or below accounts for 65% of the working age population with 14.6% of the working age population having no qualifications at all.²⁷

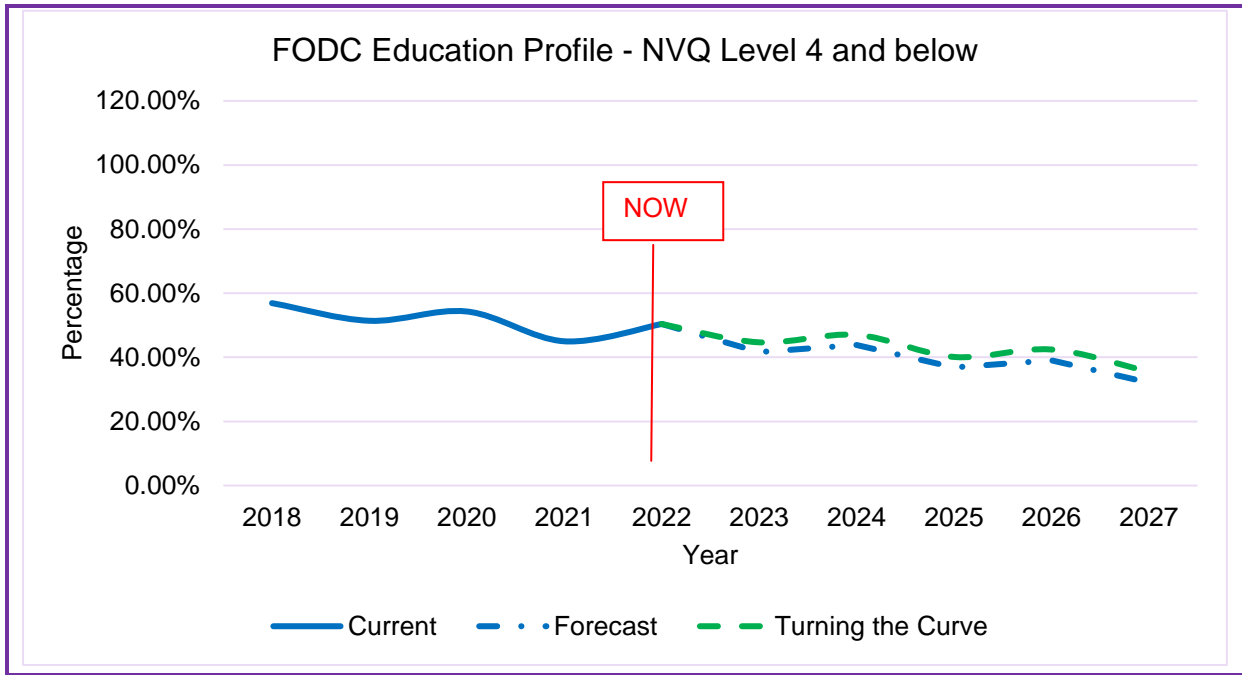
A positive change to note was the percentage increase of those who achieved a qualification Level 4 or below (50.4%) which increased by 5.4% between 2021 and 2022.

Despite this improvement, reported vacancies to the Department for Communities and responses from Business survey would indicate there is still ongoing shortage of suitable skilled staff which could be explained by the challenges in aligning skills development with industry demands.

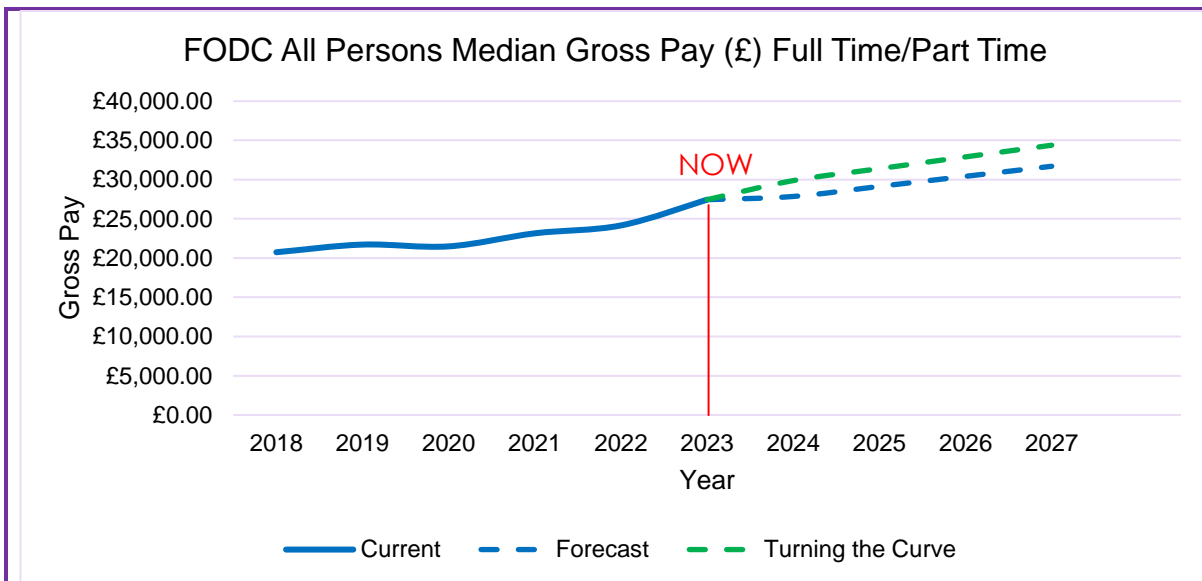
Further factors may include delayed changes in the educational landscape or access to educational opportunities following the Covid-19 pandemic which may have temporarily impacted individuals' ability to pursue or complete higher education. Furthermore, a shift in employment patterns or the uncertain economic conditions during this period may have influenced decisions regarding further education or training.

