



Department for
Communities

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Specification

Workable (NI) Programme

November 2024

1. Introduction

As part of the Department for Communities (DfC), Work and Wellbeing Division (WWD) in the Work and Health Group (WHG) is responsible for employment service policy, design and delivery of active labour market programmes, disability employment provision and improving financial inclusion and capability. The Workable (NI) (WNI) programme is one of the programmes, administered by the Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) within WWD, that offers support and assistance to help disabled people starting a new job and progressing in their careers. The programme also offers existing employees who become disabled or whose disability creates greater barriers than previously, the ability to remain in employment.

The Department now wishes to formalise a competitive Grant Funding Exercise for the delivery of the WNI Programme and invites applications from organisations for the programme's management and delivery. Grants will be awarded to a maximum of three suitable organisations/consortiums who must be able to deliver the service across Northern Ireland.

WWD's business aligns specifically to the theme of 'Wellbeing and Inclusion' within the Department's "Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020-2025", falling under an objective to 'Increase and incentivise participation in the labour market and wider society through targeted, sustainable interventions,

delivering these alongside community-based partners and other sectors.' The Department's five-year Strategy for 2020-2025 sets out the vision - "We will work together for a fair and inclusive society by transforming support for people, communities and places to improve lives and deliver generational change."

Due to the critical alignment with and importance of the WNI programme to the "Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020-2025", and its target client group, it will be necessary for the Service Provider to clearly demonstrate that they can support people to retain paid employment, who have a range of significant disability related barriers, such as learning disabilities, severe mental health conditions, sensory and physical disabilities and people with neurodiversity.

Service Providers are required to employ an Employment Support Manager and team of Employment Support Officers (ESO) whose roles and responsibilities are set out at **Annex A**.

2. Background to the Workable (NI) Programme

The Workable (NI) (WNI) Programme was introduced in NI in 2006 and was developed following widespread consultation, as a replacement for the Employment Support programme.

The WNI programme offers support and assistance to both employees and employers to help address barriers in the workplace which hinders their progression at work.

WNI assists disabled people through the provision of a flexible range of supports. Emphasis is on progressing participants on the programme by use of a distance travelled approach using the 'WORKS' assessment framework (outlined in **Annex B**) with the aim of progressing towards unsupported employment). Payment to the Service Provider is as stated in the funding model outlined at **Section 5** below.

The WNI programme aims:

- To assist disabled people overcome barriers they face in work to help them retain their employment and progress in their careers.
- To help disabled employees who are in danger of losing their job because of their disability, to keep their job.
- To provide a range of supports to meet the various needs of disabled employees in employment and to review this support. A list of supports provided by the WNI programme can be found at **Annex C**.
- To assist disabled employees to develop skills and competencies within the workplace and set goals for their career progression and enable support provision to be reduced, where appropriate.
- To assist disabled employees to progress into unsupported employment, where appropriate.

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, 1088 people were supported on the Workable (NI) programme. There were

362 new starts to the programme during that time and 178 progressed to unsupported employment.

3. Eligibility Criteria for Programme Participants

For a person to be eligible for Workable (NI) (WNI), they must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The individual **must be at least 16 years of age** (there is no upper age limit). They must however abide by the employers existing policy on the age range of recruitment.
- The individual must **have a disability, as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995** and the disability must have an adverse impact on the individual's ability to carry out a particular job.¹
- Disabled employees **must work on equal terms with other employees**. They **must be paid the appropriate rate for the job** and have the same access to training and development opportunities as other employees in their workplace.
- Disabled employees must have the right to work in Northern Ireland.
- Disabled employees must live in Northern Ireland. However, if the employee lives in Republic of Ireland, works for a Northern Ireland Company, and meets all other eligibility criteria, they are eligible.
- Disabled employees must be paid in GBP and pay Income Tax and

¹ The Act defines disability as "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities."

National Insurance Contributions to His Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

- The job **must:**

- be for a minimum of **10** hours per week.

Note: It is expected that WNI support will be provided to a person working 10 hours or more in **one** job. Whilst a person may have secondary employment WNI support can only be provided for the primary employment. The 10-hour rule **cannot** be made up of a combination of hours less than 10 hours in different jobs.

