

1 – SCHEME DETAILS

Project Name	Aspire to Be	Type of funding	Grant
Grant Recipient	Doncaster Deaf Trust (DDT)	Total Scheme Cost	£ 465,000
MCA Executive Board	Skills	MCA Funding	£465,000
Programme name	AEB Innovation Fund	% MCA Allocation	100%
Current Gateway Stage	BJC	MCA Development costs	n/a
		% of total MCA allocation	n/a

2 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As stated in the SEP - The aim for SYMCA is to be a region that provides inclusive growth and progression opportunities for everyone, enabling individuals and employers to reach their potential, achieve their goals, drive productivity, and contribute to our economic success.

The project is a unique tailored and individualised non-accredited programme for the people aged 16 to 60+ from the SY region who have Special Educational Needs & Disabilities and promotes sector specific learning, independence skills, and mindset change in readiness to enter/re-enter the world of work and or pathways into FE/Apprenticeships where applicable. The programme is designed to build on personal skills and provide opportunities to increase confidence, self-esteem, self-development, and improve their health and well-being.

The programme offers sector specific non-accredited learning at the applicants' premises that cover basic industry standards and encompass elements of a Level 1 qualification along with real work environment training in industries, such as: - Hospitality, Logistics/Driving, Warehousing/Distribution and Retail.

The qualifications have been inclusively designed to aid support for those with limited abilities or anxieties that would otherwise be excluded or would not engage in an educational based setting. (Office of National Statistics based 2022) survey shows, disabled people who were "limited a lot" were almost twice as likely to have no qualifications than non-disabled people (10.1% compared with 5.4% – a significant difference).

The project will therefore provide a range of activities aimed at SEND individuals, including:

- Employability – CV writing, application/interview support/ independent travel, job search
- Confidence and motivation – to build confidence, goal setting, mindset changes, that can be adapted to suit various age groups and learning abilities
- Personal Development – Become more self-sufficient and less reliant on others. This will include things like, Budgeting, Healthy Eating, and Personal Hygiene
- Specialist support – Accessibility to Doncaster Deaf Trust specialist supports services that include, BSL, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and a SEND specialist Level 6 CIAG Advisor
- Sector Specific non – accredited learning – Inclusively designed to aid support for those with limited abilities, covering basic industry standards in Warehousing, Cleaning, Kitchen porter, Hospitality, Retail and Administration, all are based on a level one qualification.
- Sector specific work environment training - 5 simulated work areas (Warehouse, Shop, Kitchen /Café, Hotel Suite, and Admin office on site to provide hands on experiences
- Employer liaison support – works directly with employers to enhance opportunities, offer awareness training/Access to work support, risk assessments and organise work trials and in work support
- Digital Technology – Using and teaching different methods of technology for the benefit of learning, engagement, and continuous development of support.
- Multi agency network for progression – Local knowledge of various external services to source or refer to e.g Mental Health Services, Housing Associations, Autism Plus that supports and enhances progression opportunities

The SMART objectives set out in the BJC to be achieved by end of programme 30.11.25 are:

- 200 individuals with SEND engaged in the programme
- 200 individuals to achieve higher skills base equivalent to Level 1
- 20 individuals to achieve Level 2 skills level
- 100 individuals entering into employment
- 200 individuals improved Health Management – using the About Me diagnostic tool to measure effectiveness of courses/support

The candidate numbers, skills levels and employment will be monitored/measured through: Internal MI system, feedback, formal audits, external evaluations, Internal reviews, and performance assessments

3. STRATEGIC CASE

Options assessment

The business case is based on:

- Do Nothing Option – No change to the current situation with current work programmes which are not fit for purpose for SEND individuals.
- Preferred Option - Structured support for adults with SEND to place people directly into employment. Access for people to non-accredited learning based on identified industry sectors and industry standards to prepare people for work and meet employer expectations.

The applicant has stated that it is not possible for a lower MCA request option to be considered at this time due to the funding constraints of DWP, ESF and UKSPF.

