

Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership

Annual Report

April 2023 - March 2024

Contents Page			
Chair Foreword	Page 3		
NMD Labour Market Partnership	Page 5		
Membership	Page 6		
Action Plan Report	Page 7		
Schools to Industry Sub Group	Page 21		
Communications	Page 23		
Financial Statement	Page 24		
Appendix 1 – Social media stats	Page 27		
Appendix 2 – Sample Social media posts	Page 28		

NMD Labour Market Partnership Chairperson Foreword



Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership, established three years ago, continues to support local employment by delivering various initiatives to assist with the supply of potential employees to the business community.

With a focus on employability and upskilling, local residents from throughout the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area have again this year been provided with the opportunity to access support to work towards gaining employment or progressing within their current employment.

Funding of 25% was provided in June 2023 with the remaining 75% being secured in August 2023, enabling the entire 23/24 Action Plan to commence and complete within a condensed 8-month time period.

Nearly all initiatives in the Action Plan were delivered, including additional initiatives provided in response to the economic shock felt by local businesses impacted by the flooding in Autumn of 2023.

The Enterprise Readiness Programme was not delivered as it would have been a duplication of the new Northern Ireland Enterprise Support Service, "Go Succeed" which launched in Autumn 2023.

Key deliverables included:

- The appointment of a Skills and Employability Manager and Skills and Employability Officer.
- Regularly meet with partnership members to discuss progress and interventions.
- Commissioning Ulster University Economic Policy Centre to undertake a Strategic Assessment of the Newry, Mourne and Down labour market.
- Delivery of a Pre-employment Programme "Get Work Ready" to 48 participants; all of whom availed of one-to-one support, resulting in 30 securing employments to date.
- Assisting 35 local entrepreneurs with mentoring support and grant assistance to develop a business in the Newry, Mourne and Down area via our two local Enterprise Agencies.
- 95 Upskilling for Growth enrolments, surpassing the initial target of 75 participants, with 83 of those completing their respective courses.

- Over the course of the three years, the NMD LMP Transport Employability Academies have enrolled 92 people; 74 of whom gained licences with 53 of those gaining employment to date.
- Delivery of 5 employability academies to 66 participants, 51 of whom completed, 23 of whom have secured employment at time of print.
- Two sector specific employer engagement events were held to highlight the job opportunities within the Engineering Industry and Hospitality and Tourism Industry, with 58 people in attendance.
- Two business masterclasses were facilitated for flood effected businesses which attracted 84 participants.
- Local employers were invited to attend a Disability Engagement Event to obtain practical advice and support when considering employing someone with a disability or health condition.
- A large job fair was held with approximately 420 attendees and over 60 employers exhibiting their current vacancies.
- A careers fair was attended by 12 schools in the Ballynahinch and Lecale Learning Communities attracting 1000+ year 12 and year 13 students.
- A Bring IT On event was also hosted to highlight potential career pathways into technology.
- NMD LMP attended the Downpatrick Jobs and Benefits Office Youth Event and hosted two Health and Social care specific events in partnership with Downpatrick and Ballynahinch Jobs and Benefits Offices.
- NMP LMP continued to support the promotion of Apprenticeships as a viable and alternative pathway to employment through sponsorship of the SRC Big Apprenticeship Event and SERC Excellence Awards Apprentice of the Year.

These Action Plan achievements were made possible because of funding supplied by the Department for Communities, who also provided support to the secretariat during the 23/24 year despite the constraints faced by all Northern Ireland Civil Service departments.

The members of the NMD LMP are determined to work together and with central government to assist those who are unemployed or economically inactive and to upskill employees in key industries to ensure that they remain competitive.

Subject to funding, the NMD LMP will continue in the 2024-2025 financial period with a new set of initiatives to improve the functioning of the Newry Mourne and Down labour market and to support the local economy.

Dr Conor Patterson Chairperson, NMD Labour Market Partnership

Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership

Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership (NMD LMP) was established in February 2021 and was developed using existing structures within the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, namely the Employability and Skills working group and the Economic Forum. These established and successful groups combine a wealth of rich and diverse experience and knowledge and have enabled Council to respond quickly to the introduction of a local Labour Market Partnership (NMD LMP).

