



Press release: 21 July 2022

Local partnership awarded grant aimed at helping more young people into work

The local partnership between D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2LEP), Direct Education Business Partnership (DEBP) and Nottinghamshire County Council has been selected as one of only seven projects to be awarded the Connected Futures Fund from The Youth Futures Foundation.

Youth Futures Foundation was established to find, fund, support and evaluate programmes which help young people to move into meaningful work. They announced the places that will benefit from its 'Connected Futures' grants programme at their conference in Birmingham on Thursday 21 July.

The funding opportunity was launched in November 2021, inviting submissions of projects to be delivered in identified Local Authority areas *'to explore problems with employment support for young people facing disadvantage and mobilise local stakeholders around a shared ambition for change.'*

Our project proposal was submitted, in consultation with multiple stakeholders covering Derby City, Chesterfield, Ashfield, Mansfield, and Nottingham City (D2N2 eligible areas). It involves examining the processes and pathways available for young people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism, to enter employment and identify recommendations for:

- Developing consistent and effective preparing for adulthood processes to enable young people to progress into work.
- Testing activity solutions for work readiness (young people and employers).

The project proposal resulted in more than 100 endorsements from across education, employment, skills, health, and the youth justice system within D2N2 - with all partners recognising that change is needed to improve outcomes. Currently just 1.8% of the working age population with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism secure employment across our local area, meaning that there is a talent pool for employers being lost.

One young person said, "No one really understands how hard it is and how frustrated I can get; I just want a job and to be like everyone else."

Clare Talati, DEBP Chief Executive Officer said, "Amplifying the voice of young people to inform and influence other key stakeholders is fundamental to ensuring that there are accessible, consistent, and

inclusive pathways towards employment. Therefore, we are delighted to be working through Connected Futures to support the aspiration of employment to become a well-deserved and long overdue reality for our young people.”

The project will run from now until January 2024 and is an in-depth research study, followed by an opportunity to test out solutions. Insight+, the research and evaluation branch of DEBP, and lead partner will:

- Conduct extensive interviews with representative young people.
- Conduct interviews with parents/carers to understand their experiences.
- Examine the support offered within education to move young people towards work.
- Analyse the statutory and local processes in place.
- Examine 'Local Offers' across D2N2; seeking to identify pathways available for young people to prepare for and enter employment.
- Work with local employers to identify inclusive recruitment practice and develop approaches.

All the evidence will be analysed to identify good practice as well as gaps/weaknesses, within systems, processes, support, approaches, and interventions.

Councillor Keith Girling, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Asset Management with Nottinghamshire County Council said, “We want all young people across our county to have the best possible start when it comes to having the right skills to find work. This is a great example of organisations working together to secure new funding to help make this happen. This funding will help come up with ways to improve the link between education, work and training across the whole system, especially for those leaving school with fewer qualifications. It will help us fully research the issues young people with learning disabilities face, such as autism, when it comes to finding work and how these disadvantages can be better addressed.”

Matthew Poole, Director of Grants and Investment at Youth Futures Foundation, said, “By providing flexible funding, Youth Futures encourages grantees to foster collaboration, innovation and risk-taking whilst acting as a catalyst for wider change – we cannot wait to see what these local group partnerships have in store for young people within their community.”

Will Morlidge, D2N2LEP Chief Executive Officer said, “The Connected Futures project is critical to enabling young people with SEND and autistic spectrum disorders to add value to workplaces across Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. It is an ambitious and wide-ranging piece of work which has youth voice at its core.”

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About Youth Futures Foundation:

Youth Futures Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit organisation established in December 2019 to improve employment outcomes for young people from marginalised backgrounds. The foundation launched with an initial endowment of £90m from the Dormant Assets Scheme. Its vision is to narrow the employment gap by identifying what works and why, investing in evidence generation and innovation, and igniting a movement for change.

For more information visit www.youthfuturesfoundation.org and follow on Twitter [@YF_Foundation](https://twitter.com/YF_Foundation).

About the Connected Futures Fund:

The Connected Futures Fund aims to join up services and will see local partnerships receive funding to establish new systems that provide young people who face more barriers to employment, with the connected and consistent support they need to get good jobs.

About Direct Education Business Partnership (DEBP):

We support children, young people, and vulnerable adults to have a positive future, by equipping them with the opportunities and tools for success. Our vision is for every child, young person, and vulnerable adult to have a future based on their skills, not their situation.

For more information visit www.debp.org and follow us on Twitter [@DirectEBP](https://twitter.com/DirectEBP).

Charitable Incorporated Organisation registration number: 1193708

About D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2LEP):

D2N2LEP supports economic growth across Derbyshire, Derby, Nottingham, and Nottinghamshire. Steered by a business-led Board, they work in partnership to create the conditions to attract investment to build a stronger economy and unlock opportunities to create future prosperity for the region. They work with partners across the region with the aspiration to offer every person that vital opportunity to unlock their potential through initiatives including Careers Hubs and Skills Bootcamp delivery.

About Nottinghamshire County Council:

Nottinghamshire County Council delivers a wide range of services from bases around the county to the people of the Nottinghamshire, everything from applying for a school place for a child to registering a birth.

Serving a population of nearly 800,000 of whom nearly 200,000 are children - the Council is involved in providing care for children, adults and for those with special needs; the provision of education; transport and roads; waste and recycling; planning and the environment; the registering of births, deaths, marriage and civil partnership; emergency planning and trading standards – this list could go on and on.

For more information visit www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

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