

Name of Meeting: Third Meeting of the Labour Market Partnership Members 2025-2026

Meeting Held at: Large Committee Room, Cloonavin, Coleraine Council Offices.

Date and Time: Wednesday 25th September 2025 at 10.00am

Minutes Taken By: Louise McLoughlin

Attendees: Alison O'Mullan (AO'M) - Jobs and Benefits Office
Danielle McAleese (DMcA) - CC&G LMP
Gabrielle Quinn (GQ) – NRC – (Online)
Gabriele Narvilaite (GN) – (RVE)
Jonathan Wilson (JW) – DfC
Louise McLoughlin (LMcL) – CC&G Business Support
Luke McCloskey (LMcC) – NWRC
Marc McGerty (MMcG) – CC&G LMP - Chair
Oisin Duffy (OD) – CC&G Local Economic Partnership (LEP)
Lorinda Bond (LB) - Jobs and Benefits Office

Apologies: Annette Deighan (AD) – Causeway Chamber
Chloe Stewart (CS) – CC&G LMP
Helen Lynagh – (HL) – Invest NI
Mark Reid (MR) – DfE Careers Service
Niall McGurk (NMcG) - CC&GBC Economic Development
Martin Devlin (MD) - Roe Valley Enterprises
Nuala McVey (NMcV) – Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Samuel Steele (SS) – Enterprise Causeway – Vice Chair
Siobhan McManus (SMcM) - Jobs and Benefits Office

Distribution: All Member organisations
Council (for information)

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 26 November 2025

Date of Issue: November 2025

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Ref No.	Description	Action by
1.00	Welcome	
1.01	Welcome from the Chair and a roundtable of introductions took place.	
1.02	Apologies - Apologies recorded as above.	
1.03	Conflicts of Interest - Forms to be completed and returned to LMP Secretariat for <u>each</u> meeting (sent along with minutes).	CS
1.04	Minutes of Previous Meetings – Siobhan McManus was not in attendance at last meeting, amend and redistribute minutes from second meeting for accuracy. Minutes proposed by LMCC Seconded by AO'M	CS
1.05	Action points - A. Medical Assistant roles do not legally require a specific qualification, but medical terminology and basic IT skills are beneficial. Further investigation into an academy which provides medical terminology and a federation who can deliver. B. MMcG to share EPIC Futures report to LMP Members when available. C. Arrange events to support and promote employability. D. Share statistics. E. Share presentation with members.	LMP Team
2.00	Local Economic Partnership (LEP) Introduction	
2.01	O Duffy introduced Local Economic Partnership (LEP) noting the £4.5m funding over 3 years will be used to drive economic growth, supporting entrepreneurs and develop skills in different sectors to shape the future of CCG. Three themes outlined are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration, Growth and Innovation • Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Business Resilience • Sustainability and skills for the Future Interventions await approval; however, the proposals so far, compliment the work by LMP.	

	<p>MMcG confirmed that he envisaged some overlap between LMP and LEP in particular with regard skilled labour supply. LMP and LEP would work together to ensure complementarity.</p> <p>OD will attend LMP Meetings and OD will provide Members with updates as LEP develops and grows. MMcG sits on the LEP Partnership Board, along with several LMP Members.</p> <p>G Quinn reminded LEP to consider the availability of Skills Focus Programme and Step-Up Programme when considering interventions.</p>	
3.00	2024-2025 LMP Update	
<p>3.01</p> <p>3.02</p> <p>3.03</p> <p>3.04</p>	<p>MMcG provided members with an update on the following 2024-25 programme, including budget spend and programme outcomes:</p> <p>SP2.1 Retrain Plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 candidates on Transport (15 jobs) • 12 candidates on Non-Emergency Ambulance Care (8 jobs) • 9 candidates on Taxi (5 jobs confirmed) • 16 on Youth Work (14 secured employment and 14 gain qualification) • 104 on Security (71 jobs and 98 quals – 11 completed from DIS in Sep) • 24 candidates on Hospitality Academy (8 jobs and 21 qualifications) • 20 candidates on Childminding (6 started and 10 waiting on approval) • 22 on Beach Lifeguarding (Being counted on PLA) <p>MMcG noted that several candidates are still working towards completion, and final figures will be adjusted before the Annual Report.</p> <p>SP2.2 Seed Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 79 participants enquired on the 24-25 programme. > 56 applications applied to Seed Fund > 51 of those to have been awarded Seed Fund > 1 rejected and 4 applications pending (being scored this week) > Slight underspend (circa £5,000) <p>MMcG propose to Members to reallocate underspend to offer limited application support for new candidates by extending the current delivery partners contract. All Members agreed.</p> <p>SP2.3 Personal Learning Account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 381 participants applied for funding. > 251 participants approved. > 10 candidates did not commence. > 241 candidates being surveyed. > Survey of PLA candidates underway (to be completed for mid Oct) 	<p>LMP Team arrange events</p>

