



UK Shared Prosperity Fund Call for Projects

E33: supporting people aged 25 and over, including those who are economically inactive, to progress towards and into sustained employment Scope of Call

The scope of this call focuses on supporting people, including those who are economically inactive, to progress towards and into sustained employment. We are looking for projects that will support people furthest from the labour market to overcome barriers to work by providing cohesive, locally tailored support including access to basic skills.

Projects should facilitate the join-up of mainstream provision and local services within an area for participants, using one-to-one keyworker support. This includes intensive and wrap-around one-to-one support to move people closer towards mainstream provision and employment and essential skills (including numeracy, literacy, ESOL and digital).

A range of entry routes should be available for participants to enter the programme; this could include direct identification by delivery partners as well as referral from relevant local organisations such as the voluntary and community sector, local authorities, social prescribers and health and care providers.

The programme should provide participant-led support delivered through a mentor/key worker model and individualised support plan. Projects should take a holistic approach to deliver personalised support to enable participants to overcome their individual barriers to employment, raise their aspirations, build self-confidence, engage in training/education, and improve their quality of life. Support and courses should cover a broad range of topics from general life skills to more employment specific training. This could include support with housing, mental and physical health, benefits, job applications, English, etc.

The length and level of support offered should be personalised, alongside the learning style (this could cover peer support, group/class based, one to one, and specialised support).

The support could also be extended to cover an individual's initial period in employment to help the participant to remain in employment.

The project should take a partnership approach to delivery with at least 80% of the funding to be allocated to local voluntary and community sector organisations. It would be particularly beneficial if these partners are embedded in deprived wards of the county to ensure that those most in need of support are engaged.

To maximise outcomes and avoid duplication applicants should collaborate with a range of local partners to consider the provision already available locally as well as through the Jobcentre Plus/Department for Work and Pensions network.

This provision can include projects promoting the importance of work to help people to live healthier and more independent lives, alongside building future financial resilience and wellbeing.

Beyond that, this intervention will also contribute to building community cohesion and facilitate greater shared civil pride, leading to better integration for those benefitting from ESOL support.

We are particularly interested in projects delivering activity in the market towns of Leominster, Bromyard, Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye and Kington and the Golden Valley as well as Hereford city.

Funding must be used to support and deliver activity across Herefordshire to Herefordshire residents only.

Financial Value available: up to £150,000.00

How much you can apply for?

You can apply for revenue funding only, to fund 100% of the eligible costs of delivering provision (noting the match funding section)

Funding is for the 2025/2026 financial year.

You can apply for a:

- Minimum grant of £15,000 maximum grant £150,000

If applying for more than one project intervention you will need to **complete a separate application for each one**.

Outputs and Outcomes

Outputs - Applications in respect of Intervention E33 will be considered based on their ability to deliver the following Outputs:

- Minimum number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services **100** (numerical value)
- Minimum number of people supported to access basic skills courses **30** (numerical value)
- Minimum number of people receiving support to gain employment **60** (numerical value)

Outcomes - Projects will also be monitored on the Outcomes they deliver in respect of each relevant Intervention. Applications in respect of Intervention E33 will be considered based on their ability to deliver the following Outcomes:

- Minimum number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF **75** (numerical value)
- Minimum number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support **20** (numerical value)
- Minimum number of people with Basic Skills following support **20** (numerical value)
- Minimum Number of people in education/training following support **20** (numerical value)

Applicants applying for the full amount would be expected to meet these targets as a minimum. Where an applicant is applying for a share of the funding, we expect outputs and outcomes to be delivered in proportion to the share applied for.

An up-to-date list of Outputs and Outcomes and the indicator definition and unit of measurement that corresponds to each Output and Outcome can be found here: [UKSPF Indicators](#)
Government may update, amend or add to this additional guidance and all service providers must ensure that they are using the most up to date versions of all documents which will be available on the UKSPF government website. *Subject to additional or amended guidance from the Government during the contract term, the Council will vary the contract accordingly to those changes.*

UKSPF in Herefordshire Background

This project is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. In line with current Government requirements UKSPF funding must be fully expended, and projects delivered by 31 March 2025. The Council does not have the facility to support projects that go beyond this deadline.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.

Applicants should refer to UKSPF guidance [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note - GOV.UK](#) Investment priority = People and skills.

This investment priority has two primary elements, employment support for economically inactive people (benefit and non-benefit claimants) and funding skills provision to provide people with the skills needed to progress in life and work, including supporting local areas to fund local skills needs.

Activities supported by UKSPF will need to consider updated local, regional and national policies and priorities. These include but are not limited to the [‘Get Britain Working’ white paper](#) and Connect to Work programme. Our planned UKSPF investment aligns to national and our established strategic frameworks including the [About Herefordshire Council – Herefordshire Council Big Economic Plan](#) and [Herefordshire Cultural Strategy 2019-2029](#) and partners may apply for funding to support projects and programmes that align to the objectives of the fund.

Herefordshire is one of the most sparsely populated areas of the UK, with an ageing population and connectivity challenges characteristic of rural areas. The overall population of Herefordshire has increased by 2% over the past 10 years compared to 6.6% in England, and between 5.2% and 6.4% in neighbouring areas. This increase has been primarily amongst the over 65 population, with the working age population declining by 4.1% (ONS Census, 2021).

