Aberdeen Local Employability Partnership

Agenda

21 May 2025

Marischal College Room 2-S-01

Apologies: Nicola Graham, SDS; Gerry Lawie, NHS Grampian

Note of last meeting (circulated on 23 April)

Community Benefits (briefing paper attached) - Stuart Calderwood

CLD Plan – Colin Wright

Third Sector Development Officer Post (draft job description attached) - Maggie Hepburn

Tour of Stat Explore – Gareth Smith

ETPF Update – Anne Kain

NOLB Year End Report – Rebecca Craigmile

Work Experience Feasibility Study Update – Angela Taylor

Training Fair Update – Angela Taylor

***Action Plan Timelines** – Roundtable discussion

***Sub Groups: leads and members** – Roundtable discussion

*subject to availability of time – may need to move to June meeting

AOCB

Future Agenda Items

Conference
Other Funding Streams
LEP reporting line within CPA
SES - SUSE report
Health Determinants Data
Developer Obligations
VocTech ufi regional project
Consortium Building
Child Poverty Accelerator
Lived Experience

Date of Next Meeting: 18 June

Aberdeen Local Employability Partnership

Note of Meeting on

21 May 2025

Present: Nicola Graham, SDS; Maggie Hepburn, ACVO; Kirsty McLaughlin, Business Gateway; Fiona Daniels, NESCol; Chris Smillie, ACHSCP; Angela Taylor, ACC; Gareth Whyte, DWP; Aimee Maitland, DYW-NE

Apologies: Gerry Lawie, NHS Grampian; Stuart Bews, ACC

Note of last meeting - Agreed

Community Benefits (briefing paper attached) - Stuart Calderwood attended the LEP in person to discuss Community Benefits. A briefing paper had been shared in advance and was attached with the 21 May agenda.

Stuart explained that community benefits are effectively a tender within a tender, which includes employability outcomes, and follows the CITB benchmarks for construction Community benefits have to be proportionate and relevant to what is being procured.

There is no monetisation of community benefits in Scotland.

The community benefits report for 24/25 highlighted some really good outcomes, including 17 apprenticeships, 44 jobs created and an anticipated 40 jobs to be created, alongside 57 placements, 372 workforce development outcomes, 128 school visits, 44 FE-HE engagements, and 867 hours of community support.

ACC is trying to become more sophisticated with community benefits through the wider supply chain and would like to have more focus on care experienced young people.

Suppliers like to know what is 'out there' and how they can support organisations in the city. Information sharing would be useful.

ACTION: The results of the mapping exercise being carried out by the ETPF could be published on the ABZWorks website and shared with Community Benefits contractors and their sub-contractors to give a direct overview of ongoing activities and areas where they could support. Brief information containing organisation name, contact name, website, and email address would be useful for this. - Anne for ETPF and Angela for ABZWorks.

CLD Plan – Colin Wright – Unfortunately Colin was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

Third Sector Development Officer Post (draft job description attached) - Maggie spoke to the proposed job which is to be created to support the LEP, and funded via NOLB monies. Angela had previously sent comments to Maggie on the draft job description (attached) and Maggie agreed to incorporated those comments as changes to the document. LEP members agreed the job spec in principle

ACTION – Maggie and Angela to follow-up to confirm the final details.

Tour of Stat Explore – Gareth gave LEP members a tour of the Stat Explore systems, showing how to gather data on various things. Brief tips on this – Do NOT save password. Start at the top of the board and work down.

ETPF Update – Anne informed the LEP that the ETPF is setting its priorities for the coming year. This discussion has involved looking at potential joint funding outwith NOLB. There is a keenness to explore developing partnerships for the future and gather information about good examples of partnerships elsewhere. The ETPF will be asking Pegs Bailey of IS for help with that.

Looking to see if there is a possibility of test of change funding and, if there is, there could be a partnership project to try to get something off the ground.

ETPF members spoke about commissioning and asked if training providers would have the opportunity to review the commissioning again in future and if that could become an ongoing activity with the LEP.

Work Experience Feasibility Study Update – is now live. Social Value Labs has been commissioned to carry out a feasibility study into the provision of work experience and routes for a potential single point, as requested by providers at the 2024 conference.

Training Fair Update – 28 May at Beach Ballroom. Almost all commissioned providers will be in attendance alongside a number of support agencies. Morning session is for networking and information sharing with a view to strengthening relationships between providers and encouraging cross-referrals and more joint working across the city.

Afternoon session will be open to members of the public and an opportunity to promote services to the public and sign people up on the spot. Presentations will take place in a separate part of the Beach Ballroom with more in-depth information about services.

Catering will be provided througout the event.

NOLB Year End Report – Rebecca Craigmile presented on the 2024/25 activity, however due to other business was unable to complete the presentation. This will be picked up at the next LEP meeting.

***Action Plan Timelines** – Roundtable discussion – postponed due to lack of time. Suggestion that this may need a dedicated session.

***Sub Groups: leads and members** – Roundtable discussion – postponed due to lack of time

AOCB

Future Agenda Items

2025/26 Conference
Other Funding Streams
LEP reporting line within CPA
SES - SUSE report
Health Determinants Data
Delivery Plan Refresh
Developer Obligations
VocTech ufi regional project
Consortium Building
Child Poverty Accelerator
Lived Experience

Date of Next Meeting: 18 June, via Teams

Purpose of Briefing Paper

To explain the ACC approach to community benefits (CBs) and the strict legal framework CBs operates within. Focus on potential for:

i) generation of bidder funding for local employability initiatives;
ii) use of funds for local employability initiatives and
iii) opportunities to involve an increasing number of LEP partners for mutual benefit

Several LEP partners (e.g. ACVO, NESCOL and DYWNE) are already positively engaged to some extent in community benefit delivery (primarily as sources of supplier support) and have been for some years. As this paper will show, community benefits in public procurement bear little resemblance to community benefits in windfarm, offshore and renewable energy developments. None of the restrictions described in this paper apply to those developments where the delivery mechanism is primarily community funds. Community benefits in public procurement does **not** generally involve "cash" or "community funds" but is primarily concerned with the delivery of definite, forward-looking outcomes, localizing delivery as far as possible.

What are Community Benefits?

Community Benefits are clauses within contracts requiring bidders to commit to social, environmental or economic benefit **in addition** to the core purpose of the contract on a cost-neutral basis re:

(i) Training and recruitment, or
(ii) the availability of sub-contracting opportunities, or
(b) which is otherwise intended to improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the authority's area in a way additional to the main purpose of the contract in which the requirement is included.

At or above £4M, community benefits must be "considered." Community benefits in some form tend to be included in all "regulated" contracts i.e. **£50K+ goods and services/£2M+ Works.**

Approach and Monetisation of CBs

Bidders do not have a choice about the CB themes they address or in what quantity. The Council sets the themes and quantities for each benefit type per project according to value, length and nature of the contract as well as the likely physical presence (or remoteness) of the supplier in performing the contract. The table on Page 2 is **not** a "menu", is not ranked or weighted and no points-based methodology is used.

There is no monetisation of benefits or cash equivalents that are or could be compliantly offered by bidders. The Scottish Government does not support monetisation of community benefits although monetisation/use of proxy values is common in England and Wales.