The trend for 2023-2027 anticipates a gradual decline in the percentage of individuals with qualifications below NVQ Level 4, however there is continued need for investment in skills development in order to align with current vacancies and future industry demands. Collaborative interventions will contribute to a positive outlook for higher educational attainment levels and improved employment prospects.

²⁷ Labour Force Survey Tables for Local Government Districts 2009-2022



FODC % Working Age: Achieved Below NVQ Level 4 Source: NISRA, Labour Force Survey. 2023



All Persons Gross Pay (£) Full Time Part Time Source: NISRA

What can be done?

- Transport Academy
- Sectoral Employment Academies
- Classroom Assistant Training Academy
- Gamified Essential Skills Learning Programme

How do we measure success?

- Reduction in the % working age with low qualifications.
- # increase in All Person Median Gross Pay (£) Full Time/Part Time.

Economic Inactivity

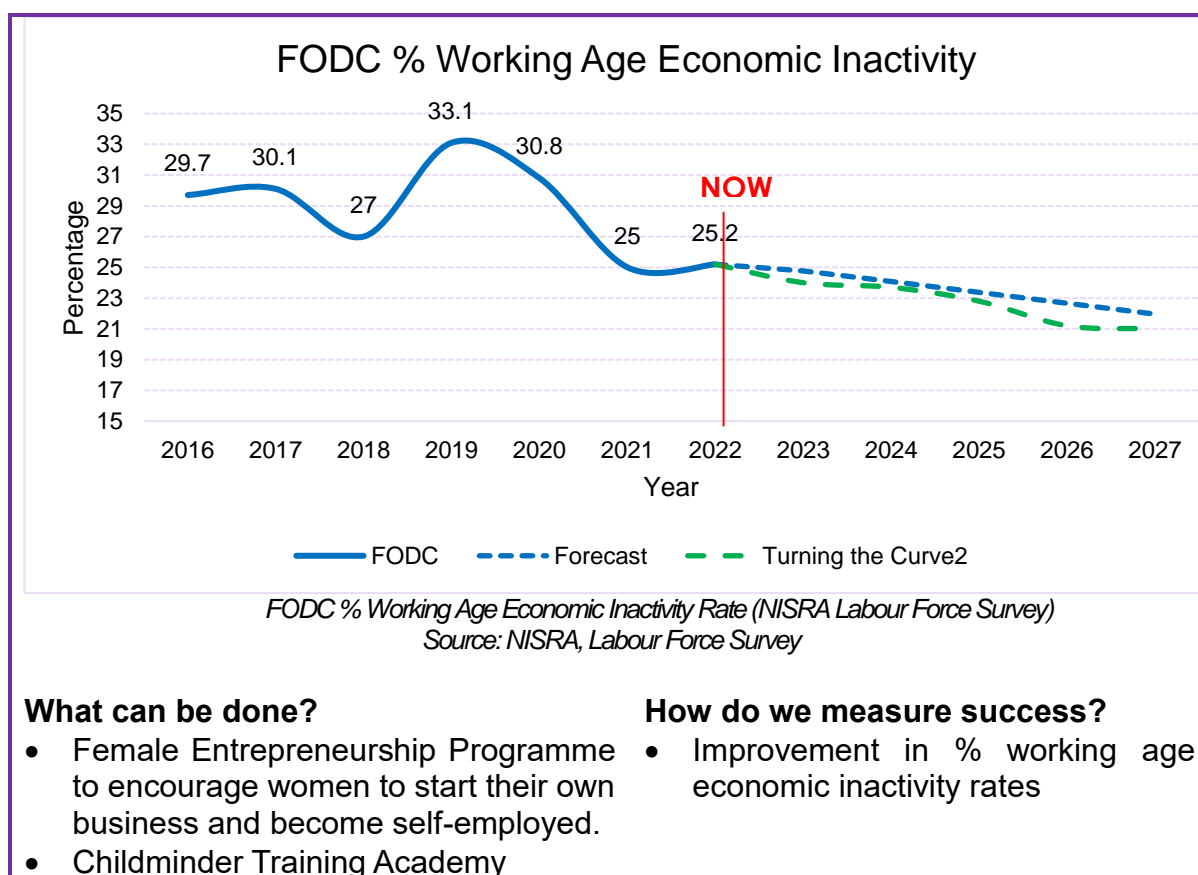
Indicator: % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate

Rationale: While economic inactivity in Fermanagh & Omagh has been on a decreasing trend, there was a slight increase from 25.0% in 2021 to 25.2% in 2022 which can be understood in the context of the broader labour market dynamics in the Fermanagh & Omagh area. For example, despite progress, challenges exist due to a large percentage of the economically inactive population looking after the family home because they do not have access to affordable skilled childcare or they are caring for an elderly family member due to the shortage of spaces in care homes or carers available to come to the family home.