	<p>MMcG informed members that if surveys are not completed, job outcome figures cannot included in the Annual Report. A Moore, CCG will also follow up directly with candidates to ensure outstanding surveys are completed.</p> <p>SP3 Promote & Support Employability NI MMcG informed Members that a number of SP3 events were still to be completed with accrued moneys. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMP Conference (with stakeholders and partners) • Skills to Propel Breakfast (for employers) • School Careers Conference / Careers Planning Support • Lifelong Learning Strategy Workshop (join with LEP) • Apprenticeship Celebration Event and ongoing promotion • General Marketing and promotion of LMP and EMP NI <p>GQ informed members of a Business Event, taking place on 5th February 2026 and would like to discuss further with MMcG on potential opportunities.</p>	
5.00	2025-26 LMP Update	
5.01	<p>MMcG provided members with an update on the following 2025-26 programme, including budget spend and programme outcomes:</p>	
5.02	<p>SP2.1 Retrain Plus MMcG informed Members that the with the current pipeline of candidates for various academies, the 2025-26 budget is nearly fully committed. Additional funding is anticipated in Autumn 2025.</p> <p>MMcG added that considering this budget challenge they have more of a focus on candidates who are unemployed or economically inactive rather than skilled labour supply (SLS). SLS candidates are being signposted to PLA for support.</p> <p>Members were informed that the biggest challenge on Retrain Plus Employment Academies is finding delivery partners who can fully deliver a programme including programme management, recruitment, placements etc. At present LMP Officers are actively involved with all recruitment and onboarding of candidates.</p> <p>Moving forward LMP will explore only using training partners for the upskilling component of an academy and this will be reflected at a lower cost when calculating the budget for academies.</p> <p>MMcG informed Members that the LMP have been in discussion with Council Procurement about pricing and value for money assessment. LMP have been exploring Direct Award Contracts with public sector partners if value for money is achieved. Members will be updated.</p>	Share JBO candidate figures from surveys with LB (DMcA)

5.03	<p>MMcG informed Members that moving forward LMP want to work with JBOs to incorporate DfC Work Experience Programme in academies (and possible ADF). LB noted that collaborating with JBO would need employer engagement from the outset.</p> <p>Ongoing Academies</p> <p>MMcG gave an overview of the current ongoing academies, noting that Lifeguarding can be funded through PLA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 candidates on Transport Academy includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 HGV & 2 Coach (will include Warehouse/Agri/Construction transport) • Non-Emergency Ambulance Care (12 candidates – 10 completed) • Taxi Academy (9 candidates) • Lifeguarding (1 candidate completed and secured employment on PLA) • Security (65 candidates – 14 jobs to date) • Children’s Care (which will include childcare, classroom assistant etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 enquiries • 30 places funded (23 NRC Coleraine & 7 NWRC Limavady) • Awaiting confirmation with additional Limavady candidates • 138 candidates currently participating (target 110) • Childminding (DE Funding) 	
5.04	<p>Academies being developed and procured</p> <p>Discussion took place about a number of potential academies. This included the employer partners, current live vacancies, training delivery partners, potential candidates, delivery models, and costs. Academies included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Social Care Academy (Pilot using WEP and ADF) • Medical Admin Assistant • Work from Home Customer Service • Digital Marketing (possibly focus on the hospitality or retail sector) • Woman Returners • Youth NEET Academy (focus on area with no delivery – e.g. Ballycastle) • Community Development • Metal Fabrication / Welding • Construction Grounds Work • Scaffolding Academy • Roofing Academy • Retail Academy • Business Admin Academy 	<p>LMP Team to finalise academy and procure.</p>
5.05	<p><u>Health and Social Care Academy (Pilot using WEP and ADF)</u></p> <p>Discussion took place about the training duration and the content for the HSC Academy. Members were informed that employers in this sector want a short academy with some HSC skills but also soft skills and communication skills. The model being explored is 2 weeks of training and 2 weeks of work placement (via Work Experience Programme), circa 16 hours a week.</p>	<p>LMP Team to finalise academy and procure.</p>