Penalty clauses are illegal and consequently, funds are not generated from non-performance or poor performance of obligations by suppliers. Although there has

been some experimentation, no authority is thought to be using “reimbursement values” at scale in lieu of non-delivery or sub-standard delivery of benefits as it has proved to be problematic to reliably quantify as a loss to the Contracting Authority.

Although elements of “cash” were evident in AWPR (a Scottish Government contract), Contracting Authorities would rather secure the high-quality outcomes imposed in contracts than cash the equivalents. It not only creates bidder discrimination (in terms of options available to suppliers with more resources), if suppliers can “buy” their way out of community benefit commitments, this arguably sends the wrong message.

Types of Community Benefits

Benefit Description
1.1 Job Creation Related to the Project (Entry Level Employment)
1.2 Jobs Created by the Project (Apprenticeships)
1.3 Work Experience (Placements) (5 days – 6 weeks)
1.4 Developing the Workforce
1.5 School Engagement Activities (focus on construction sector, STEM, gender/gender pay gaps and disability)
1.6 Further and Higher Education Engagement Activities (focus on construction sector, STEM gender/gender pay gaps and disability)
1.7 Employability engagement activities
1.8 Vacancy Sharing (including wider supply chain)
2 Communities, Community Groups, and Community Projects **(i)** hours professional or practical support/general volunteering + **ii**) donation of new/surplus equipment or materials and/or financial offers) e.g.: improve community cohesion or open spaces near to the development, digital inclusion or projects looking to initiate and implement circular economy, fuel poverty or climate literacy initiatives in Aberdeen’s communities
3. Local Economic Development Measures (Duty to Report) creative measures to ensure inclusive participation of local SMEs/Local 3rd sector + reporting on work packages awarded locally…Main Contractor + wider supply chain)
4.1 Environmental Wellbeing, Carbon Reduction and Climate Literacy (Annual Report of credentials and improvements Co-operation, collaboration with bodies such as SCARF + exploration of Net Zero Toolkit)
4.2 Environmental Measures (Fuel Poverty & Climate Literacy)
5. Fair Work Practices Including” Real” Living Wage (including gender pay gap reporting)
6. Prompt Payment in The Supply Chain (Duty to Report)
7. Promotion of Adoption and Fostering (cascade of Council message via payroll, digital etc to reach as many staff as possible)
8. Case Studies (innovation)

The main employability related benefits are highlighted in red. Apprenticeship quantities in construction projects generally follow/exceed CITB benchmarks. Potentially any apprenticeship type (e.g. business/admin, IT etc) is acceptable in meeting the standard as long as the qualification is at SCQF Level 5+. Lower level Foundation Apprentices are not discounted but the focus is on adults looking for career paths.

Apprentice/placement requirements can be met by sub-contractors/in the supply chain or by main contractor and many benefits can be fulfilled virtually. Opportunities for care experienced and disabled people are strongly promoted throughout, and great care is taken to ensure benefit entitlements are unaffected by accepting a placement or apprenticeship opportunity.

Generation and Use of Funds

As indicated previously, social value in public procurement does **not** generally involve "cash" or "community funds" but is primarily concerned with the delivery of definite, forward-looking outcomes, localizing delivery as far as possible. The following represents the extent to which cash offers are encouraged in the context of community support. No floor or ceiling can be compliantly introduced as this would create bidder discrimination and would arguably result in bidders "buying" the contract. As indicated previously, penalty clauses are illegal and experimentation with "reimbursement values" has not been introduced at a national level. Delivery of the CB outcomes sought in the quantity sought (or more) remains the preferred course of action.

"…please note that if financial contributions are narrated as part of the Bidder's offer (whether payable to the Council or direct to 3rd sector organisation) this will be regarded as an acceptable means of meeting the requirements. However, **the principle or aggregate sum of any such offer will not form part of the evaluation decision in any way."**

If it is advantageous for bidders to take advantage of local funding to meet employability objectives, the funding stream needs to be detailed within the tender documents while the competition is live. All bidders must be eligible for the funding. It would create bidder discrimination if sources of funding are only disclosed to successful bidders post contract award. An aggrieved bidder unsuccessful in a competitive process could challenge the award decision on the grounds that a selective advantage has been bestowed that all bidders were not made of aware of at the same time. The funding stream would need to be permanently available as we cannot regularly change our documents as funding streams come and go.

Community Benefit Project Plans

A Community Benefit Project Plan has been developed to provide a self-contained, consolidated reference document for bidders with definitions and extensive detail on individual community benefit requirements and permitted flexibility pertaining to the procurement.

Community Benefit Project Plans clearly indicate benefits that are "specified" and benefits that are "supplementary", clearly detailing quantities and fully describing

requirements. Community Benefit Project Plans provide all the information needed by a bidder to enable them to submit structured responses capable of fair “like for like” evaluation. A CB Plan is typically around 25-26 pages in length and a weighting of 10% of quality criteria is typically applied.

A section of the Community Benefits Project Plan contains full information on local sources of practical and financial support, advice and information (e.g. local colleges, universities, employability partners, government agencies and 3rd sector interfaces.) Promotion of local sources of 3rd sector/agency support innovatively encourages “local” delivery of benefits and enables bidders without local knowledge or direct experience of delivering social value to enhance the quality of their bids (fairly) and compete on an equal footing.

Risks and Practical Considerations

Mandating excessive quantities or introducing community benefit requirements not relatable to the contract could result in a legal challenge that requirements are not proportionate and relevant and/or create or perpetuate bidder discrimination. If not pitched at an appropriate level, local SMEs and local 3rd sector organisations might be disinclined to submit bids and/or challenge award decisions.

Method Statements (within Community Benefit Project Plans) are the preferred approach to communicating requirements to bidders. All community benefit requirements must be **“proportionate and relevant”** and capable of fair “like for like” evaluation. In essence**,** a Contracting Authority cannot request, demand or impose whatever it chooses in terms of community benefit requirements.

Localisation of Benefits

Certain principles apply to public procurement to govern fair and transparent competition. In simple terms:

- **Equal treatment and non-discrimination:** giving every bidder an equal chance to win the contract irrespective of their nationality or whether they are familiar to the Council;
- **Transparency**: stating requirements and award criteria in advance and adhering to them;
- **Mutual Recognition**: giving equal validity to qualifications and technical standards of other Member States, offering “equivalency” where necessary and
- **Freedom of establishment**

Effect of Limitations

Principles of freedom of establishment and non-discrimination prevent public sector bodies from insisting that bidders must be “local” organisations within a given

postcode, region, from Scotland or the UK. Such obligations cannot be included as tender questions or contractual conditions.

References to “SMEs” and “3rd sector” organisations therefore relate to SMEs and 3rd sector bodies located anywhere. Measures can be taken to ensure the “inclusive participation” of local SMEs and local 3rd sector organisations so that contract opportunities are visible and accessible to the local business community. However, no advantage or disadvantage can be conferred to local SMEs/local 3rd sector organisations in the procurement process.

Summary of Impacts:

- Competition must not be artificially restricted to local contractors
- Competition must not mandate that a supplier has local premises or commits to establishing local premises unless there is a genuine basis or business reason to do so
- The Council cannot insist that all (or a percentage) of staff engaged on the contract must be “local”
- The contract or community benefit requirements within the contract cannot demand the contractor only use locally sourced or Scottish produce/materials where there is no basis or business reason to do so

Conclusions

The approach described in this paper is working well and high-quality CB outcomes are secured at scale year after year. The restrictions within public procurement (despite EU exit) serve as limiting factors to radically different or cash-orientated approaches. The range of benefits sought represents a suitable mix of social, economic and environmental considerations as required under the appropriate legislation.