This is especially prevalent in rural areas where transport links are limited. Notably, over 20% of areas within the district fall within the 10% most deprived in Northern Ireland concerning access to services.

Although not exclusively, the caring role is often undertaken by the female of the house as can be reflected from the Fermanagh and Omagh economically inactive gender gap of 8.7%.

Addressing these challenges is vital for sustaining Fermanagh & Omagh's competitiveness and economic growth as the labour market dynamics and socio-economic profile of Fermanagh & Omagh indicates a gradual decline in economic inactivity should such efforts be implemented.

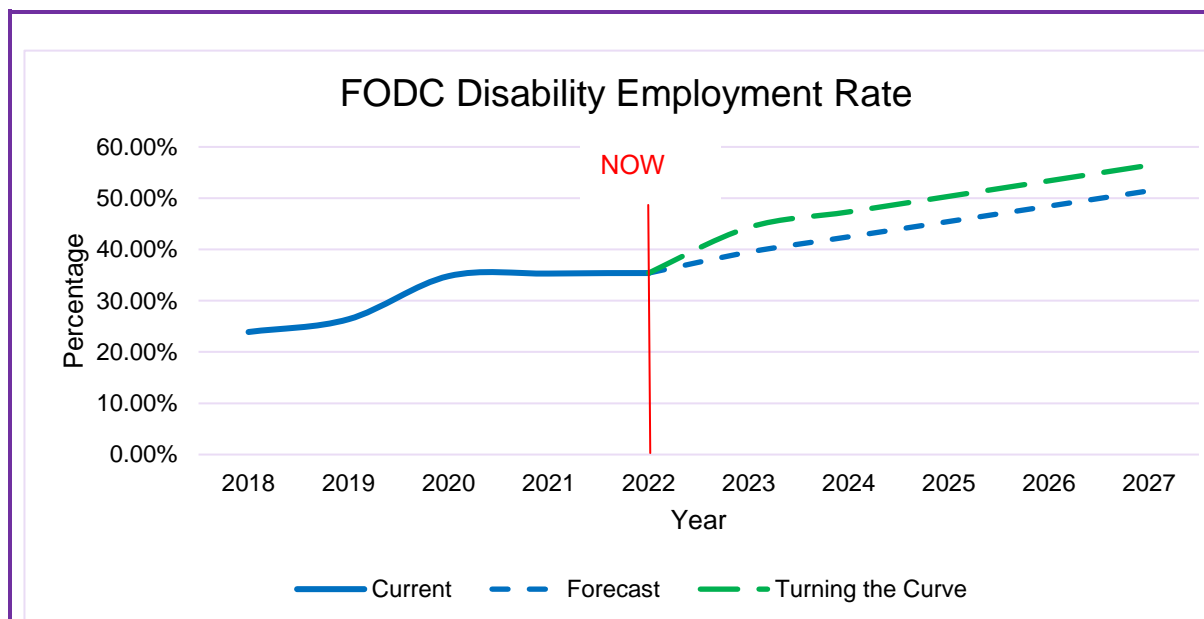


Disability

Indicator: % Employment rate of people with disabilities

Rationale: The % employment rate of people with disabilities has shown fluctuations in recent years, with notable increases observed in 2017, 2020, and 2021. Despite some variability there is a general positive trend suggesting gradual improvement in employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities over time. Factors contributing to this trend include the growing recognition of the value and benefits of workplace diversity and inclusion, leading to more inclusive hiring practices by employers, as well as increasing efforts to promote accessibility. Furthermore, Government initiatives and policies aimed at promoting the employment of people with disabilities has and will continue to play a role in driving these increases.

However, it is essential to address the current disability employment gap in Fermanagh and Omagh where only 35.4% of disabled individuals are employed compared to 86.7% of non-disabled individuals (Figure 16). This shows that despite improvements, disabled individuals continue to face barriers to workforce participation. Thus, looking ahead, continued advocacy, education and support for both employers and individuals with disabilities will be key to further enhancing employment opportunities and leading to a sustained increased in the percentage employment rate of people with disabilities in the coming years.



% 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 inclusion employment programme.