- be expected to last for at least six months from date of commencing the WNI Programme.
- be with a single identifiable employing organisation.
- be a genuine job, for example, work that would otherwise be done by another employee.
- pay at least the National Minimum/Living Wage

Someone who is self-employed may be eligible for WNI support and this will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the above listed eligibility criteria have been satisfied.

4. Scope of the Grant

Any successful Service Provider(s) will be expected to deliver the Workable (NI) (WNI) programme to participants (existing and new) across the whole of Northern Ireland. As of 30 September 2024, 720 people were being supported on the programme across Northern Ireland, as outlined in **Table 1** below.

The participants are employed by over 140 employers in the private, public and community and voluntary sectors. The current participants have a diverse range of disabilities these include learning disability, sensory, mental ill health, physical, autoimmune, cardiovascular, and hidden disabilities e.g. neurodivergent, diabetes, cancer, etc.

Table 1 – Number of WNI participants within each employer’s District Council Area

EMPLOYERS DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Antrim and Newtownabbey	37
Ards and North Down	43
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	81
Belfast	295
Causeway Coast and Glens	35
Derry City and Strabane	38
Fermanagh and Omagh	23
Lisburn and Castlereagh	68
Mid and East Antrim	29
Mid Ulster	39
Newry, Mourne and Down	32
TOTAL	720

5. Funding

Payment will be made monthly in arrears upon receipt of a detailed Claim from the Service Provider. The funding structure for Workable (NI) (WNI) is outlined in the table below:

Table 2 – WNI Funding Model

Successful application and action plan	£500 one-off payment
In Work support payments	£290 monthly per client
Progression (paid after 13 weeks sustained employment)	£300 one-off payment

6. Process

Whilst Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) have policy and budgetary responsibility for the Workable (NI) (WNI) programme, the first point of contact for potential programme participants is normally with you as the Service Provider.

The Programme Manager from HWSB will be responsible for approving applications to the programme.

The Service Provider will offer an independent, confidential, client focused, flexible, advice and mentoring service to people with disabilities on the WNI programme and to their employers. While participants can expect a confidential service, should information come to light that suggest improbity, HWSB reserves the right to share such information with other Government Departments for the prevention and detection of fraud, criminal activity, etc. HWSB officials will have access to all related information

and records held by the Service Provider for the purpose of monitoring and managing the agreement, including all related financial arrangements and electronic and paper records. The WNI Service Provider will refer clients to employability interventions (including training or education) delivered by the public, private or community and voluntary sectors which can assist clients to overcome barriers in employment.

All participants will have individually focused Action Plans that will be formally reviewed at least every six months; however, the Action Plans will be a working document for ESOs to track and monitor progress against goals and objectives set for the participant.

The frequency of support visits will be determined by the identified needs of each WNI participant, but all Service Providers will be expected to provide **at least a one-hour support session per month to each participant as a minimum service requirement.** Action Plans will help employees develop their skills, knowledge and experience to achieve realistic occupational goals including progression to unsupported employment, where this is the right option for them.

Through the Service Provider, WNI will offer a range of supports to employees and employers that can include:

- Specialist one to one job coaching support given by a designated support worker, both in the workplace and virtually.

- Mentoring.
- On and off the job training.
- Support to help colleagues mentor and buddy the employees.
- Advice and disability awareness training to the employer and other employees.
- Offering advice and assistance with making reasonable adjustments in the workplace.
- Agreeing a support package with the employee and employer and setting objectives and goals in an action plan.
- Other supports appropriate to meet the individual employee's assessed needs.

It is expected that in many cases, the type and level of support(s) will change with time and the nature of support(s) will vary. Longer term support will be available for people with disabilities if this is deemed necessary and can be evidenced in the action plan.

Employees should have opportunities to develop and gain skills to achieve realistic occupational goals, with progression to unsupported employment, and career development and progression with the same or a different employer.

The Service Provider will have responsibility for:

- Identifying support needs in the participant's employment and agreeing the participant's employment goals.