Several LEP partners (e.g. ACVO, NESCOL and DYWNE) are already positively engaged to some extent in community benefit delivery (primarily as sources of supplier support) and have been for some years. It would be possible to add more local sources of support/funding, but it should be borne in mind that **1)** the CB Plan is already lengthy and **2)** suppliers have a completely free choice who they work or partner with in meeting requirements and **3)** the supplier might not be local and their preferred source of support need not be local. From experience, most bidders tend to take the easiest and strongly implied “preferred” course of action which results in local partnering and delivery.

As indicated previously, funding streams related to local employability initiatives would need to be disclosed to bidders within tender documents (not post award), all bidders would need to be eligible, and the funding schemes would need to be permanently available.

ACVO Job Description

Senior Development Officer (Employability)

Hours:	**Full-Time 35 hours a week**
Salary:	**TBA (suggested £32,000 – £34,000)**
Duration:	***funding sought initially for three years***
Location:	**Aberdeen City**
Reports to:	**Chief Executive ACVO**

Purpose:

The post is a joint commitment between Aberdeen's Local Employability Partnership and ACVO Third Sector Interface and is intended to support strengthening employment outcomes for the people of Aberdeen through improving the capacity, scope and contribution of third sector employability provision.

By working collaboratively with Aberdeen's Employability Training Providers Forum, the postholder will engage actively with local and national third sector providers to understand their strengths and challenges, identify opportunities for and support partnership working across sectors. They will support third sector employability providers with organisational development as well as growing involvement from related community organisations to extend reach. They will advocate for the sector strategically on relevant partnership boards and working groups.

Responsibilities:

- Provide strategic support to the Aberdeen Employability Training Providers Forum.
- Work with the ETPF to review, map and maintain a record of third sector employability activity, opportunities, challenges and priorities for the area.
- Establish effective working relationships with local and national third sector providers and represent all perspectives fairly.
- Build positive relationships with strategic partners involved in employability and related services in Aberdeen.
- Attend and advocate for the sector on the Aberdeen Local Employability Partnership (LEP) and any other relevant strategic groups as appropriate.
- Support and help inform Aberdeen's Local Employability Partnership's (LEP) strategy development including ensuring transparent and accessible commissioning of employability services.
- Work pro-actively with the ETPF to support the sector to explore and develop opportunities for working in partnership including, but not restricted to, Consortium models.

- Work with the ETPF to provide input into design and delivery of participation and engagement methods that support those with lived experience to develop a collective voice and co-produce new services in employability.
- Support business development within the sector to strengthen preparedness for opportunities.
- Keep up to date with and share information on national employability policy and funding developments as relevant to the sector.
- Work collectively across the development team and wider ACVO TSI organisation collaboratively, respectfully, fairly and honestly; always undertaking to represent the organisation in an appropriate manner and with the integrity expected by ACVO TSI.
- Undertake any other reasonable task required of the post by the line manager.

Knowledge, Skills & Experience

Experience:

- Experience of working in a third sector employability delivery organisation or service at a senior level
- Experience of project development or management
- Experience of supporting developing partnerships and multi-agency approaches
- Extensive experience of working with Microsoft packages, including word, PowerPoint, excel and Outlook.
- Experience of managing a diverse workload and meeting deadlines
- Experience of facilitating meetings and events.
- Experience of managing multiple complex working relationships and partnerships.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

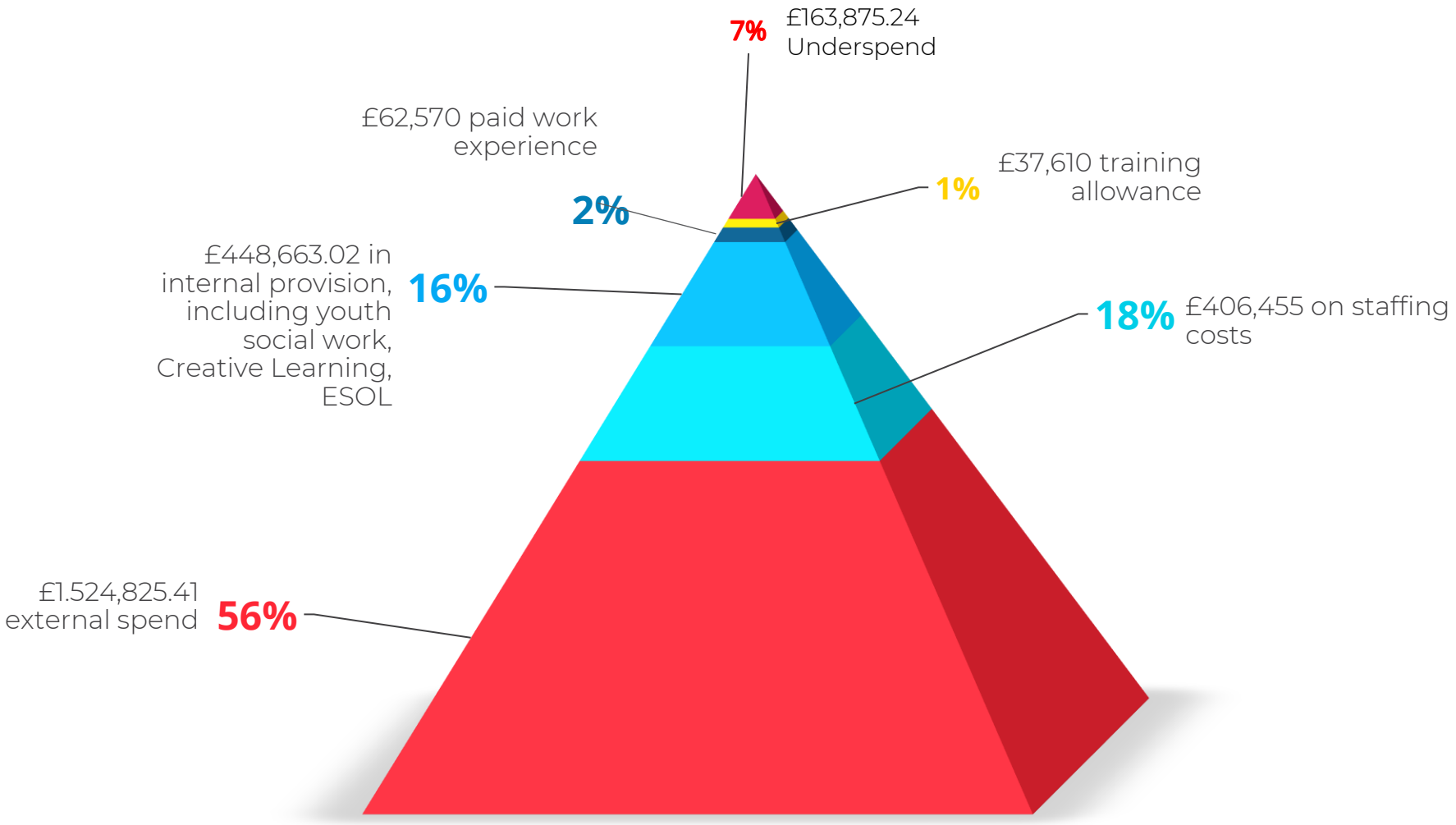
- Excellent written skills, including the ability to write reports and other content that is accessible to different audiences.
- Excellent spoken communication skills, including the confidence to designing and deliver presentations
- The ability to grow and develop partnership working across a diverse group of interests, including supporting, communication, negotiation, and project development.
- Demonstrable relationship building and networking skills including the ability to influence and motivate others.
- A good understanding of employability policy in Scotland is essential and the issues affecting the sector locally would be preferable.
- Excellent digital skills, with experience of using online digital tools and an ability to embrace new emerging technology.
- The ability to work unsupervised but within a team and a teamwork environment.
- Strong attention to detail and the ability to take ownership of your work.
- Knowledge of confidentiality requirements, business sensitivity and the management of personal data.