	<p>Members discussed how to overcome the driving license and car insurance barrier for HSC jobs. It was noted that an eligible candidate could be supported by the Adviser Discretion Fund to access financial support to overcome these barriers, however Work Coaches will discuss the individuals' circumstances and will decide whether to approve an application for this funding.</p> <p>It was agreed that candidates should be trained first prior to participating on Work Experience Programme. And that possible progression to support on the Adviser Discretion Fund should only be after they have shown commitment and progress on the academy.</p> <p>Procurement to commence in Q3. If possible, recruitment to commence in Q3 with delivery in Q4.</p>	
5.06	<p>LMP Members agreed to progress.</p>	
	<p><u>Medical Administration Assistant</u></p> <p>Members were informed other similar medical admin academies had been delivered in the past with varying levels of success. Academy delivery models and content was discussed along with potential employers. Delivery anticipated for Q4.</p>	
5.07	<p>LMP Members agreed to progress.</p>	
	<p>Other academies LMP Members agreed to progress include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from Home Customer Service • Digital Marketing (focusing on hospitality / independent retail / agri-foods sector) • Woman Returners • Youth NEET Academy (targeting Ballymoney and Ballycastle as they have limited provision) • Community Development (LMP to explore if this could be funded through PEACEPLUS. LMP cannot fund if outcome is volunteering.) 	
5.08	<p>A brief discussion took place regarding alternative academies. Other areas suggested for academies were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacy Technician • Butchery • Optometric • Cabin Crew • Dog Grooming • Legal Sectary • Dental Assistant 	
5.09	<p>LMcC suggested an academy with all the local schools to address the Classroom Assistant deficit. DMcA said that the Children's Care Academy included a pathway</p>	

<p>5.10</p>	<p>for Classroom Assistants and that the course content had been designed to allow this.</p> <p>Members approved seven of the academies noting the benefits of the suggested list. Members agreed not to rule out Retail as an option as opportunities lie within this sector for development and upskilling. Academies agreed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Social Care Academy (Pilot using WEP and ADF) • Medical Admin Assistant • Work from Home Customer Service • Digital Marketing (possibly focus on the hospitality or retail sector) • Woman Returners • Youth NEET Academy (focus on area with no delivery) • Community Development (if no alternative funding and with job outcomes) 	
<p>5.11</p>	<p>SP2.2 Seed Fund</p> <p>MMcG updated Members on the Business Seed Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78 enquiries being processed • All eligible candidates referred to Go Succeed to get financial forecasts • Application Workshops planned for early October with Grants and Funding Unit • Key factor in previous years has been support for candidates to submit Seed Fund application (provided by Tangible Consulting) • No budget in 2025-26 to this support • Proposal to reallocate £2,400 for outreach events and £2,500 for specialist training, along with underspend (circa £5k) from 24-25 to extend Tangible Consulting support until March 2026 to support 40 applicants • It is forecast all 40 grant awards will be issued Dec 2025 / Jan 26 <p>MMcG proposed reallocating the budget below to extend Tangible Consulting Support to candidates in 2025-26. Proposed changes are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. £2,400 for outreach events (no longer needed as recruitment has been successful) 2. £2,500 for specialist training (can be delivered by Go Succeed or LMP team at no cost) 3. c.£5,000 underspend 2024-25 <p>Members had no objections and approved the reallocation of this funding.</p>	<p>Issue calendar dates (CS)</p>
<p>5.12</p>	<p><i>GQ left meeting at 12:05.</i></p> <p>SP2.3 Personal Learning Account</p> <p>MMcG updated Members on the Personal Learning Account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 250 applications submitted • 130 applications approved and 30 pending 	