- Negotiating and agreeing with the employee and employer a package of support to meet the employee's needs in the workplace.
- Liaising with professional staff, e.g. Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Health and Work Support Branch and others to meet the employee's needs.
- Preparing and agreeing an Action Plan with the employee and employer which sets out objectives and development opportunities.
- Monitoring and reviewing progress against the Action Plan on a regular basis as determined by the identified needs of each WNI participant, with at least one formal review every six months and revising as appropriate. Any alterations to the Action Plan will need to be agreed by all relevant parties.
- Providing and recording support to help the employee progress within the job, including into unsupported employment, if appropriate.
- Ensuring that there is understanding and agreement between the Service Provider, the employee and the employer about the expectations for WNI.
- Arranging the delivery of support measures as outlined in the Action Plan.
- Providing guidance, information and support to managers, supervisors and work colleagues to ensure that they can meet the needs of the employee.

- Working with the Department's WNI Programme Manager and Departmental staff to ensure that the programme best meets the needs of disabled employees and their employers.
- The employment of front-line delivery staff who have experience of delivering and managing employment support services or similar services to people with significant disabilities in a working environment and are suitably trained to deliver necessary supports.
- Submitting claims to the Department and ensuring that claims are accurate, timely and validated according to the Departmental WNI Guidelines.
- Ensuring that appropriate insurance is in place to cover people visiting or working on your premises who are not in your employment.
- Ensuring that providers' personnel have Enhanced Disclosure – Access NI checks in place.
- Notifying the Department's WNI Programme Manager and other relevant HWSB staff of any major changes to participant Action Plans.
- Collation and submission of management information and any monitoring or evaluation information as required by HWSB.
- Ensuring a marketing plan is in place to promote the programme.

The Department would expect the Service Provider to develop close links with the private, statutory, voluntary and community sector as appropriate, to assist in providing support to WNI participants.

7. Statement of requirements

(a) Existing Participants

The Service Provider(s) will provide support to participants on the Workable (NI) (WNI) programme from the effective date of award of the Grant, 1 April 2025, (720 as at 30 September 2024). The Department would require new provider(s) to be able to deliver support to those participants of the programme supported by the current Service Providers. Current programme participants will transfer to new providers, to enable them to continue receiving support in their employment. From the effective date of the award all current participants will be aligned to the funding model outlined at **Section 5** and the assessment model at **Annex B**. Further details will be provided by Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) at the time of notification to successful applicants.

Incumbent Service Providers will be expected to work with their current programme participants, employers and Departmental staff to ensure a smooth transition for those concerned and enable support to begin with the new provider.

Continuity of support to programme participants and their employers is essential and new providers must make arrangements with incumbent providers in advance of 1 April 2025 to allow sufficient time to transfer those participants to a new provider, with as little disruption to the disabled employees and their employers as possible.

All transfers must take place before the start of the new Grant Funding period of 1st April 2025.

The Department will work with the new Service Provider(s) to determine procedures to facilitate the smooth transition of programme participants from incumbent Service Provider(s).

To facilitate continuity of support to programme participants at the end of this current funding period, the following procedures will apply:

- Incumbent Service Provider(s) will co-operate fully with the Department during the handover leading to the end of the current grant period, and within 10 working days of being requested, by the Department's Representative, must transfer to the Department, or any person designated by the Department, in a fully indexed and catalogued format free of any charges full access to all documents, reports, summaries and other information required to achieve an effective transition without disruption to routine operational requirements.
- Incumbent Service Provider(s) will undertake the handover of operations to the new Service Provider(s) in such a manner as to cause the least possible disruption and to ensure that such handover shall be done in the shortest possible time; and the Department will work with the new Service Provider to negotiate any changes to programme procedures

which are deemed appropriate or necessary by the Department, to ensure a level of service to programme participants and employers and value for money.

(b) New Participants

- Provide support to all new participants:
 - Negotiating and agreeing an Action Plan with all new participants and employers which sets out objectives, development opportunities and agreed support arrangements.
 - Providing support tailored to meet the employee's requirements to help them progress within their job, including transition into unsupported employment, where appropriate.
 - Enabling the employee to reach their full potential by providing support to both the employee and employer.
 - Ensuring that the employee and employer have a clear understanding of the Service Provider's role within the delivery of the programme.
 - Arranging the delivery of support measures as outlined in the Action Plan.
 - Working closely with HWSB and other Departmental staff to ensure that WNI best meets the needs of disabled employees and their employers.