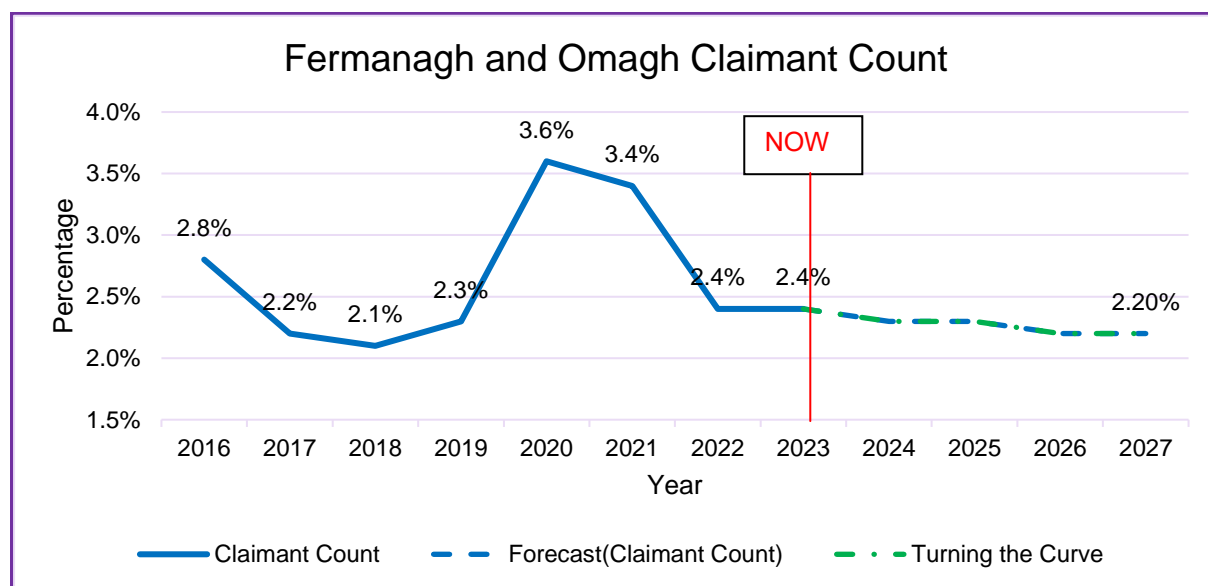
How do we measure success?

- Improvement in % employment rate of people with disabilities.

Unemployment

Indicator: % Claimant Count

Rationale: The percentage of claimant count has been consistently low in the Fermanagh and Omagh area, since the outbreak of Covid 19. Forecasts show that the rate will return to the same level as 2017 (2.2%) in 2027. Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Partnership will observe the claimant count however will not consider it as a priority theme at this stage.

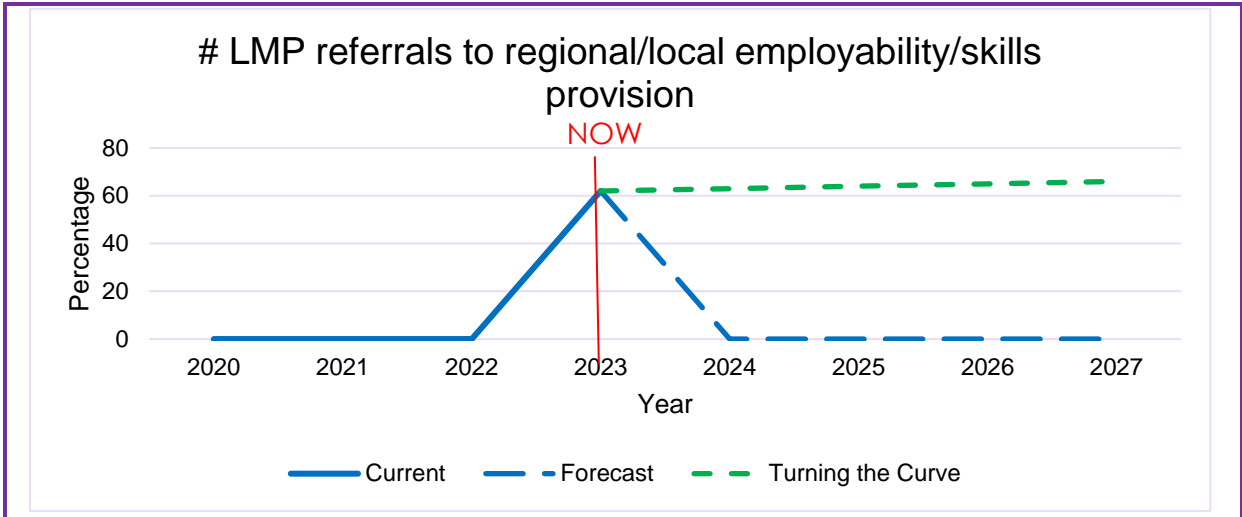


Turning the Curve: SP3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally.

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

Rationale: The number of apprentices in Fermanagh and Omagh has shown consistent growth since 2014, with a notable increase observed between 2020 and 2021. To capitalise on this trend and tackle the issue of employer vacancies in the area, the FO LMP will initiate a pilot programme for online apprenticeships.

Fermanagh and Omagh LMP will continue to support local Jobs Fairs and work in partnership with other employability and skills providers to signpost participants to suitable programmes.