Aberdeen Local Employability Partnership

2024/25 Employability Data

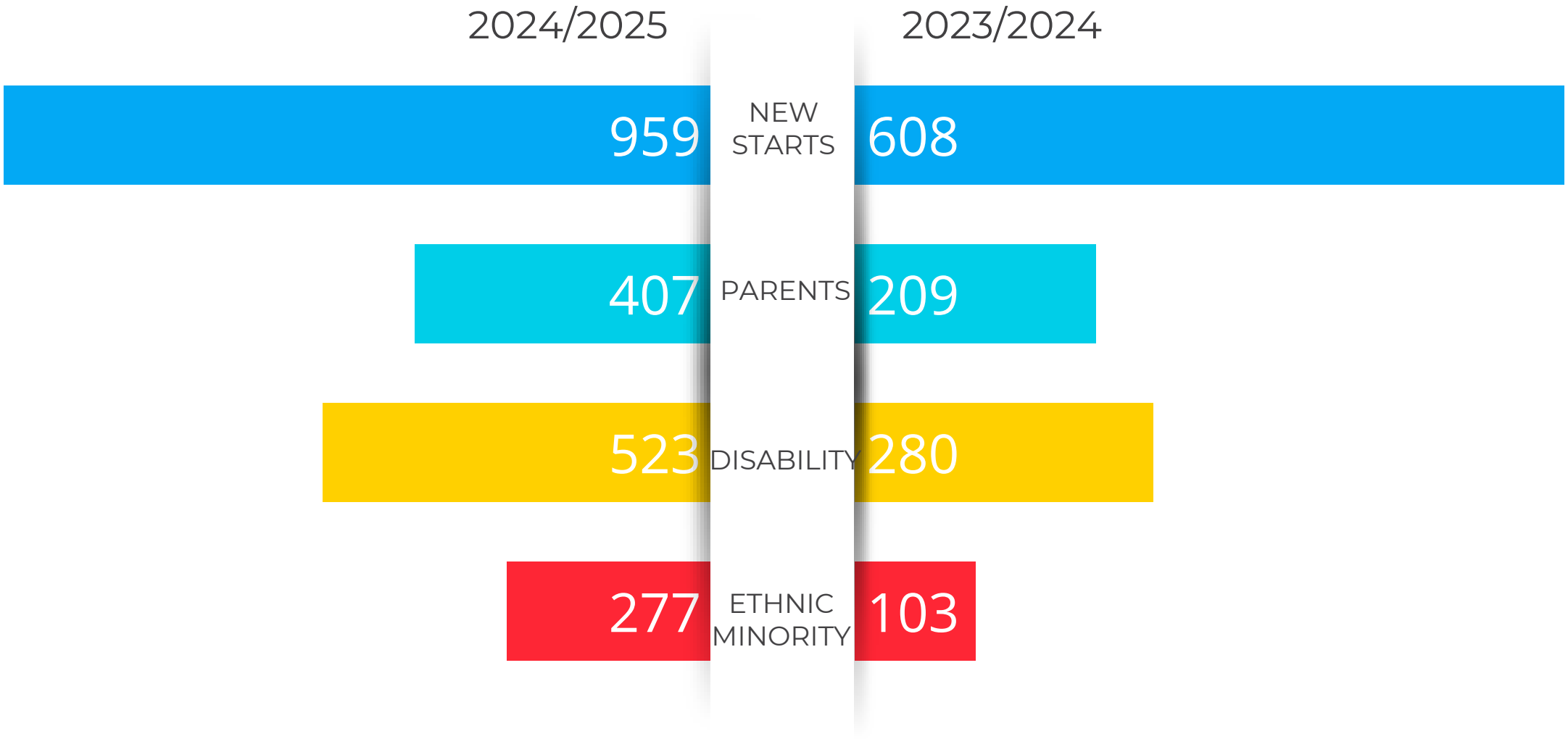
No One Left Behind Spend Breakdown

£2,744,000 NOLB and Child Poverty Budget Breakdown 2024/25

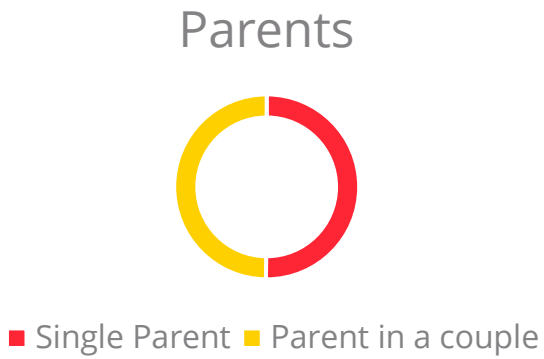


DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON

2024/25 AND 2023/24



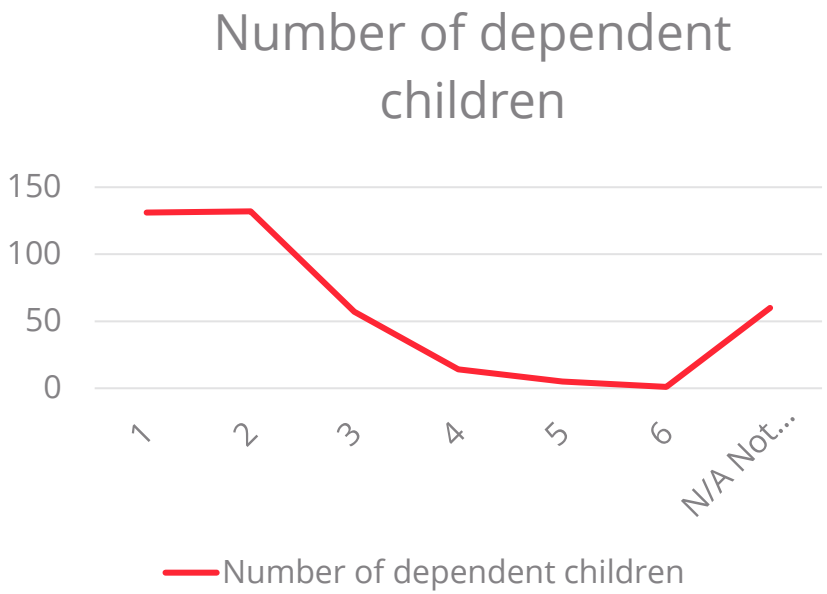
PARENTS



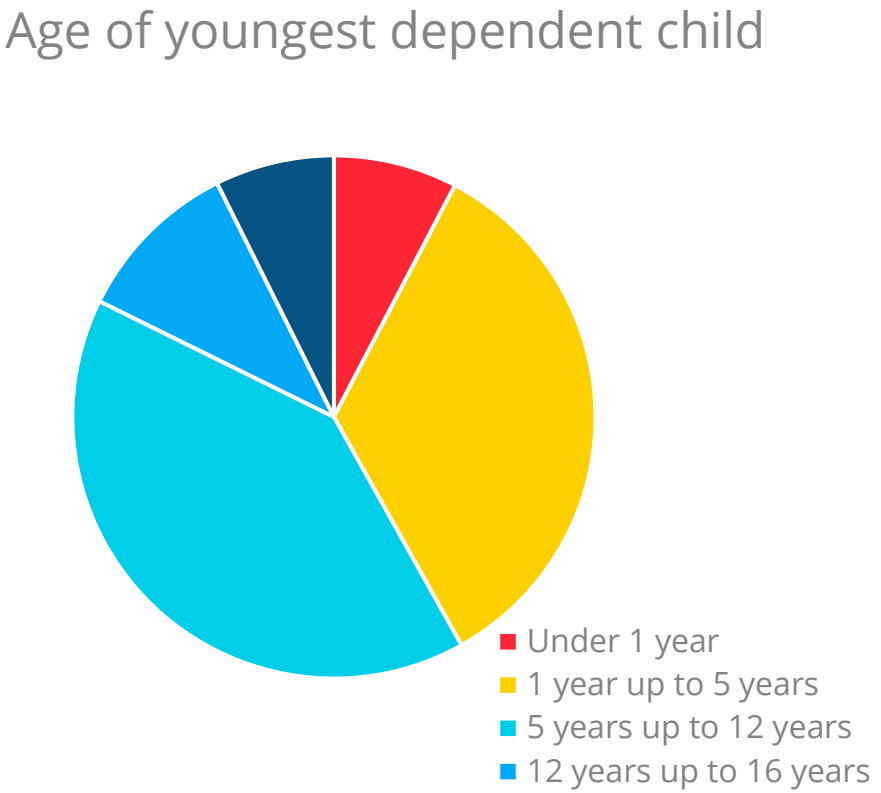
75% Live with dependent children full time

8% Live with dependent children part time

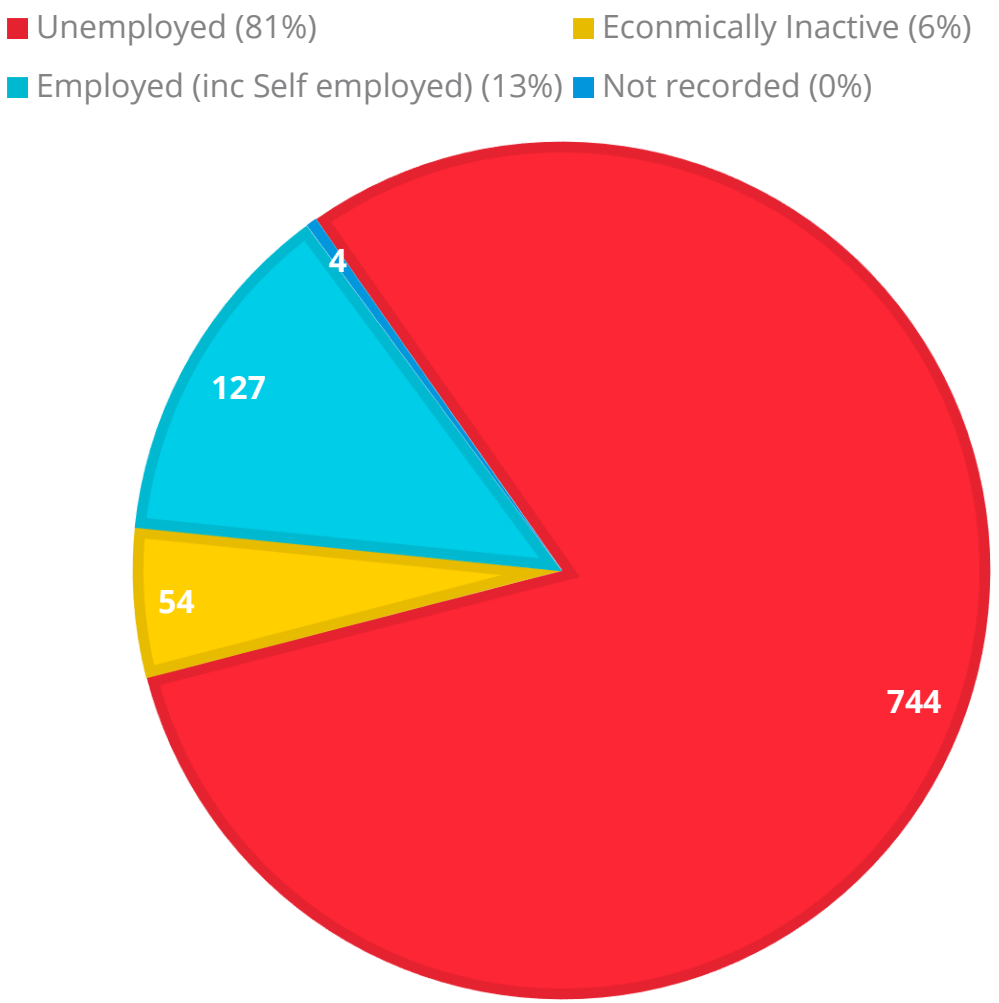
17% Do not live with their dependent children