A social mobility ‘cold spot’ Herefordshire has below average economic inactivity rates. However, headline statistics mask hidden inequalities across the county. Analysis of IMD data (2019) indicates that 16 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Herefordshire are amongst the 25% most deprived in England in terms of adult skills and of these, five are within the 10% most deprived. Furthermore, amongst the economically inactive, the county has a higher proportion of people who are suffering from long term ill-health (APS, 2021).

A high proportion of employment is in low skilled and low wage sectors which limits the opportunities for career progression and makes residents more vulnerable to rising costs and in-work poverty. Intervention is therefore required to increase skills and qualification levels where this supports social mobility and removes barriers to employment, education and training, particularly amongst disadvantaged communities and those furthest from the labour market.

Partnership working

Organisations are actively encouraged to work in partnership, rather than working in isolation and not engaging other local organisations or stakeholders.

Capacity, capabilities, and deliverability

Priority for support will be given to high quality projects led by and / or delivered by local organisations which can be delivered on time, to budget and which will achieve strong and sustainable outcomes for Herefordshire. Where appropriate, organisations and partnerships must therefore be able to demonstrate a solid track record of delivery and achievement of outputs and

outcomes, with robust governance and project management systems in place. Applicants must demonstrate the following in their submissions:

- Robust approach to information, advice and guidance for every participant
- Strong understanding of existing support already available – within Herefordshire - to ensure appropriate and responsive signposting to alternative skills provision and to maximise upskilling, employment opportunities and career progression.

Excellent knowledge of learning and skills programmes delivered locally by higher and further education institutions, training providers, employers, Public Health, social prescribing delivery organisations, and the VCSE sector

Call Specific Information

Project(s) must have in place a 'Participant File' which provides a single point of reference for each Participant containing all evidence relating to the Participant's eligibility, activities on the project and any Outputs and Outcomes obtained, including:

- (a) An initial assessment of the Participant's eligibility to participate on the Project and the suitability of the Project to meet their needs;
- (b) All supporting evidence for the data the successful provider(s) reports to the Council in the 'Participant Data Form' (PDF) and for all other data reported to the Council; and
- (c) Records of learning, activities delivered and engagement, with evidence that the activity is taking or has taken place; and
- (d) All records and evidence of achievement of Outputs and Outcomes; and
- (e) Records of the Participant's attendance and/or participation in Project activities.

A Participant is someone who will take part in and directly benefit from the activities offered by the Project. Before agreeing to support a Participant, the Successful Provider (s) and Delivery Partners should undertake some form of initial or early assessment of the individual's circumstances to identify: the personal circumstances of the Participant identifying how the Project activities will be suitable and effective in addressing their needs; the specific barriers or challenges they face (relevant to the Project objectives);

Participants that are enrolled must reside in Herefordshire. Evidence of the Participant's full address must be obtained and retained as part of the Participant's record to establish that the Participant qualifies for support from the programme.

Completing eligibility checks. The successful provider(s) is responsible for checking that the evidence obtained provides sufficient proof to verify that a Participant is eligible to participate in the Project and is compliant with UKSPF requirements.

To be eligible for support proof must be obtained to evidence that a Participant: is legally resident in the UK; and is legally allowed to take paid employment.

Confirmation of the Participant's full name and contact details, post code, their start date on the Project, their gender, ethnic origin, disabled status, highest prior educational attainment, Basic Skills requirements, housing/homelessness and household status, and whether the Participant is an offender.

Confirmation, signed by the Participant, of their explicit consent to the collection and processing of data, including personal data, by Herefordshire Council and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the purposes of reporting upon, monitoring, auditing and evaluating the Project.

Data transfer by the Successful Project(s) to Herefordshire Council and to any assigned Project evaluator or auditor as required in the Funding Agreement, to assist with the final Project evaluation and/or for Herefordshire Council monitoring and audit purposes; and

(f) data transfer to MHCLG and MHCLG's appointed evaluator; and

(b) sharing by Herefordshire Council of anonymised data .

The project may provide support to Participants, for example in the form of travel expenses, childcare costs or training allowances. The successful provider(s) is required to keep records of funds spent on Participant support to verify expenditure. The following list includes examples of Participant costs and details the types of records that will be required for audit purposes. Please note this list is for guidance only and is not exhaustive:

(g) For Travel expenses, copies/photocopies of tickets, petrol receipts and evidence of travel by vehicle, travel expense claim forms, Participant signature that cash has been received, and internal budget reports.

(h) For Training allowances Participant signature that cash has been received, cheque counter-foils, internal budget reports.

(i) Carer/childcare costs claims, internal budget reports, evidence of registration for child-carers. Please note childcare costs can only be paid directly to the child-carer and NOT to the Participant. The child-carer MUST be registered to look after children and their registration number must appear on all claims submitted for payment. Costs for caring for children or other dependents should show the net weekly or hourly costs involved, excluding any contributions from the Participant towards these costs.