<p>What can be done?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Mini Job Fairs and outreach employment events • Apprenticeship Online Brokerage Service 	<p>How do we measure success?</p> <p># LMP referrals to regional/local employability/skills provision</p>
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Fermanagh and Omagh Labour Market Action Plan – 2024/2025

Based on the completion of the Strategic Assessment, the following Action Plan for 2024/2025 has been developed. This Action Plan has been developed with alignment to the following Strategic Priorities:

- **Strategic Priority 1:** To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area
- **Strategic Priority 2:** To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally
- **Strategic Priority 3:** To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally

Baseline Information

Strategic Priorities	Indicators to which Local LMP makes a contribution	2023/24 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 % LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP)	% of LMP members who feel the local LMP is making a positive contribution and delivering effectively (LMP) <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">2021</td> <td style="width: 70%;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> </table>	2021	0%	2022	0%	2023	60%				
2021	0%											
2022	0%											
2023	60%											
Strategic Priority 2 To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally	Theme: Economic Inactivity % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NISRA - Labour Force Survey)	FODC % Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (Labour Force Survey) <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">2018</td> <td style="width: 70%;">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>25.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>25.2%</td> </tr> </table>	2018	27.0%	2019	33.1%	2020	30.8%	2021	25.1%	2022	25.2%
	2018	27.0%										
2019	33.1%											
2020	30.8%											
2021	25.1%											
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Theme: Disability % employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – Labour Force Survey)		FODC's % employment rate of people with disabilities (NISRA – Labour Force Survey) <table border="1" style="width: 100%; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">2018</td> <td style="width: 70%;">23.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>26.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>34.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021</td> <td>35.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022</td> <td>35.4%</td> </tr> </table>	2018	23.9%	2019	26.4%	2020	34.8%	2021	35.3%	2022	35.4%
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2019	26.4%											
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2022	35.4%											

	<p>Theme: Skilled Labour Supply</p> <p>% Working Age: Achieved Below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA)</p> <p># All Persons Median Gross Wage (NISRA)</p>	<p>FODC % Working Age: Achieved Below RFQ Level 4 (NISRA)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>2018</td><td>56.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>51.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>55.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>45.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>2022</td><td>50.4%</td></tr> </table> <p>FODC # All Persons Median Gross Wage (£) Full Time/Part Time (NISRA - ASHE)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>2018</td><td>£20,743</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>£21,721</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>£21,493</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>£23,155</td></tr> <tr><td>2022</td><td>£24,161</td></tr> <tr><td>2023</td><td>£27,446</td></tr> </table>	2018	56.9%	2019	51.4%	2020	55.0%	2021	45.0%	2022	50.4%	2018	£20,743	2019	£21,721	2020	£21,493	2021	£23,155	2022	£24,161	2023	£27,446
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2019	2.3%																							
2020	3.6%																							
2021	3.4%																							
2022	2.4%																							
2023	2.4%																							
<p>Strategic Priority 3</p> <p>To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally</p>	<p>Theme: Referrals to relevant existing projects/initiatives</p> <p># LMP referrals to existing regional/local employability/skills provision (LMP)</p>	<p># LMP referrals to existing regional/local employability/skills provision (LMP)</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>2018</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2019</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2020</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2021</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2022</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr><td>2023</td><td>60</td></tr> </table>	2018	0	2019	0	2020	0	2021	0	2022	0	2023	60										
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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	Start Date	End Date	Performance Measures
LMP Delivery	<p>SP1.1 LMP Delivery and Development</p> <p>Effective delivery of the LMP through the Members, appropriate structures, and mechanisms</p>	<p>Bi-monthly LMP meetings scheduled with clear Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Undertake an annual survey of the LMP members.</p>	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 meetings of LMP <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60/84 (71%) attendance of LMP members at meetings <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/14 (79%) of LMP members who feel that they are contributing to the delivery of the LMP. • 11/14 (79%) of LMP members who think that the LMP is making a positive difference.

<p>SP1.2 Action Plan 2025/26</p>	<p>Develop an Action Plan for 2025/2026</p>	<p>01/10/2024</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Action Plan drafted to address identified local needs and approved by Regional LMP <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/14 (79%) Members who feel that their views have been taken into account with regard to the Action Plan <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/14 (79%) of LMP members reporting increased awareness of local employability and labour market issues
<p>SP1.3 Capacity Building</p>	<p>Proactively identify opportunities to increase collaboration with LMP members (e.g. between educational organisations & industry representatives to address specific industry needs)</p> <p>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</p>	<p>01/04/2024</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>	<p>What did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three information/training session provided for LMP members. <p>How well did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/14 (79%) of LMP members who felt supported by the LMP in their role. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/14 (79%) of LMP members reporting improved understanding of their roles.