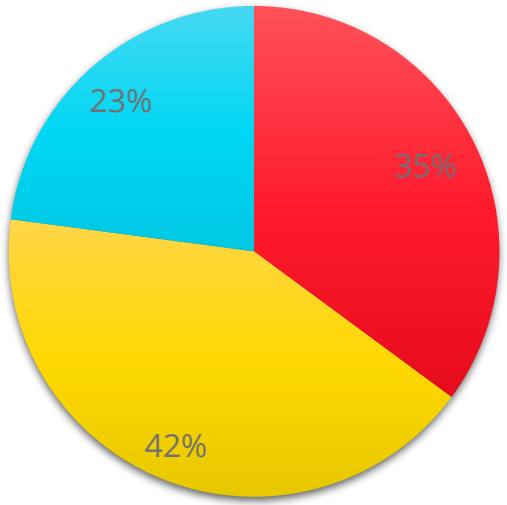


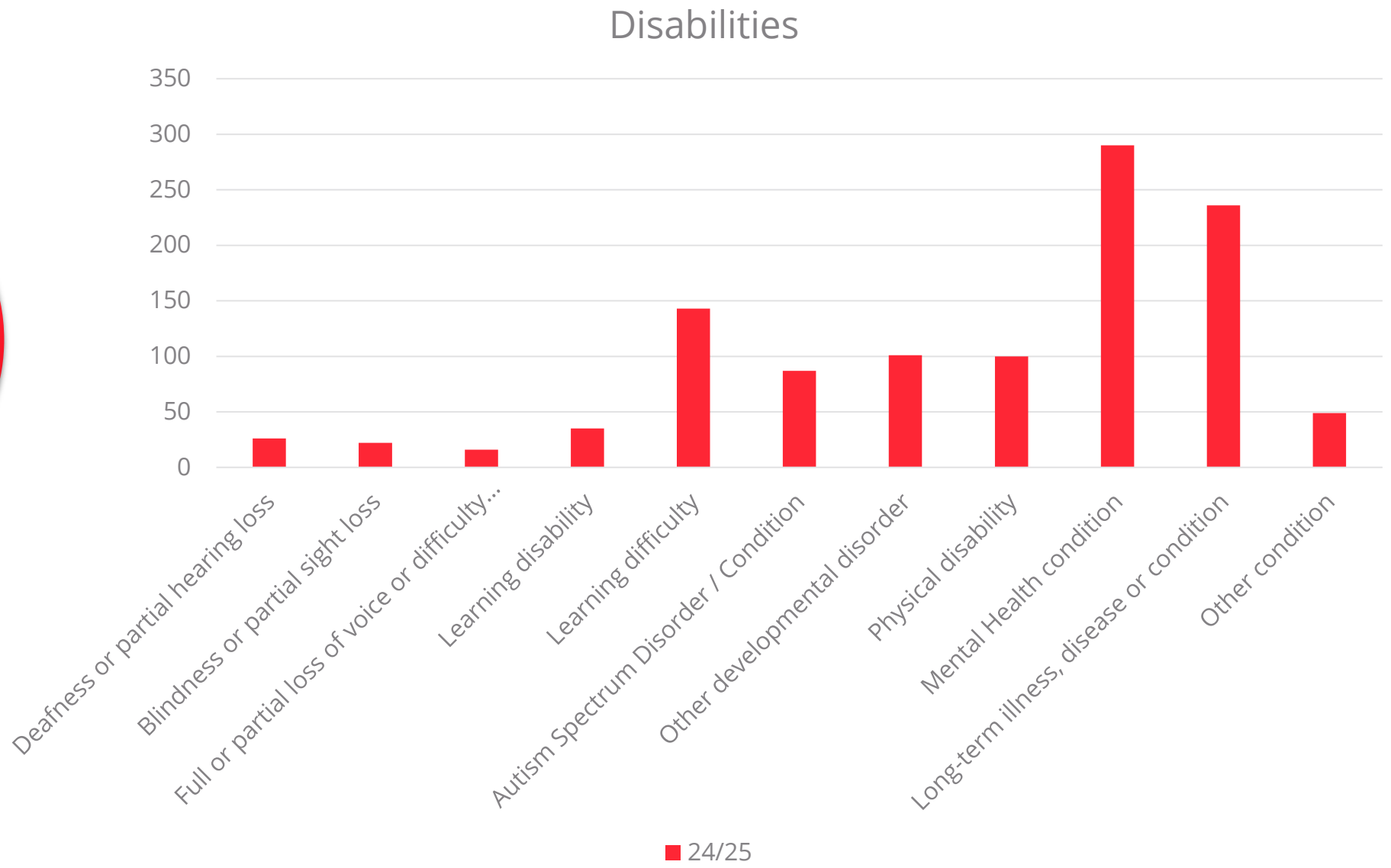
52 Parents look after a disabled child or adult within the family

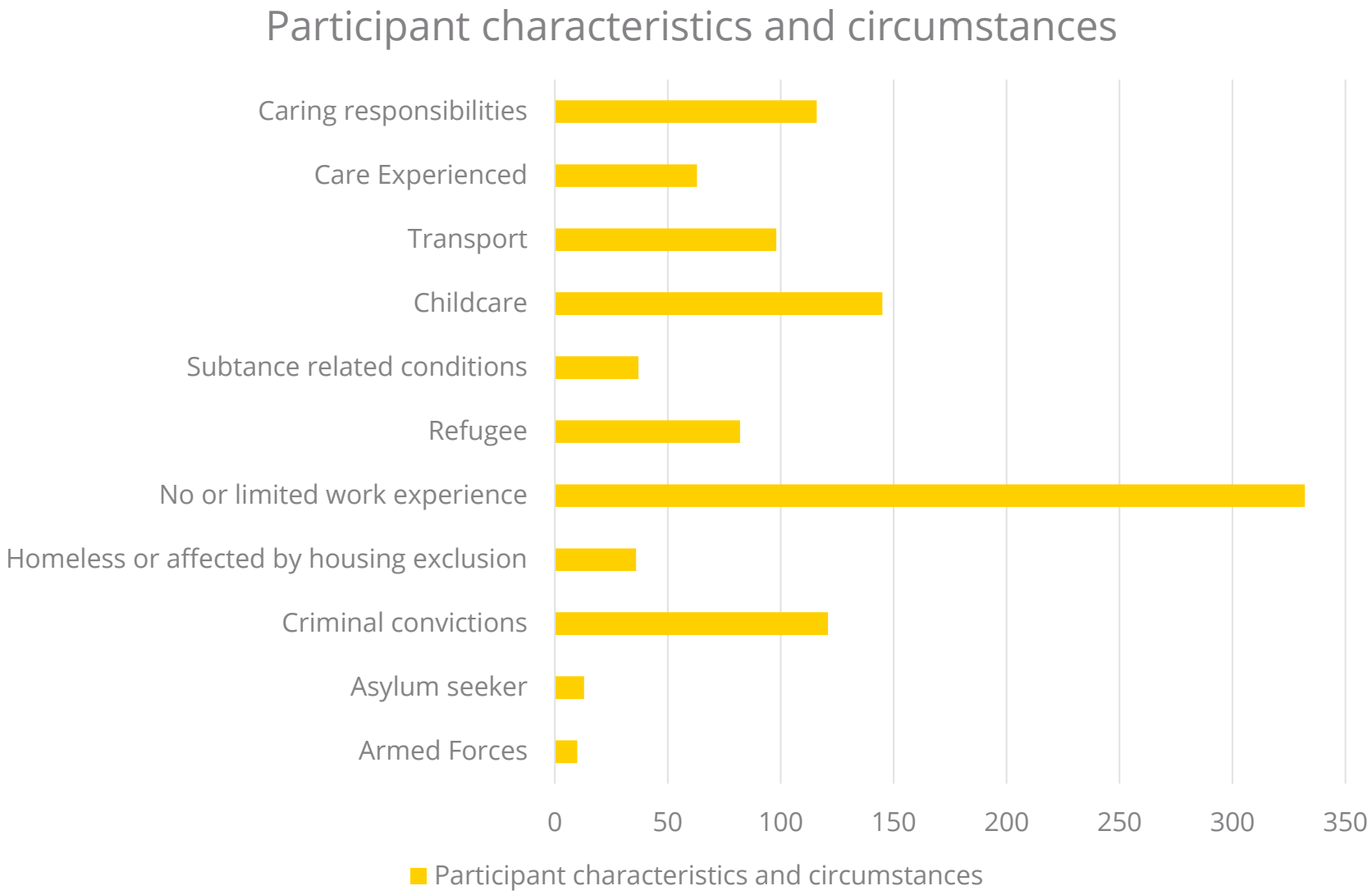


ECONOMIC STATUS AT START DATE




23%
35%
42%
No, not at all
Yes, a little
Yes, a lot


Disabilities
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Deafness or partial hearing loss
Blindness or partial sight loss
Full or partial loss of voice or difficulty...
Learning disability
Learning difficulty
Autism Spectrum Disorder / Condition
Other developmental disorder
Physical disability
Mental Health condition
Long-term illness, disease or condition
Other condition
24/25