Originally in 2021/2022, NMD LMP was focussed on a developing a suite of programmes to ensure that this district offers residents the best opportunities for accessing work, upskilling for work whilst promoting Newry, Mourne and Down as a great place to live and work. In February 2021, a Chair and two Vice Chairs were appointed. NMD LMP continued into 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

Governance and Funding

Approval for the NMD LMP 2023/2024 was fully funded by the Department for the Communities; and administrated by the NMD Skills & Employability Manager and Officer. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer for the funding. The reporting structure for NMD LMP is via the Council's Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism committee who meet monthly for updates and decision reports provided as and when required.

Accountability

NMD LMP uses an Outcomes Based Approach (OBA) to measure impact and improve accountability. Action Plan reporting is completed using indicator and performance measure information; a project report card is utilised for each initiative and thematic report cards are completed biannually to ensure impact is measured and that the right projects are being delivered to meet needs identified in the Action Plan.

NMD LMP Goals

- To support those unemployed or economically inactive to move closer to or into the labour market
- To support those underemployed to upskill and access meaningful employment
- To upskill and reskill those in employment to meet the current and future skills needs of our employers
- To showcase the district as a great place to live and work
- To collate and distribute local labour market intelligence to inform local labour growth requirements
- To improve linkages between job seekers and local industry/employers
- To improve business to school engagement in order to expand local industry knowledge and opportunities among students and the future labour market

NMD Labour Market Partnership – 2023/2024 Membership

	Organisation
	Finnebrogue
	First Derivates
ders	MJM Marine
sines	National Trust
Business Stakeholders	Norbrook
0,	King Communications
	Re-Gen Waste
ပ	Invest Northern Ireland
	Down Business Centre
egic	Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency
Strategic Stakeholders	Chambers of Commerce
Sta	Disability Action
	DFC NISSA & Jobs and Benefits
	Careers Service NI
	Area Learning Co-ordinators
J / on ders	Education Authority
ining icatio	South Eastern Regional College
Training / Education stakeholders	Southern Regional College
	Clanrye Group

Action Plan Report

This Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, although some projects continued into Quarter 1 of 2024/2025.

Projects delivered by NMD LMP during the 2023/2024 period are set out in the following pages.

During the reporting period, NMD LMP implemented the Action Plan for 2023/2024 which includes the following three strategic priorities:

- **Strategic Priority 1**: To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area
- **Strategic Priority 2**: To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally
- Strategic Priority 3: To promote and support delivery of Employability NI

SP 1. To form and successfully deliver the functions of the local Labour Market Partnership for the area					
LMP Delivery & Development					
Initiative	Key Outcomes				
1.1 Effective delivery of the LMP through the appropriate resource, governance, and delivery structures.	Between 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024: • Facilitated 6 NMD LMP meetings: 30 August 2023 22 November 2023 10 January 2024 21 February 2024 27 March 2024 • Annual Report produced for 2022/2023 • Recruitment of Skills & Employability Manager and Officer – October 2023 and December 2023 respectively • Procurement completed and delivery contracts awarded for actions implemented under the 2023/2024 Action Plan • Continuation of Schools and Industry Working Sub Group – 6 meetings held • Quarterly reports and quarterly claims				
	collated and submitted to DfC				
1.2 Conduct a Strategic Assessment to inform the 2024/2025 Action Plan	Commissioned Ulster University Economic Policy Centre to conduct a Strategic Assessment and present findings to NMD LMP Members to increase awareness of local				

economic issues confronting NMD LMP and support the ongoing work of the Partnership.

SP2. To improve employability outcomes and/or labour market conditions locally

Theme 1: Economic Inactivity

Aim

Key Outcomes

2.1 Get Work Ready Pre-employment Programme

A total of 48 people were enrolled on to the Get Work Ready programme, as at time of print 30 participants have progressed into employment. This number is likely to increase as more participants have to complete the full 12 weeks of support. This initiative will continue in Q1 of 2024/2025.