	<p>SP1.4 Pilot Sectoral Focused Employment Pathway Cluster</p> <p>Pilot initiative aimed at creating sector-specific clusters to address employment needs.</p> <p>In this pilot, a manufacturing cluster will be formed to identify roles in demand, pinpoint key skills gaps, determine training needs and share opportunities within the sector.</p> <p>The primary goal of this initiative is to promote opportunities within key sectors and develop clear and structured career pathways so that individuals can</p>	<p>This programme will include tailored career pathways for each priority sector, outlining career opportunities.</p> <p>The career pathways will be developed with insight from the established Cluster Group within each priority sector on their skills development needs, recruitment challenges & opportunities for collaboration on intervention design.</p> <p>Cluster groups will support the mapping necessary qualifications and skills required for entry level positions, recruitment across different stages of the pathway (e.g. return to work, economically inactive, disabled etc.) and advancement within each sector.</p>	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One working group established. • 4 x Cluster Group meetings <p>How well did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/24 (50%) attendance of working group members at working group meetings <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/6 (50%) of working group members who feel they are contributing to the delivery of the LMP.
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	acquire the necessary skills and qualifications to secure employment.				
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Strategic Priority 2: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally

Indicators	% Working Age Economic Inactivity Rate (NISRA - Labour Force Survey), % Employment Rate of people with Disabilities (NISRA Labour Force Survey), % Working Age: Achieved Below NVQ Level 4 (NISRA), # All Persons Gross Median Wage Full Time/Part Time (NISRA- ASHE)
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Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Performance Measures
Economic Inactivity	<p>SP2.1 Female Entrepreneur Programme</p> <p>Tailored support targeted at females who are economically inactive.</p> <p>Improve female economic activity by encouraging economically inactive</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> <p>Class based learning (including four days group training and presentations</p>	01/03/2024	31/12/2024	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 participants enrolled onto Female Entrepreneur Programme <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12/15 (80%) of participants enrolled who complete the Female Entrepreneur Programme 9/12 (75%) of completers reported satisfaction with the Female Entrepreneur Programme <p>Is anyone better off?</p>

	<p>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 address individual needs and barriers, enabling participants to commence test trading</p> <p>Once established participants will be signposted to the Go Succeed Growth programme where they can avail of additional support for growth.</p>	<p>from four female start up role models)</p> <p>One to one mentoring, estimate 4 days per participant (28 hours in total)</p> <p>£1,500 support with start-up costs relevant to the business idea as approved by the course tutor in compliance with FO LMP terms to be specified in the design of the tender specification for this project (e.g., IT or other necessary equipment).</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/12 (75%) of completers reporting they have commenced self-employment • 6/9 (66%) of completers still in self-employment 6 months after finishing participation
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	<p>SP2.2 Childminder Training Academy</p> <p>The aim of the academy is to engage the economy inactive or unemployed residents to move into employment by becoming a registered childminder or an Approved Home Childcare providers.</p> <p>This programme will offer comprehensive training, mentoring and support to ensure participants are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to become successful childminders.</p>	<p>This programme is to support 12 participants.</p> <p>Marketing and outreach strategies will be implemented to attract potential participants. The structured training curriculum will cover essential topics (child protection, health & hygiene, and paediatric first aid) and regulatory requirements for those progressing to become registered childminders/ approved home childcare providers. Through structured training, individualised mentoring, and ongoing support, participants will be equipped to enter the childcare workforce with confidence.</p>	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 participants enrolled onto the Registered Childminding Training Academy <p>How well did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8/12 (67%) of participants enrolled in the Registered Childminder Training Academy complete the programme. 6/8 (75%) completers reported satisfaction with the Childminder Academy. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6/8 (75%) gained a qualification as a result of participation on the project. 4/6 (67%) participants on Childminding Training Academy gained employment. 3/4 (75%) of completers still in employment 6 months after finishing participation.
Disability	SP2.3	Six month Employer-led Disability Inclusion programme to increase the	01/07/2024	31/03/2025	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 participants enrolled onto the programme. 20 employers participating on the programme

