

## (Stage 1 application)

### 1. Give key outcome(s)

- Support parent and career returners that are non claimants (have left paid employment for at least a year to take on caring responsibility) back into the job market through a bespoke training and support programme directly linked to the business community. The programme will address barriers identified in the ESP commission Barriers to Recruitment Employment, Recruitment and Retention report.

*Measure: Project beneficiaries will comprise 5 cohorts of a maximum 20 individuals – an average of 12 per cohort. At least 60 returners will be engaged and supported.*

- Employers within East Suffolk will be supported and engaged in a positive discussion around the creation of an enlarged pool of skilled workers from the cohort of returners by influencing HR practices. A toolkit will be developed to support micro and SME's understand the benefits of flexible working, supporting returners and how to accommodate such working. Within this tool kit will be imbedded the support of the Department of Working and Pensions (DWP) and other partners that can offer support to the recruitment process.

*Measure: The Project will engage 40 employers directly (14 of which have already confirmed) providing a range of different sizes/roles/skillsets/locations. It will work with these on specific returnship programmes that will seek to influence cultural/structural changes within the organisation required to fast track suitably experienced returners into more senior roles – longer-term legacy of the project. The toolkits will be available to all businesses across East Suffolk*

- Through working in partnership with the local DWP, parent returners will be linked together (claimant and non claimant) to build confidence and signposted onto the relevant DWP training route if relevant.

*Measure: Number of referrals made to DWP services and parent and carer networks supported.*

### 2. How has the need for this outcome(s) been identified?

A piece of work was commissioned by the ESP (through the both the Skills and Vibrant Economy task groups) with the aim of gaining a clearer understanding of the needs of micro businesses, especially in relation to the topics of recruitment, retention and the barriers to employment. The proposal was aimed at delivering the ESP goals concerned with raising aspirations and fostering a vibrant business sector. The research identified the following barriers:

#### Employment barriers

- Cultural pressures on mothers to be stay at home Mums.
- Lack of affordable childcare and flexible work patterns.
- Balancing work with domestic responsibilities, including caring.
- Personal willingness to commute, limiting job opportunities.
- Insufficient confidence.
- Rurality.
- Skills around job searching and managing opportunities in an information age.

#### Recruitment barriers

- Micros have less experience of recruiting and managing staff.

- Fear of getting recruitment wrong.
- These businesses having a higher sense of risk regarding recruitment.
- They want flexible staff.
- Must focus support on micros, even those with modest growth potential.
- Often the threshold for offering support to such business is seen as being too high.

#### Local barriers

- Transport
- Seasonality of some jobs
- Poor Childcare
- Low Pay
- Mental Health issues (from low confidence, anxiety, to more acute features).
- Employers view about lack of experience, skills, training of applicants.

Through the Economic Development Teams at both Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils, a strategic employer engagement exercise/survey was conducted within the target area to establish demand/need and the focus of delivery: i.e. primarily women-returners, the maintenance of skills during breaks and the fast-tracking of skilled individuals into more senior roles. Engagement is ongoing and participating companies range from smaller SMEs to some of the largest employers within the target area.

The Barriers to Recruitment report identifies key barriers linked to working parents, particularly women. This is further highlighted by the high proportion of economically-inactive women in East Suffolk (Waveney: 52.9%, Suffolk Coastal: 40.4%, National: 27%). Suffolk is one of three areas most at risk of skilled worker shortages which again highlights the need to bring together an intervention that addresses skills shortages by removing barriers to a skilled or semi skilled workforce that currently isn't active in the job market.

### 3. Who will benefit from the outcomes(s)?

The Project will engage 40 employers directly (14 of which have already confirmed) providing a range of different sizes/roles/skillsets/locations. All businesses across East Suffolk will be able to access the toolkit. It will seek to work with those on returnship programmes and seek to influence the cultural/structural changes that exist within the businesses required to fast track suitably experienced returners into more senior roles. Beneficiaries will comprise 5 cohorts (each max. 20 individuals, average 12). At least 60 returners will be supported.

#### Wider benefits:

- The independent place based business in East Suffolk will have access to a cohort of skilled/semi skilled workers who currently are not active in the job market. This will support skills shortage issues and allow businesses to grow.
- Businesses across East Suffolk who will have access to the HR information, knowledge and resources that will enable them to recruit the right staff and grow.
- The economies of the towns and villages in East Suffolk will benefit from a vibrant and resilient business community.
- Individual employees will access an enhanced programme of training and support that will support them to return to the job market.

### 4. How will the outcomes(s) be sustained after the funding has run out (if appropriate)?

The Project will support cultural/structural changes within local businesses and the implementation of returnship programmes and measures to enable the fast-tracking of suitably experienced returners into more senior roles.

At an individual level, participants will be equipped to re-enter employment and project partners will establish and sustain a network to provide ongoing referrals to other appropriate support.