- 48 Enrolled
- 48 Completed
- 30 into employment

Graphics used to promote the Get Work Ready programme:





2.2 Enterprise Pathway Programme

Specialised, mentoring and business support between 'Go Succeed' participation and establishing and growing a new business providing more sustainable employment for the participant.

Participants also availed of financial assistance towards business startup costs.

35 participants from across the district, enrolled on the programme, all of whom commenced trading and to date 33 of those received grant aid.

- 35 Enrolled
- 35 Completed
- 35 into self-employment

Theme 2: Skilled Labour Supply				
Aim	Key Outcomes			
2.4 Upskilling for Growth	Supporting employers to upskill staff to enable career progression for those underemployed or employed and seeking career progress, creating employment vacancies and opportunities for those entering the labour market.			
	This initiative overachieved targets set and will help support the Government's drive to increase the numbers of adults engaging in lifelong learning. With most of the programmes concluding in Q4 it is still too early to report on the number of entry level vacancies created.			
	95 Enrolled83 Completed83 Gained a new qualification			

Graphics used to promote a sample of the Upskilling for Growth programmes:





2.5 HGV Bus and Drivers Academy (2022/2023)

A continuation of the HGV Bus and Drivers Academy from 2022/2023 has enabled 17 of the total 27 participants to transfer into the 2023/2024 delivery period.

- 17 Enrolled
- 10 Completed
- 9 into employment

2.6 Employability Academies:

Positive marketing and recruitment on all employability academies; given the short time frame for delivery the academies were successful in achieving enrolments of 66 participants onto 5 academies, to include:

- Women Returners Academy
- Classroom Assistant Academy
- Digital Skills Academy
- Hospitality Academy
- Transport Academy

Women Returners Academy



- 11 Enrolled
- 8 Completed
- 4 Qualifications awarded
- 2 into employment at time of print

Classroom Assistant Academy



- 12 Enrolled
- 12 Completed
- 6 into employment (at time of print)

Digital Skills Academy



- 8 Enrolled
- 6 Completed
- 6 Qualifications awarded
- 5 into employment at time of print

Hospitality Academy



- 13 Enrolled
- 11 Completed
- 10 Qualifications awarded
- 4 into employment at time of print

Hospitality Academy Celebration Event image:



Transport Academy



- 22 Enrolled
- 14 Completed
- 14 Qualifications awarded
- 13 into employment at time of print

A Place to Work: Bring IT On

Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership hosted "Tech for the Future" on Friday 17th November as part of Enterprise Week 2023, in partnership with Bring I.T On to promote the various pathways to start a career in Technology.

Providing attendees with an opportunity to hear from a high calibre line up of professionals providing an understanding of the various pathways and careers, as well as discovering the fastest growing Information Technology jobs and the most sought-after skills employers need.

Bring IT On Event images:





A Place to Work: Employer Engagement Events

NMD Great Place to Work Events included sector specific events specifically focusing on the Hospitality and Tourism Industry and Engineering Sector.

Feedback from the 58 attendees confirmed that they particularly enjoyed the question-and-answer sessions with local employers; getting to hear current employee and business owners' journeys; and the career opportunities open to job seekers, students, and career changers.

Career teachers and Work Coaches were also in attendance and learned more about local employers which also addressed the issue of lack of awareness of local potential employers throughout the District.

Engineering Event images:





Hospitality and Tourism Event images:





A Place to Work: Masterclasses

Two masterclasses were held specifically for SMEs in the retail, hospitality and professional services sectors who were affected by the flooding predominantly in the Newry and Downpatrick areas.

A total of 84 attendees gained valuable advice for relaunching their businesses specifically on:

- Brand awareness
- Visual merchandising
- Digital marketing
- Upselling
- o Online selling
- Customer service
- Employment retention

Attendees reported the Masterclasses as either "very helpful" or "helpful" and comments included:

"Overall a very worthwhile workshop for me to attend and loved that the ideas and methods can be applied to almost all businesses. Particularly enjoyed the 3 x keynote speakers telling of their business journey and the pitfalls along the way"; and "Great event for anyone in business to attend. All speakers were excellent. I was surprised at the amount of takeaways from a 2-hour session that can be taken into our business. Great event & will keep an eye out for future events!".