	From this narrow list of options, the justification of the Preferred Option is clear in its ability to have a significant impact on the social-economic cost to the region compared to the do-nothing option which is having a disbenefit to those individuals and society. This supported by strong empirical evidence of the economic benefits of diversifying the workforce.
<i>Statutory requirements and adverse consequences</i>	There aren't any statutory requirements for this project.
<i>FBC stage only – Confirmation of alignment with agreed MCA outcomes (Stronger, Greener, Fairer).</i>	<p>The BJC demonstrates a clear alignment to the SEP in that it will provide inclusive growth and progression opportunities for everyone, enabling individuals and employers to reach their potential, achieve their goals, drive productivity, as it will capture those individuals that get lost in welfare and education systems.</p> <p>The project aims to deliver the following outcomes:</p> <p><u>Stronger</u> The BJC proposes 50% (100) will have achieved employment by Oct/Nov 2025. The Advantages of hiring those with a disability Quality- work, staff retention, motivation Corporate Culture – diverse work force, improves job morale and behaviours = Improvement in performance and productivity, and offers employers a wider pool of talent.</p> <p><u>Fairer</u> Economic inactivity - 50% (100) of service users in work by end of project Wage Levels - Increase in skills and employer liaison intervention will enhance career opportunities for 50% (100) service users Qualification & Skills - 100% of those who engage will have increased knowledge of learning and gained skills that could link to apprenticeships, pathways to FE and employment. Personal Wellbeing - 100% of those who engage will partake in “About me” -diagnostic tool - completed at various stages of the programme and used to capture, assess and measure to show improvements in individual needs and address barriers.</p> <p><u>Greener</u> Whilst not a major output from the project, Travel forms part of the employability process, service users are encouraged to look at types of travel i.e., short distance travel either walk or cycle & Public transport timetables for best mode of transport to work.</p>

4. VALUE FOR MONEY

Monetised Benefits:

<i>VFM Indicator</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>R/A/G</i>
<i>Net Present Social Value (£)</i>	N/A	
<i>Benefit Cost Ratio / GVA per £1 of SYMCA Investment</i>	N/A	

Non-Monetised Benefits:

<i>Non-Quantified Benefits</i>	The positive action and investment in employment outcomes for adults with SEND will have a positive social impact
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Value for Money Statement

The economic dimension is consistent with the strategic case and sets out a strong rationale for the benefits to be derived from the preferred option.

There are no monetised benefits but the non-monetary benefits are appropriately ranked against Social Value, Low Carbon & Economic criteria with strong justification of the relative merits of the preferred option. The employment rate of disabled people is 53.1%, but is considerably lower for individuals with SEND (29%). This project seeks to move 50% of the target beneficiaries into employment providing a good societal return on investment.

The justification of the Preferred option is clear in its ability to have a significant impact on the social-economic cost to the region compared to the do-nothing option which is having a disbenefit to those individuals and society. This is supported by strong empirical evidence of the economic benefits of diversifying the workforce.

5. RISK

The applicant has completed a risk register of which the top 5 risks are set out below.

Risk	Likelihood (High, Med, Low)	Impact (High, Med, Low)	Mitigation
Failure to recruit people on to the project	Low	High	Referral system in place with various agencies and waiting list already established. The project has been in operation for the last year and has established relationships with key agencies.
Significant reduction in funding	Low	High	DDT budget system, monthly monitoring including finance KPIs in place to ensure viability of the service. Quality assurance system in place to manage delivery and focus on outcomes.
Disruption to operations due to loss of accommodation or severe damage to property	Low	High	Business Continuity Plan and insurance coverage.
Major IT systems failure	Low	High	Disaster Recovery Plan. Cyber Essentials Plus certified. All data held on the cloud to reduce risks

Lack of employer engagement	Low	High	Established relationships with national /local employers. KPI's in place for new collaboration's

The risks appear reasonable but the applicant has only calculated a risk value for the first of these in the risk register.

6. DELIVERY

The timetable for the project is a 2-year delivery programme, starting in May/June..

There are no procurement implications as the service is being provided in-house by DDT.

The applicant has shown demand from evidence from previous similar schemes carried out but also a waiting list for the users for this funding round. There is also evidence of engagement with the market with a number of employers who are keen to employ and offer opportunities to SEND adults.

The level of cost certainty is stated to be 100%. However, this is not consistent with the cost breakdown which includes an inflation allowance so would suggest not all costs are fixed. The applicant has stated that the pay figures are based on likely pay award settlements and don't anticipate any significant changes. This would suggest a more appropriate costs certainty would be 95% as is usual for the final stage of a business case.

The applicant has confirmed that any cost overruns would be funded by the project.

There is clear governance with the Project Manager reporting up to the DDT's Chief Executive and Char of Trustees.

Monitoring and evaluation procedure are proposed with an Aspire to Be Monitoring and Evaluation Framework specific to the project. There will be monthly reporting throughout the project against key KPI's.

7. LEGAL

As the project is being carried out by a charity to meet its charitable purposes, the project is not to be considered an economic activity and so falls outside the statutory definition of a subsidy.

8. RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Recommendation	Full approval subject to conditions
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Payment Basis	Payment on defrayal
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Conditions of Award (including clawback clauses)	
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The following conditions must be included in the contract

1. Clawback on achievement of the following outputs by March 2025:
 - a. 200 New Learners through Non-accreditation learning
 - b. 90 Jobs Created
 - c. 10 Apprenticeships created