	<p>Employer-Led Disability Inclusion Programme</p> <p>Health and Disability is the single largest driver of economic inactivity.</p> <p>Result from the business survey highlighted that almost half (45%) of all respondents have not previously engaged with any organisation or programme that seeks to support employers with apprenticeships or placements for unqualified, unemployed or disabled workers.</p> <p>A small number of respondents (10%) have engaged with organisations or programmes that have supported those with</p>	<p>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> <p>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.</p> <p>Work with employers to identify potential work opportunities for prospective participants</p> <p>Encourage employers to be more innovative in how job roles can be designed to be more assessable for participants with a</p>			<p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16/20 (80%) of participants enrolled who completed the programme • 15/20 (75%) of employers reported satisfaction with the project. • 12/16 (75%) of completers reported satisfaction with the project. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/16 (75%) of completers gaining new employment • 12/16 (75%) who completed some aspect of the programme reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the project. • 8/12 (67%) of completers still in employment 6 months after finishing participation • 15/20 (75%) of employers participating reported the programme would assist in filling vacancies.
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	<p>disabilities gain employment</p> <p>15% of respondents were interested in sourcing new employees through a disability support programme.</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>disability/long term health condition</p> <p>Work with employers to consider and support in the development of innovative approaches to the traditional recruitment and selection processes.</p> <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>			
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<p>Skilled Labour Supply</p>	<p>SP2.4 Transport Academy</p> <p>To fulfil the shortage of HGV and Coach Drivers within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area.</p> <p>Many logistic companies are experiencing a shortage of staff and are continually recruiting.</p> <p>In 2023, Bus and Coach NI identified 27 private coach companies in the F&O area with combing fleet of 100 vehicles. Results from a survey undertaken by Bus and Coach NI, identified vacancy levels around 24%. This is in addition to the shortages Translink and the</p>	<p>HGV/Coach Driving academy targeting those who are unemployed or under-employed and those who want to skill up.</p> <p>25 participants for HGV academy</p> <p>20 participants for Coach Driving academy</p> <p>Provide mentoring support and subsistence support (travel/expenses) to participants</p>	<p>01/04/2024</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 participants enrolled onto Transport Academy <p>How well did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36/45 (80%) of participants enrolled who completed the project 28/36 (78%) of completers reported satisfaction with the LMP project <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28/36 (78%) of completers who moved into higher paid employment 28/36 (78%) completers who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the programme
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	<p>Education Authority are experiencing.</p> <p>A Transport Academy was delivered as part of the 2023/2024 Action Plan and was highly successful, attracting over 150 applications to participate. With a waiting list for approved participants, there is an identified demand for further delivery of this intervention.</p>				
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	<p>2.5 Sectoral Employment Academies</p> <p>Employment programmes designed to directly address the reskilling needs in areas where demand surpasses available skills.</p> <p>The Local Monitor of Employability and Skills Demand report undertaken in 2023 identified 12 skills which would remain prominent over the next three years, three of which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General / Plant Operatives, • Basic ICT skills, • Housekeepers & chefs. <p>Programmes to be tailored to provide targeted interventions</p>	<p>Accredited courses to support those who are unemployed, under-employed, economically in active wanting to reskill/skill up.</p> <p>Participants endeavour to gain employment at a rate equal to or above the current living wage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism & Hospitality • Digital Skills • General/Plant operatives <p>Each participant will benefit from personalised one-to-one mentoring support, which will include, the creation of individualised employability development plans, refining CV writing skills, and participating in simulated interview sessions.</p> <p>Engagement with local employers especially SME's to support them fill</p>	01/04/2024	31/03/2025	<p>What did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sector specific academies • 50 participants enrolled on the programme <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40/50 (80%) of participants enrolled who completed the project • 30/40 (75%) of completers reported satisfaction with the project <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22/30 (73%) of completers who moved into higher paid employment. • 22/30 (73%) of completers who reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the project. • 22/30 (73%) participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the programme
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	<p>to equip individuals with the necessary skills required by industries facing a shortage of qualified professionals.</p> <p>Employment academies have been identified based on vacancies highlighted by local employers.</p>	<p>vacancies with a skilled workforce.</p>			
	<p>SP2.6 Classroom Assistant Level 3 Upskilling Academy</p> <p>The aim of the academy is to support those who are unemployed, economically inactive underemployed or would like to skill up, achieve a Diploma in Classroom Assistant/Support Teaching & Learning qualification,</p>	<p>Classroom Assistant Qualification & Placement</p> <p>50 Participants will work towards an NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Supporting Teaching and Learning/Classroom Assistant</p> <p>24 Sessions & 6-9 Month's Placement (12+ hours per week) in PEAGS funded preschool, primary 1-7 or secondary school</p>	<p>01/04/2024</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 participants enrolled onto the programme <p>How well did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40/50 (80%) of participants enrolled complete the programme. • 30/40 (75%) participants reported satisfaction with the programme. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32/40 (80%) gained a qualification as a result of participation in the academy. • 26/40 (65%) of completers who moved into higher paid employment.

	<p>increasing their opportunities to apply for permanent, higher paid positions.</p> <p>Priority will be given to those currently working on temporary classroom assistant contracts or have a level 1/2, (or similar) classroom assistant qualification.</p> <p>Only those who have a Level 3 Classroom Assistant qualification can be offered a permanent position within the education system.</p> <p>Belfast LMP offered a Level 3 classroom assistant course during 2023/24 and over 30 applications were received from residents in Fermanagh and Omagh however as</p>	<p>Access to available placements</p> <p>Support in securing placement</p>			
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	<p>they were outside the LMP area, they were ineligible.</p> <p>The REAP programme (joint SPF programme between SWC and Council) offer qualifications to achieve a Level 1 classroom assistant however there are limited pathways available to progress to achieving a Level 3 qualification.</p>				
	<p>SP2.7.1 Gamified Numeracy Programme</p> <p>Support for those unemployed, economically inactive or at risk of redundancy through a project of activities designed to address and remove barriers to help move them closer</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 and/or those of working age to acquire basic qualifications in Maths.</p>	01/07/2024	31/03/2025	<p>What did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x gamified essential skills course in numeracy • 10 participants enrolled onto programme <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7/10 (70%) of participants enrolled who completed the project • 5/7 (71%) of completers reported satisfaction with the LMP project <p>Is anyone better off?</p>