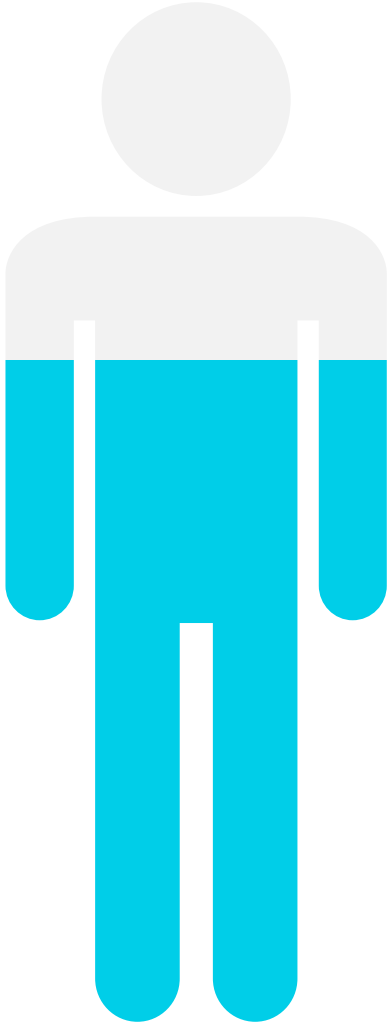

Participant characteristics and circumstances
Caring responsibilities
Care Experienced
Transport
Childcare
Subtance related conditions
Refugee
No or limited work experience
Homeless or affected by housing exclusion
Criminal convictions
Asylum seeker
Armed Forces
0
50
100
150
200
250
300
350
Participant characteristics and circumstances

GENDER BREAKDOWN

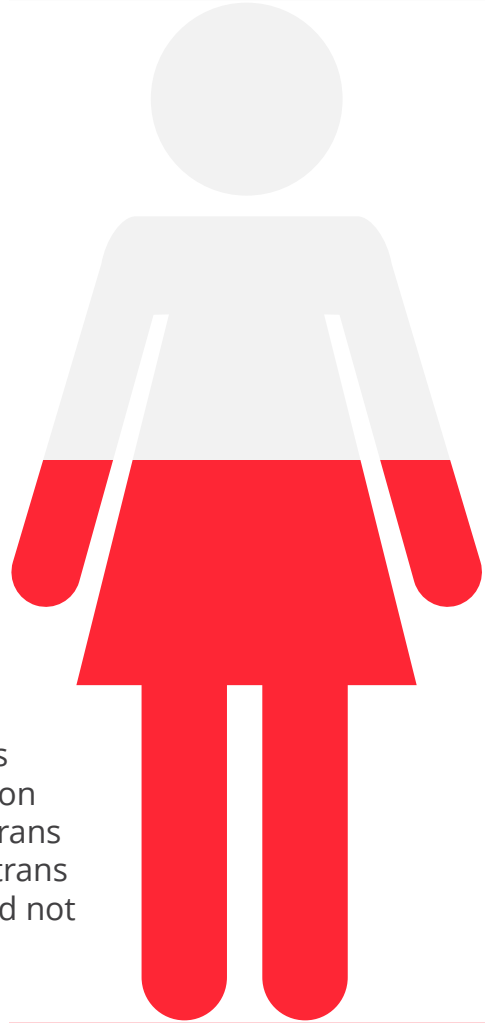
2024/2025

55% MALE

A similar profile to last year with 51% of total new starts advising their gender to be male.



In 2024/25 6 individuals listed their gender as non binary, 1 individual as trans man, 2 participants as trans women, and 4 preferred not to say.

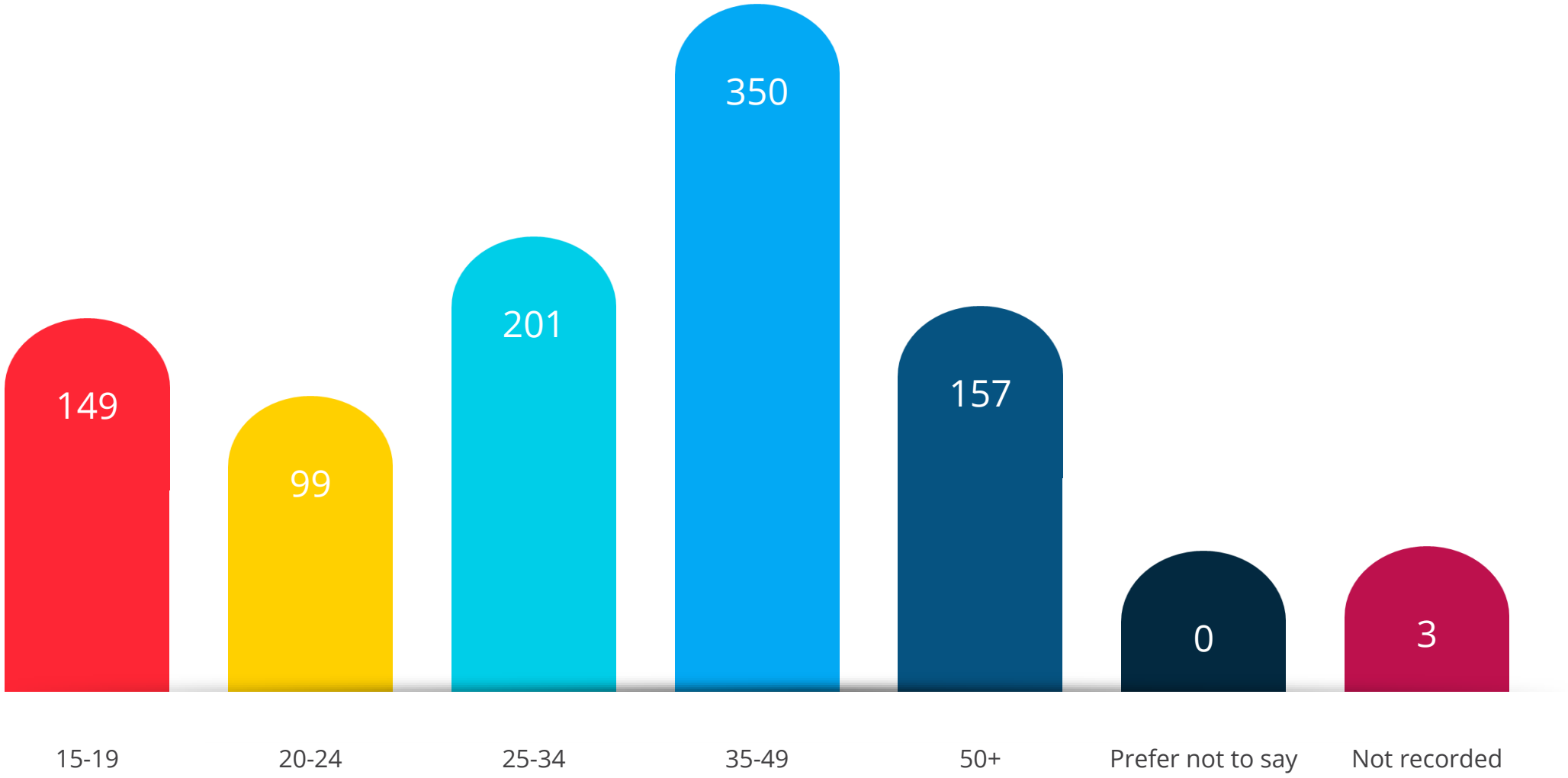


44% FEMALE

Again a similar profile in comparison to last financial year where 48% of new starts advised their gender to be female.