Newry Masterclass images:





Downpatrick Masterclass images:





Theme 3: Disability

Aim

Key Outcomes

Employer Engagement Disability Awareness Raising Events

This event engaged with local NMDDC based employers to provide practical advice and support for employers considering employing someone with a disability or health condition.

Discussing key disability and employment issues, the masterclass provided attendees with the opportunity to hear from both employers and employees with real life experience.

Enabling employers to consider and explore the potential labour market that currently exists and provide opportunities to individuals who can provide a solution to the cross sectoral staffing shortages that currently exist in the marketplace with mutual benefits. Raising awareness of the benefits of tapping into a labour market to create sustainable jobs suitable for employees with a long-term disability or health condition.

Disability Awareness Event image:



SP3. To promote and support delivery of Employability NI **Employability Key Outcomes** Aim NMD LMP hosted a major Job Fair in Newry 3.1 Employment Pathway on 25th May 2023 and provided exhibition **Events** space to 40 employers and 10 support organisations and attracted 418 attendees with an opportunity to avail of 1,063 jobs on offer. Attendees, of which 69% were aged 18 to 49, reported 97% very satisfied or satisfied with the event. Employers attending the Job Fair were asked to complete a satisfaction survey. 80% of the employers indicated they had met suitable candidates with 98% indicating they were very satisfied/satisfied with the event.

Approximately 4 weeks after the event employers were contacted to gather information on any employability outcomes as a result of taking part in this event.

This resulted 62% of employers responding to the request for employment outcomes, who confirmed 26 job offers were made and 15 positions were successfully filled.

Lecale and Ballynahinch Career's Fair was held on 7th February 2024 in Down Leisure Centre, Downpatrick and was attended by 12 schools in the Ballynahinch and Lecale Learning Communities attracting 1000+ year 12 and year 13 students. Exhibitors included 43 employers/universities/colleges and support organisations.

Feedback from careers teachers included: "The event was highly worthwhile and very helpful for our Year 12 students in advance of making their A-level choices. The exhibition was very well laid out with a great variety of universities and employers. The timings worked very well, from the transport times to the slots allocated to each school. The students were able to plan their use of the exhibition in advance, which was much appreciated". And:

"I felt the Careers Fair at the Down Leisure Centre to be a huge success. There was a very good range of Exhibitors - Universities, Further Education Colleges, and Businesses. The Exhibitors were very engaging and I find Careers Fairs to be an ideal opportunity for us at Careers Practitioners to network and form long lasting partnerships".

Student responses were collated with an average satisfaction rate of 4/5; and awareness of opportunities 4/5.

Feedback from students when asked what particular elements of the careers fair they liked included:



Exhibitor responses were collated with 79% being very satisfied and 21% being satisfied.

The success of the Lecale Careers Fair has resulted in the Area Learning Coordinators in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council expressing an interest in hosting two Careers Fairs in the 2024/2025 financial period to cover the entire Council area.

Newry Job Fair images:





Careers Fair images:





3.2 Increased Awareness

Events attended to raise the profile of NMD LMP included Downpatrick Jobs and Benefits Youth Event; hosting of two Health and Social

care specific events in partnership with Downpatrick and Ballynahinch Jobs and Benefits Offices; and SERC Careers Event.

Combined numbers for these events were just under 600 attendees.

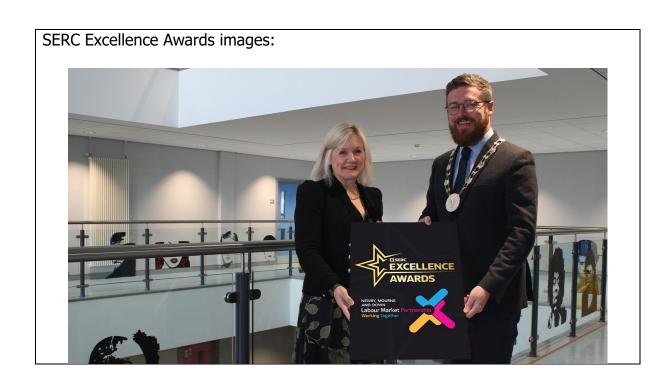
3.3 Apprenticeship Awareness

In supporting the promotion of Apprenticeships as a viable and alternative pathway to employment, NMP LMP sponsored the SRC Big Apprenticeship Event and SERC Excellence Awards Apprentice of the Year.