5.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target for 2025-26 is 150 candidates • Accrued £50k funding from DfE in 2022-23 being utilised • PLA programme continuing, however, funding will expire circa Dec 2025 <p>LMP are on target to achieve 150 candidates with funding expected to expire in December 2025. It is anticipated additional funding will be secured in Autumn 2025.</p>																						
5.14	<p>DE Childminding Academy</p> <p>The 2025-26 Childminding Academy will be coordinated through Belfast City Council and will continue this way for the foreseeable. There may be an opportunity to develop candidates further, post programme completion, subject to budget. NICMA have been contracted via the Belfast CC procurement framework</p>																						
5.15	<p>Delivery Costs, Forecast Spend & Remaining Budget</p> <p>Discussion took place about delivery costs, forecast spend and remaining budget. MMcG updated Members stating Retrain Plus and PLA budget is currently fully committed.</p> <p>MMcG stated that an additional £125k of budget is anticipated from DfC. This would increase the budget from LoO for £458k to the original Action Plan budget of £583k. MMcG stated that additional funding might be available in Q3 due to other LMP easements / underspend.</p>																						
5.16	<p>The SP2 and SP3 breakdown for budget against (currently funded vs in the original Action Plan)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="209 1395 1021 1675"> <thead> <tr> <th>Budget</th> <th>Revised</th> <th>Original</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>SP2.1.1 Retrain Plus (EI)</td> <td>£68,000</td> <td>£75,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SP2.1.2 Retrain Plus (Skilled Labour)</td> <td>£53,000</td> <td>£75,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SP2.1.3 Retrain Plus (Disability)</td> <td>£15,000</td> <td>£20,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SP2.2 Business Start up & Seed Fund</td> <td>£51,300</td> <td>£70,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SP2.3: Personal Learning Account</td> <td>£87,000</td> <td>£139,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SP3: Increased Awareness</td> <td>£15,685</td> <td>£30,600</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Members agreed if full funding is secured from DfC to continue with the budgets in the original action plan, and to revisit these in Q4 and complete any Change Controls to DfC is required.</p>	Budget	Revised	Original	SP2.1.1 Retrain Plus (EI)	£68,000	£75,200	SP2.1.2 Retrain Plus (Skilled Labour)	£53,000	£75,200	SP2.1.3 Retrain Plus (Disability)	£15,000	£20,000	SP2.2 Business Start up & Seed Fund	£51,300	£70,500	SP2.3: Personal Learning Account	£87,000	£139,000	SP3: Increased Awareness	£15,685	£30,600	
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	<p>LMP Subgroups</p> <p>LMP Sub Groups to be developed include:</p>																						

5.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Engagement – this will include employer facing staff including Chamber, JBO EEOs - to occur bi-monthly with JBO office manager involvement. • Employability Providers and Partners – SPF and PeacePlus partners. To include engagement with PeacePlus coordinators for Employability programme with target for 250 people with PeacePlus coordinators to come on board to either members group or subgroup. • Lifelong Learning Strategy – subgroups to coordinate a range of skills initiatives and themes with access to academies. • Disability Employment – to include partners Triangle, CAN, SPF Partners, and local JBO <p>Navigatr Platform MMcG provided a brief overview of a new platform used by Belfast City Council to monitor candidate progression to manage their Digital Badge. Digital Badges give employers and organisation’s a visual way of recognising non-accredited learning. Concerns have been raised as to how this can be implemented by CCG, however members suggested that if LMP don’t have to upload and verify the information then the platform should be explored via the pilot scheme.</p>	
6.00	Any Other Business	
	Nothing raised	
7.00	Date of Next Meeting	
7.01	<p>MMcG suggested aligning meetings with finalised statistic information to provide members with an accurate position starting next year.</p> <p>All Agreed</p> <p>Date of next meetings: 10.00am Wednesday 26 November 2025 10.00am Wednesday 28 January 2026 10.00am Wednesday 11 March 2026</p>	Issue calendar invite (CS)