5. Name of Project/activity that will deliver the outcome(s)
East Suffolk Returners Project

6. Brief description of the project / activity that will deliver the outcome(s).
<p>The East Suffolk Returners project comprises a comprehensive package of support for prospective returners and local employers. It will target women – but not exclude males – within East Suffolk who have been out of the workforce or economically-inactive/excluded due to family responsibilities/under-employment and for which confidence/direction/skills currently present barriers – supporting these individuals to become work-ready, secure employment or start their own enterprise.</p> <p>Support comprises both group and one-to-one coaching and facilitates peer support networks, reinforced with a range of opportunities within specific roles/employers. It will support participants with: identifying career options (restart, change of career, enterprise start-up); CVs/interview skills; upskilling/training; confidence-building; peer-support networks; direct access/introductions to local employers; understanding of employers' needs; mentoring; job shadowing; workplace-based training/experience.</p> <p>Employers will be supported with: flexible working; job-sharing; openness to returners/re-starters; returner 'compacts' (individuals taking family leave supported to maintain/extend skills/contacts via CPD/volunteering; fast-tracking qualified returner.</p> <p>Project / activity START DATE 7-1-2019      END DATE 17-12-2019</p>

7. Who is involved?	
<p>Who is involved in developing this outcome proposal?</p> <p>Suffolk Coastal District Council Waveney District Council Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services Department Of Work and Pensions.</p> <p><b>Agreed participating companies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adnams, Southwold (hospitality foodservice, distribution);</li><li>• East Coast Healthcare, Lowestoft;</li><li>• Lovewell Blake, Lowestoft/Halesworth (accountancy);</li><li>• Clays, Bungay (print/design, manufacturing, distribution);</li><li>• DS Watson Civils (Anglia), Beccles;</li><li>• Nexus Engineering, Gorleston (charity delivering STEM activities to young people);</li><li>• Waveney District Council, Lowestoft;</li><li>• Essex &amp; Suffolk Water, Lowestoft;</li><li>• Hoseasons Holidays, Lowestoft (boating and UK/overseas holidays);</li><li>• Mary Moppins; Lowestoft/Great Yarmouth (cleaning company);</li><li>• M&amp;H Plastics; Beccles (plastics);</li><li>• ATPI, Lowestoft (corporate travel);</li><li>• Pleasurewood Hills, Lowestoft (holiday park);</li><li>• Bernard Matthews, Holton (food/drink).</li></ul>	<p>Project / activity lead:</p> <p>Name: Marie Webster-Fitch</p> <p>Organisation: Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council Telephone: 01502 523395 Email: <a href="mailto:marie.webster-fitch@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">marie.webster-fitch@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Who will deliver the project/activity? Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services</p> <p>ESP Board member supporting the project Michael Ladd</p>

8. Give information about match funding here:		
Source of match funding	Funding confirmed?	Amount (£)
Waveney District Council	yes	£6,000
Suffolk Coastal District Council	yes	£6,000
Returners Fund Round 2 (Government Equalities Office) EOI to be submitted in August 2018, Requires ESP match funding to be confirmed.	No	£34,000

Total project / activity cost	£66,000
Total of confirmed match funding	£12,000
Total amount of ESP funding required	£20,000

9. How will the project / activity be monitored and outcomes reported (including project risks)?
<p>The following monitoring/evaluation criteria are proposed.</p> <p>Short term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative (no. enquiries generated, no. engagements, no. individuals completing the programme of support, no. individuals undertaking upskilling, no. individuals taking up a placement/shadowing/mentoring opportunity, no. individuals securing employment or self-employment).</li> <li>Qualitative (strategic surveying to assess participants' before/after confidence and perception of opportunities/project effectiveness)</li> <li>Strategic (no. meetings with local employers, no. opportunities for placement/shadowing/mentoring secured)</li> </ul> <p>Medium- to long-term:</p> <p>Qualitative (strategic assessment of shift in recruitment practices with regard to the female labour force within Norfolk/Suffolk as represented by a) clearly-articulated family-friendly practices, b) strategic assessment of flexible accommodation of part-time workers, project workers, job-sharers; and mid-career returners, c) survey of opportunities created to support upskilling, mentoring, mature apprenticeship and job shadowing, and d) ongoing monitoring/surveying of the career progression of individual women returners who have completed the Project – including salaries and satisfaction levels).</p> <p>Evaluation:</p> <p>At the Project's conclusion, an objective evaluation will be commissioned to establish/communicate impact and capture key learning for appropriation by future iterations. Options, going forward, will be assessed at that point.</p> <p>It will consider: have objectives been met? Have outcomes been achieved? What are the key findings? What impact did it have? What stakeholder benefits are there? Was our approach effective? What lessons have we learned? What would we do differently?</p> <p>Additional aspects will include: a determination of overall project VFM; an assessment of ongoing need and demand.</p> <p>The Project has been configured as a demonstrator/pilot. It is proposed that the approach is eminently scalable and replicable in terms of both geographical coverage and participation levels.</p>

10. Identify where the ESP money will be spent here:	
Description of activity or item (by who and by when where appropriate)	Cost (£)
1. Delivery of returners programme (employee)	<b>£42,000</b>
2. Delivery of employers support programme (including 1-2-1 consultation/ toolkit development)	<b>£15,000</b>
3. Marketing and Promotion	<b>£6,000</b>
4. Travel	<b>£3,000</b>