Combined numbers for both these events were over 1000 attendees.

SRC Big Apprenticeship Event image:





Schools to Industry Working Group

The Schools to Industry Working Group brings together key stakeholders for exploring opportunities to further engage and strengthen business and school engagement. During 2023-2024 period, NMD LMP continued with the work outlined in the subgroup which had been established in the previous year.

Membership includes the Area Learning Coordinators from across the Newry, Down and Down District representing twenty-six post primary schools in the area, along with representatives from the business community; regional colleges; and enterprise agencies.

The aim of the Schools and Industry Working Group is to showcase successful NMD businesses to schools, parents and young people to encourage a future pool of homegrown talent to remain in the district and ensure the continued growth and success of local business.



During 2023-2024 several activities and events have taken place to support the development of the working group including:

- Development of Action Plan for 2024/2025
- Working group meetings which took place on:
 - o 18 April 2023
 - o 6 June 2023
 - 19 September 2023
 - o 14 November 2023
 - o 16 January 2024
 - o 5 March 2024
- Local Economic Briefings from Ulster University Economic Policy Centre in:
 - o September 2023

- o March 2024
- Employer Engagement Events:
 - Engineering Industry
 - Hospitality and Tourism Sector
- Employment Pathway Events:
 - o Bring IT On
 - o Lecale and Ballynahinch Careers Fair
- Promotion of Apprenticeships
 - o SERC Excellence Awards Apprentice of the Year Award
 - SRC Big Apprenticeship Event

Communications

Planned and coordinated communication and marketing efforts were adopted to promote and bring awareness to all the initiatives and specific work of NMD LMP, ensuring NMD LMP is synonymous with employability and skills efforts across the district whilst simultaneously promoting the area as a great place to work and live.

In accordance with the Communications Plan NMD LMP, supported by LMP funders the Department for Communities collaborated with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council corporate marketing department, NMD Business Website, NMD Business Social Media Platforms, NMD Business Ezine, local press and the LMP membership to include Local Employers, local regional colleges SRC and SERC, Jobs and Benefits officials, Local Enterprise Agencies, training providers and Chambers of Commerce.

Communication aims:

- Increase brand awareness of NMD LMP, encapsulating and communicating initiatives, programmes, and activities
- Provide an effective identity for all LMP marketing activity
- Enhance NMD LMP's reputation both locally and regionally
- Create a Calendar of Events in conjunction with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Department for Communities and the other NMD LMP members to promote the programmes and actions of the NMD LMP
- Work with partners to promote the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area as a Great Place to Live and Work

Evaluation:

- To assess the success of the communications plan, engagement was assessed on an action-by-action basis, involving reviewing available information such as:
 - Engagement queries, applications to programmes
 - Social media impressions and engagement likes, comments, shares see appendix 1 for statistics of NMD LMP posts
 - Feedback from survey responses
 - Local press circulation figures

Financial Statement

Statement of Income & Expenditure

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership Statement of Income & Expenditure Year to 31 March 2024