AGE BREAKDOWN

AGE AT START OF REGISTRATION



OUTCOMES

2024/2025

IN EMPLOYMENT

144 people in the past year had their initial outcome listed as employment, less than last year which was 160.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

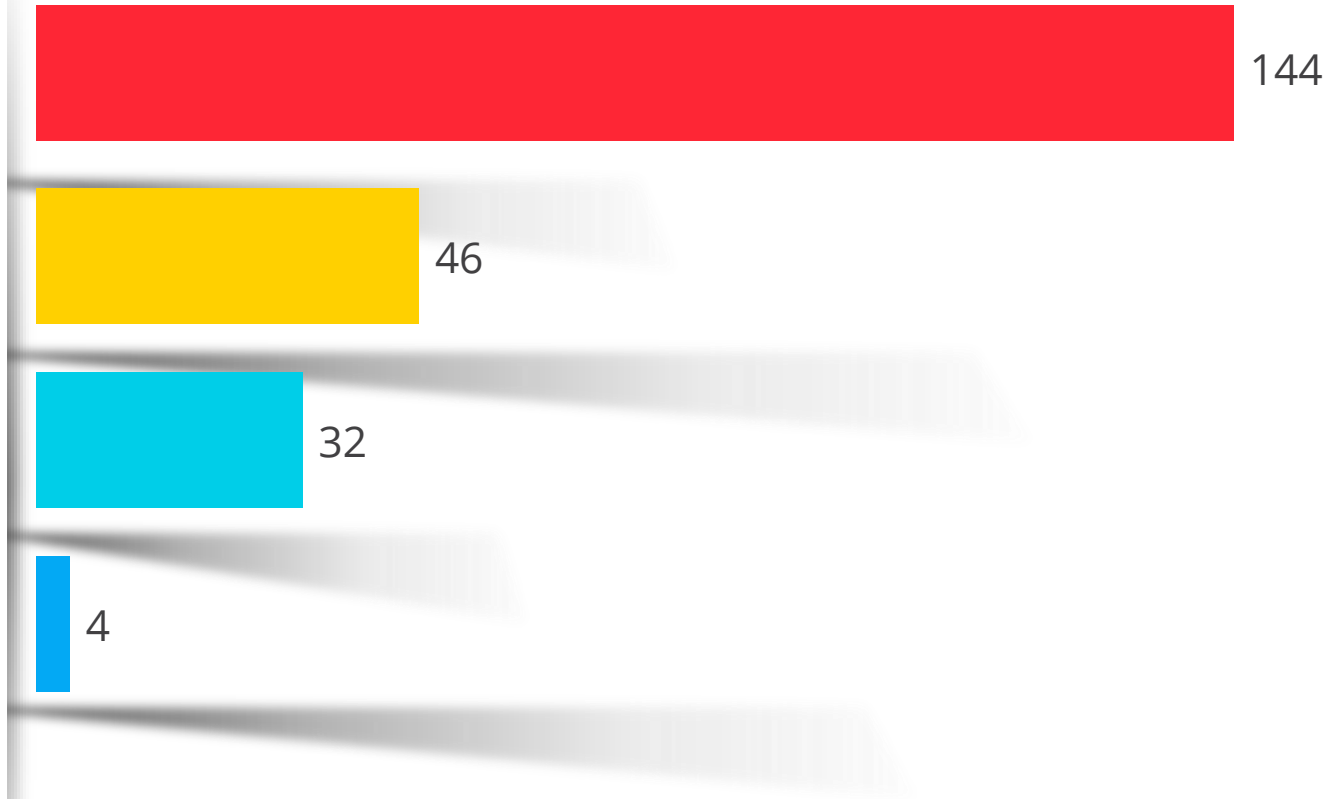
46 people had their initial outcome listed as self-employment. This is despite 46 grants for seed fund being awarded. This could be due to many businesses not being sustained.

FE/HE EDUCATION

32 individuals went on to further or higher education. At this point their support would end due to NOLB/CP guidance.

MODERN APPRENTICESHIP

4 individuals secured a modern apprenticeship.



MILESTONES

2024/2025



CHILDCARE

16 parents (28 children) received support with childcare payments to ease into employment or return to the workforce

ADHOC TRAINING

29 participants received funding for adhoc training including forklift and first aid



SEED FUND

46 individuals received support to start their own business (average claim of £3,500). Around 17 are still in business

PAID WORK EXPERIENCE

11 individuals took part in paid work experience in ELC and other council settings

DRIVING LESSONS

45 participants received support to get their driving licence though lessons

SUCCESS STORY

John was referred to the service by the DWP, he was classed as self-employed but was in no way gainfully employed, working in painting and decorating on an extremely ad hoc basis and was on Universal Credit.

John was very motivated to engage with his keyworker and expressed an interest in gaining a CSCS card. Upon achieving his card, John was quickly successful in securing an interview and was offered a job in construction that same day. His keyworker arranged for all of the safety attire he would need to get started.

John said 'It's the best rate I've ever had, I'll remain humble. I'm in charge of the sites decorating at the moment, another position I've not had until now. More responsibility and work, but it's something I really want. Thanks again for all the support and hard work you put in!'



SUCCESS STORY

“I would like to thank the ABZ works team for the support I have received. It is hard as a parent in the UK to do something you want or love due to childcare. For me, ABZworkz did not only help me with my childcare, but they help discover my passion.

After attending an NHS information session organised by ABZWorks, I discovered my passion for food after listening to the Dietetics team. I put in an application to RGU for Dietetics and was successful. After sharing this with the ABZWorks team, they were happy for my decision and extended their support by funding for my twin boys childcare at the Treehouse Nursery for 3months until they were eligible for the council free childcare. Having them put in the nursery, with a trusted childcare provider gave me a peace of mind to concentrate fully on my studies.

Also, I could save some money from paying childcare. I was able to use this money to get a car to have my driving lessons which was initially sponsored by ABZWorks. I wish I could attach my Pass certificate of my driving test but unfortunately, the driving lessons are not as smooth as my studies.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the ABZWorks team, especially Shannon May who showed her utmost support in every way possible to me. The ABZWorks is indeed a game changer!!”



Participant quotes



“I am really enjoying it so far. I wasn’t feeling great about things but feel more motivated now and hope to get on well at placement.”

Family member: *“The change in him is absolutely amazing. He has thrived and matured so much. I could not be prouder. Jay absolutely loves you and speaks so highly of you all the time. You’ve really made a massive change in our family, and I am forever grateful.”*

“It was great meeting the rest of the group and seeing us all grow in confidence as the weeks went by. I also feel that I am prepared for any future employment opportunities should they arise. I lacked the skills and confidence beforehand.”

“I’m really grateful for the support I have been given by CFINE, definitely helped me get myself sorted out and back earning!”

“The course was very useful; I learned confidence and how to be more ambitious”

“I have really enjoyed the course attending the college and meeting all the people I have met during the course. The staff were very helpful and made it a relaxing atmosphere in which to study.”

“During sessions it has made feel valued as a person. It made me feel valued and empowered and as a result listened to. The group has a great understanding of my needs and this in turn enabled me to feel not only welcome but accepted. I love coming here”

“You have been brilliant with me, I cannot thank you enough.”