Support provided to Participants should be tailored to their individual needs. For the purposes of quality monitoring, Herefordshire Council expects that the hours of 'Direct Delivery' are sufficient to enable a Participant's barriers and needs to be addressed. Evidence of the duration of Direct Delivery which has taken place should be captured

through records of attendance or participation in activities. These records should be available to be reviewed at Project 'Monitoring Visits' or at audit.

The submission to Herefordshire Council of scanned and certified copies of Project documentation does not remove the requirement for the successful provider to retain the original documentation in the Project, Participant Files. Original documentation will be reviewed during Monitoring visits and audit.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Asylum seekers are defined as people who want to stay in the United Kingdom. Refugees are people who have already been given permission to stay. Asylum seekers are not usually eligible for support, but refugees are. Asylum seekers who have not been granted permission to work are not eligible to participate on the project which offer support that is aimed at assisting Participants to progress from unemployment or economic inactivity towards employment. However, asylum seekers without permission to work may be eligible to participate on Projects that offer support that is not related to progression towards employment, such as training in Skills for Life areas (ESOL, Literacy etc.). A copy of a letter or other official documentation from the Home Office confirming that the Participant's asylum seeker or refugee status, including their right to work, makes them eligible to participate on the Project must be obtained and kept on the Participant's File.

Identifying whether Participants have Basic Skills (Maths or English including ESOL) - Participants who commence on the Project and who declare that they do not have Entry Level or above (or equivalent) qualifications in Maths and/or English (including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)) should be tested to ascertain their Basic Skills requirement, and an appropriate certified qualification in Maths, English (including ESOL) at Entry Level, Level 1 or Level 2 should either be delivered to the Participant as part of the Project activities or the Participant should be supported to access training leading to this qualification.

Leavers, Early Leavers and Returners - A Participant is deemed to have 'left' the Project when they achieved an education, employment and or training Outcome. Their 'Date of Leaving' or 'Leave Date' is the date evidenced by a 'Leaver Form' completed, signed and dated by the Participant's Project keyworker (or equivalent).

Participants who have maintained contact with the Project but have not achieved an Outcome by the end date of the Funding Agreement should be recorded on the final PDF submission as Leavers. Their Leave Date will be the last day of project delivery. A fully completed, signed and dated Leaver Form is required for each of these Participants, and a record of their next steps must be retained on their File (e.g. evidence of a referral to an organisation for continuing support).

A Participant will be deemed to be an 'Early Leaver' if they have not been in contact with the Grant Recipient and or Delivery Partners for a period of 4 weeks from the date of their last engagement (or review) with them. In these circumstances the Participant's Leave Date would be the date of the last evidenced contact or review. The Leave Date should be evidenced by documentary evidence of the last contact with the Participant and a Leaver Form completed, signed and dated by the Participant's Project keyworker (or equivalent) confirming the date of the Participant's last review/contact and that the Participant has an unknown leaver destination. The successful provider(s) should identify the Participant as an Early Leaver on the PDF

A Returner is a Participant who has been recorded as a Leaver (including a Participant who has voluntarily withdrawn) or an Early Leaver and who subsequently wants to return to the Project for additional support. The successful provider(s) must be able to verify that the Participant wants to re-engage with the Project by completing a Returner form which must be signed and dated by the Participant and the Participant's Project keyworker (or equivalent).

For all Employment Outcomes supporting evidence must be specific to the Participant and must confirm: the name and address of the employer; the job title of the role; the location where the Participant is working; the start date of the job; the number of hours worked per week; and the type of contract (e.g. permanent, temporary, fixed-term) and contract length if temporary or fixed-term; the hourly rate (to verify whether the rate is above the national minimum wage).

Self-employment is a valid form of employment when claiming an Employment Outcome.

For all Education or Training Outcomes supporting evidence must be specific to the Participant and must confirm: the name and address of the education or training provider/institution; the course title, qualification and level; the start date of the course and planned end date.

Constraints

- a) Project activities must be completed and outputs and outcomes must be achieved by 31 March 2026.
- b) This project call is time and budget restricted. Funding must be fully defrayed within the 2025/2026 financial year to be eligible, with no roll over of underspend into the subsequent year permitted.
- c) The Council will not supply a location or premises for the delivery of the face-to-face in person sessions and this will be the responsibility of the provider. The provider must ensure that the premises used are based **within Herefordshire county boundaries** and are safe and suitable for the delivery of the project. In addition premises must:
 - comply with health and safety legislation, including fire regulations
 - have disability access
 - be appropriately furnished and equipped with necessary equipment
 - be easily accessible by public transport
- d) This funding is to be used to support Herefordshire residents only aged 25+.
- e) Applicants must satisfy the following criteria: fit into one of the following partner categories (with a United Kingdom Provider Reference Number):
 - Higher and Further Education Institutions
 - ESFA registered Independent Training Providers (ITPs)
 - Community Interest Companies
 - Registered Charities
 - Employability Support Organisation
 - Voluntary Organisations, which are constituted
 - Private sector businesses, where a partnership with an ESFA registered training provider can be demonstrated.
- f) The following organisations are ineligible:

- Individuals
- Organisations without an institution