	Total Funding	Expenditure	Expenditure		Total
		Charged	Accrued		Expenditure
Funding	£	£	£		£
Funding from DfC (Administration)	133,476.92	133,293.65	183.27		133,476.92
Funding from DfC (Operational)	394,396.95	269,952.62	111,309.25		381,261.87
Funding from DfE	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Contribution from Council	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Contributions from (Other Please state)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Contributions from (Other Please state)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
	527,873.87	403,246.27	111,492.52		514,738.79
Payments	£	£	£		£
Salaries	130,943.00	130,478.63	0.00		130,478.63
Staff Costs	533.92	1,255.02	183.27		1,255.02
Telephones	500.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Recruitment	500.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Audit Fees	1,000.00	1,560.00	0.00		1,560.00
Photocopying	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Total DfC Administration	133,476.92	133,293.65	183.27		133,293.65
Strategic Priority 1 (Operational)	10,662.00	10,662.00	0.00		10,662.00
Strategic Priority 2 (Operational)	356,081.95	232,073.49	111,309.25		232,073.49
Strategic Priority 3 (Operational)	27,653.00	27,217.13	,		27,217.13
Total DfC Operational	394,396.95	269,952.62			269,952.62
				,	
Payments - DfE (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - Council Contribution (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - xx	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Total Other (Admin)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - DfE (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - Council Contribution (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - xx (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Payments - (Other Please state) (Operational)	0.00	0.00			0.00
Total Other (Operational)	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
Total Care (Operational)	527,873.87	403,246.27	111,492.52		403,246.27
	,-: 3.6.	,	·, ·,		,

Certificate of Chief Financial Officer

Subject to the central charges shown above properly reflecting actual costs Incurred by the Council on 'behalf of' the Labour Market Partnership. I am satisfied that the expenditure shown has been wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by the Council on the Labour Market Partnership and that the grant receivable is in accordance with the regulations and conditions applicable.



Assistant Director of Finance & Performance

Date 22.04.24

Appendix one – Social Media Stats

	NMD LMP SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS ACCORDING TO PLATFORM Q1 2023/2024				
Q1	SPONSORED AD IMPRESSIONS	152445			
	QUARTERLY TOTAL IMPRESSIONS	172743			
	NMD LMP SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS ACCORDING TO PLATFORM Q2 2023-2024				
Q2	QUARTERLY TOTAL IMPRESSIONS	11619			
NMD LMP SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS ACCORDING TO PLATFORM Q3 2023-2023					
Q3	QUARTERLY TOTAL IMPRESSIONS	31101			
NMD LMP SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS ACCORDING TO PLATFORM Q4 2022-2023					
Q4	QUARTERLY TOTAL IMPRESSIONS	74,028			
	OVERALL TOTAL IMPRESSIONS 23/24	289,491			

Appendix two - Sample Social Media Posts





NMDBusiness @NMDBusiness · Oct 17, 2023

Out and about today promoting the Newry, Mourne and Down Labour













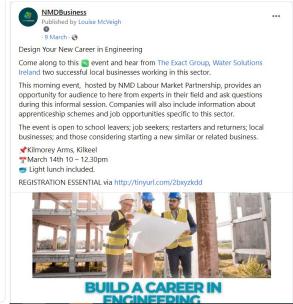












Curious about a career in Hospitality and Tourism?

Come along to this free event and hear from three successful local businesses who are excelling in this sector.

This morning event, hosted by NMD Labour Market Partnership, features a panel of local speakers, provides an opportunity for audience questions and will include information about apprenticeship schemes and job opportunities specific to this sector.

The event is open to school leavers; job seekers; restarters and returners; local businesses; and those considering starting a new similar or related business.

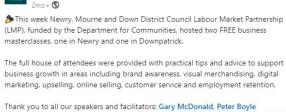
- ★Whistledown Hotel, Warrenpoint
- Thursday 21st March

6 ⋅ 4 reposts

- Ö10 − 12.30pm
- Light lunch included

REGISTRATION ESSENTIAL at http://tinyurl.com/msmsyv6k





NMD Business (Newry, Mourne and Down District Council)

(Argento Contemporary Jewellery), Clare Vallely (Kukoon Rugs) Siobhan (Wilmot) Walsh, Maeve Finnegan MCIM (Mitso), Bronagh Lennon FCIPD, Deborah (King) Loughran (King Communication).

See below links to photos and video from both events: Newry Video: https://we.tl/t-oFTUxzVIIH Newry photos: https://we.tl/t-PMFi0BsUMu

Downpatrick photos: https://we.tl/t-Cy9ZA5VUFK

#NMDLabourMarketPartnership