	<p>to the labour market /improve employability.</p> <p>Statistics show that nearly 15% of FODC's working age population have no qualifications.</p> <p>The Gamified Essential Skills Programme supports those who previously may not have had a good experience at school or those with neurodivergent conditions, to gain a qualification in numeracy in a environment and a pace tailored to their specific needs.</p>	<p>Using software previously developed from delivery of this programme in 2022/23 and 2023/24 deliver a further programme to 10 participants follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 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> <p>Barrier payment to assist with any barriers to participation.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5/7 (71%) of completers gained a qualification as a result of participation on the programme • 5/7 (71%) of completers reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the project
	<p>SP2.7.2 Gamified Literacy Programme</p> <p>Support for those unemployed, economically inactive or at risk of</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</p>	01/07/2024	31/03/2025	<p>What did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x gamified essential skills course in literacy • 10 participants enrolled onto programme <p>How well did we do it?</p>

	<p>redundancy 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 that nearly 15% of FODC's working age population have no qualifications.</p> <p>The Gamified Essential Skills Programme supports those who previously may not have had a good experience at school or those with neurodivergent conditions, to gain a qualification in literacy in a environment and a pace tailored to their specific needs.</p>	<p>training in a format that can attract and engage young unemployed people and/or those of working age to acquire basic qualifications in Literacy.</p> <p>Using software previously developed from delivery of this programme in 2022/23 and 2023/24 deliver a further programme to 10 participants follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 students in basic literacy. <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> <p>Barrier payment to assist with any barriers to participation.</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7/10 (70%) of participants enrolled who completed the project • 5/7 (71%) of participants who completed reported satisfaction with the LMP project <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5/7 (71%) of participants who gained a qualification as a result of participation on the programme • 5/7 (71%) of participants reported feeling more confident regarding their employability as a result of participation on the project
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Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of existing employability or skills provision available either regionally or locally

Indicators	# LMP Referrals to Regional/local Employability/skills provision (LMP)
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Theme	Title of Programme/Project, Aims & Description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Performance Measures
Increased Awareness	<p>SP3.1 Online Apprenticeship Brokerage Service</p> <p>FO LMP recognise the significant benefit the Apprenticeship NI programme has been to the FODC area's employers,</p> <p>The FO LMP wish to invest in a programme that further drives the success of Apprenticeships in the area, by providing SME 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</p>	<p>Deliver a facilitated online apprenticeship brokerage service that works with 25 local SME employers to identify and publicise 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>Approximate cost for an employer to avail of an apprenticeship</p>	01/07/2024	31/03/2025	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 participants enrolled • 25 employers participating <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22/25 (88%) of participants rated the programme as helpful for finding work/training opportunities. • 20/25 (80%) of employers reporting satisfaction with the programme <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 referrals to regional employability programmes. • 18/22 (82%) of employers participating reported the event would assist in filling vacancies

	<p>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>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>Participants and employers will then be signposted to the various apprenticeship delivery partners to register and complete the apprenticeship.</p>			
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	<p>SP3.2</p> <p>Employability Events</p> <p>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</p>	<p>In partnership with JBO support up to 2 Job Fairs in the FODC area.</p> <p>Support JBO's undertake outreach employment events in community venues.</p>	<p>01/09/2024</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 attendees at job fairs • 45 employers at job fairs • 9 employability and skills providers at job fairs <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53/75 (71%) of attendees rated the event as helpful for finding work. • 53/75 (71%) attendees reporting satisfaction with the event • 27/45 (60%) of employers reporting satisfaction with the event <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38/75 (51%) of attendees applied for at least one job as a result of the event. • 27/45 (60%) of employers participating reported the event would assist in filling vacancies
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	<p>SP3.3</p> <p>Marketing & Promotion</p> <p>Feedback from the employers survey refers to the lack of awareness of FO LMP and the initiatives offered with 79% stating they not heard of the FO LMP and a strong majority of respondents (82%) stated that their lack of awareness of LMP programmes or support prevented them from engaging before.</p> <p>Marketing and promotional activities will enhance awareness and utilisation of existing employability and skills provision opportunities available in FO, promoting FO as an attractive area to work in.</p>	<p>Key activities will centre around marketing and promotion including good news stories, testimonials, business highlights, successful programme or participation highlights, The aim is to develop compelling messaging and marketing strategies to effectively promote the work of FO LMP, FO as an attractive area to work in, and to communicate the employability and skills development opportunities in the area.</p>	<p>01/04/2024</p>	<p>31/03/2025</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 programme participants invited to share their experience of participating on a FO LMP programme • 30 employers invited to share their experience of participating on a FO LMP programme <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25/50 (50%) participants sharing their experiences on social media platforms, press and FO LMP webpage. • 15/30 (50%) employers sharing their experiences on social media platforms, press and FO LMP webpage. <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20/25 (80%) of participants reporting they have increased their awareness of the work of the LMP / Employability NI programmes. • 10/15 (67%) employers reporting the have increased their awareness of the work of the LMP / Employability NI programmes.
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