

## **PROPOSED FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR ESF PROGRAMMES (CONVERGENCE AND COMPETITIVENESS OBJECTIVES)**

We are proposing two separate ESF programmes: one for the Highlands & Islands (as a 'statistical effect' Convergence programme) and one for the rest of Scotland (as a Competitiveness programme). The general priorities would be the same for both programmes, but tailored to reflect the specific needs of each area.

### **Priority 1 – Supporting progress towards sustained employment to all**

**Aim: to assist unemployed and inactive people, as well as school-leavers at risk of becoming unemployed or inactive, in progressing them towards, and sustaining them in, employment by improving their employability, skills and support environment.**

Parent strategies: Closing the Opportunity Gap; Employability Framework; Smart Successful Scotland; Healthy Working Lives; Scottish Mental Health Strategy; NEET Strategy; ALNIS

Target groups: this priority would target inactive and long-term unemployed people who face particular barriers to entering and retaining jobs. Target groups would include:

- Long-term unemployed/inactive people
- Unemployed/inactive people with no or low qualifications
- 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training, particularly: young people leaving care; carers; young offenders; young people with physical and/or mental health problems and young people abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Young people pre-16 identified as being at risk of not entering education, employment or training on leaving school, particularly low attainers and persistent truants
- Unemployed/inactive lone parents
- Unemployed/inactive people with mental health problems, or long term illness and disability
- Older people seeking reintegration into the workforce or retention and re-skilling
- Unemployed/inactive people concentrated in the most deprived areas
- Other disadvantaged unemployed/inactive groups such as prisoners prior to release, ex-offenders, people with drug or alcohol problems, homeless people and refugees
- Unemployed/inactive people from ethnic minority groups

## **Priority 2 – Supporting progress through employment**

**Aim: to improve the skills of the workforce, especially low paid and low skilled workers, by engaging with both employees, employers and trades unions in order to enhance employability, productivity, adaptability and inclusion.**

Parent strategy: Employability Framework; Smart Successful Scotland; Lifelong Learning strategy; NEET Strategy; ALNIS

Target groups:

- Employees who have low levels of literacy and numeracy skills
- Employees without qualifications at SVQ level 2
- Employees in sectors where the effects of low skills are felt most keenly and where there are more barriers to progression
- Specific groups, such as women returners, part-time and ethnic minority workers
- Older workers who need to update their skills or return to the workforce
- Employees facing redundancy or redeployment as result of economic change and who need to update their skills
- Self-employed people
- Potential and new entrepreneurs
- SME managers with management and business development skills needs

## **Priority 3 – Investing in the employability and lifelong learning environment**

**Aim: to widen access to, and deepen the value of, lifelong learning by improving its support environment, particularly for key client groups.**

Parent strategy: Lifelong Learning strategy; Smart Successful Scotland; Lifelong Partners; Employability Framework

Target groups:

- Key client groups, especially those identified in Priority 1
- Personnel in training/education bodies providing lifelong learning support to key clients groups
- Social firms
- Employers, particularly SMEs