END

Name of Meeting: LMP 2026-27 Action Plan Discussion

Meeting Held at: Microsoft Teams

Date and Time: Tuesday 16th December 2025 at 10.00am

Minutes Taken By: Chloe Stewart

Attendees: Cheryl Lane (CL) – NRC
Chloe Stewart (CS) – CCG LMP
Danielle McAleese (DMcA) – CCG LMP
Debbie Rymer (DR) – Enterprise Causeway
Gabrielle Quinn (GQ) – NRC
Helen Lynagh (HL) – Invest NI
Lorinda Bond (LB) – Jobs and Benefits Office
Luke McCloskey (LMcC) – NWRC
Marc McGerty (MMcG) – CCG LMP
Oisin Duffy (OD) – CCG LEP

Apologies: Alison O’Mullan - JBO
Karen Yates – Causeway Chamber

Distribution: All Members

Date of Next Meeting: 28th January 2026 at 10.00am

Date of Issue: December 2025

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Ref No.	Description	Action by
1.00	Welcome	

<p>2.03</p> <p>2.04</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrain Plus Employability Support: We explored reducing this £14k budget and 48 candidate output, however, lots of academies include 1-2-1 support from the training company to help people apply for jobs and we cost this in when procuring academies. Retrain Plus Academies: On the Action Plan it names a number of academies. Academies discussed earlier this year at our LMP Member Meetings (e.g. Metal Fabrication / Welding, Construction Grounds Work, Scaffolding, Roofing etc) would all come under the Construction or Advanced Manufacturing academies which are already listed in the Action Plan. If an academy opportunity comes us throughout the year that is not named and distinctly different to anything on the Action Plan, we can get approval for this at a later stage. <p>After discussion it was raised going forward that the LMP can work in tandem with other programmes to delivery academies, for example in line with Skill Up, provided it is clear to both DFE and DFC who funded which parts.</p> <p>CL to share women returner programmes with CCG LMP for wider promotion.</p> <p>Issue were raised with communication between CCG LMP and Job and Benefits Office staff, with more updates from LMP required going forward.</p> <p>No changes on Action Plan required for SP2.1 Retrain Plus.</p> <p>SP2.2 Business Start Up and Seed Fund LMP Manager referred Members back to email circulated previously. Points discussed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Seed Fund: We considered reducing the target in the Seed Fund from 56 to 40 and moving this funding to Retrain Plus, however, we have lots of interest in this programme and we would propose keeping this as per the original plan, and we can review this in October. <p>No changes on Action Plan required for SP2.2 Seed Fund LMP Members agreed to look at allocating budget to help participants to apply for the seed fund, but this will be discussed again after the current Seed Fund concludes.</p> <p>SP2.3 PLA LMP Manager referred Members back to email circulated previously. Points discussed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Learning Fund: We considered changing the maximum grant amount and explored varying levels of funding for different courses; however, we have been advised by the Grants and Funding unit to avoid this as it would be very confusing for applicants. Also, we get excellent impact and job outcomes from this programme and feedback has been very positive. <p>No changes on Action Plan required for SP2.3 Personal Learning Account</p>	<p>CL LMP team</p>
<p>3.00</p>	<p>SP 3 Programmes</p>	
<p>3.01</p>	<p>SP3 Employability NI LMP Manager referred Members back to email circulated previously. Points discussed include:</p>	
<p>3.02</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SP3 programmes: We considered reducing the budget and the number of activities for each of the 5 projects in SP3, however, collectively these total less than £24k and Regional LMP partners are keen to see these activities take place. 	<p>LMP team</p>

	<p>No changes on Action Plan required for SP3 Employability NI</p> <p>CCG LMP team will be meeting with local JBO staff on the 14th of January 2025 to discuss job fairs. Meeting invites to be sent.</p>	
4.00	Work Ready	
4.01	<p>Work Ready as a previous programme.</p> <p>MMcG and Members discussion the Work Ready Programme which was discontinued in 2025-26. MMcG said that the LMP team explored the option of re-introducing the Work Ready Programme, however, we don't feel this is needed in 2026-27 as the Peace Plus employability programme will support 200+ people over the next couple of years so we can signpost any eligible candidates to this intervention, as well as JBO Job Club support to eligible candidates.</p>	
5.00	AOB	
5.01	MMcG to Employer Engagement, Lifelong Learning, Employability Partners JBO Manager sub groups need to be set up by CCG LMP team.	LMP team
6.00	Date of Next Meeting	
	28 th January 2026 at 10.00am	

END