(c) Service Providers

- Whilst some Service Provider organisations may specialise in working with people with a particular disability, within the delivery of WNI, the Service Provider is expected to work with all eligible clients, irrespective of their disability. The Service Provider may address this through partnership working or other sub-contracting arrangements. Where a Service Provider intends to form such partnerships or put in place sub-contracting arrangements, they must explain precisely the nature of these arrangements and how they will be managed throughout the period of the agreement.
- Ensure an agreed schedule of support meetings with a minimum of one hourly session per month per participant. The action plan must be agreed at the start of the programme upon application and signed by the participant, employer and ESO and monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis. For existing participants, the action plan and associated scoring under the new assessment model, as outlined in **Annex B**, must be completed within the first 3 months from the effective date of the grant agreement and submitted to HWSB.
- Action plans must be formally reviewed every **six** months and plans, along with participant progression scores under each theme, must be forwarded securely to HWSB within **10** working days of the review meeting for consideration.

- Carry out support meetings as required in addition to the minimum requirement of **one per month**.
- Ensure all claims for reimbursement are submitted to the Department within **10** working days of start of month and are supported by evidence as required.
- Assist the Department in ensuring value for money.
- Engage with HWSB staff in carrying out any review and evaluation of the WNI delivery model and agree changes as necessary to continually improve service delivery.
- Service Providers are required to pay a minimum of the Real Living Wage to all staff involved in the delivery of the WNI Programme.

8. Management of the Grant Funding Agreement

Prior to the commencement of the four-year grant award period on 1 April 2025, the successful providers will sign a Grant Funding Agreement for the first year of the period which will set out the requirements of the grant and the amount of the grant for that year. A Grant Funding Agreement will be signed by the successful providers at the start of each subsequent year of the grant period.

The Department will undertake robust monitoring functions to ensure that the programme is delivered to a high standard and that all commitments in the agreement are being met. Regular monitoring, review and Quality

Standards visits will take place to ensure that the programme is being delivered in an economical, efficient and effective manner and that each Workable (NI) (WNI) Action Plan is being implemented and reviewed.

For monitoring purposes, periodically the Department's WNI Programme Manager and/or other members of Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) staff will accompany the Service Provider's member of staff whilst they are carrying out a review of the Action Plan. Officials from the Department, upon request, must be allowed access to the Service Provider's premises and WNI records, and be permitted to interview staff and administrators. Any such visits will be agreed in advance with the Service Provider.

The collection of timely and accurate Management Information will play a vital role in the day-to-day management of the programme funding. Action Plans and progression targets will be monitored during visits and by communication to indicate if and where any adjustments need to be made to documentation or processes of the programme.

The Service Provider shall provide HWSB with relevant information determined by the Department as and when required.

The Department will continue to develop systems and processes that enable the ongoing monitoring, review and evaluation of all elements of the

programme with the assistance of the Service Provider, where appropriate.

Quality Standards procedures have been designed to:

- Enable the Department and the Service Provider to deliver an employment programme to the optimum level of quality for customers with disabilities.
- Ensure that all participants on the programme are fully supported by the Service Provider to fulfil their potential in the world of work.
- Develop and embed a culture of self-improvement that will ensure the WNI Service Provider is fully responsive to the needs of the Department, their customers and employers and commit to and achieve continuous self-improvement and quality standards of delivery.
- Ensure the Service Provider monitors and evaluates its performance continually and systematically to improve the quality of its provision and the level of achievement in the programme.
- Inform the process of the Service Provider's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Provide essential qualitative and quantitative information to the Department.

The Quality Standards Framework incorporates both Service Provider self-assessment and Departmental assessment.

The Service Provider will submit an annual self-assessment report and Improvement Plan to HWSB for monitoring and approval. Appointed officers from HWSB will evaluate the quality of the Service Provider's improvement planning through site visits and scrutiny of their self-assessment report and Improvement Plan.

The Service Provider will submit an Assurance Statement each year detailing the status of specific criteria under the following Quality Standards headings:

- Strategy and Improvement
- Human Resources
- Governance
- Assessment of Action Plans
- Workplace Support, Performance and Monitoring
- Employability, progression, and Open Employment
- Advice, Guidance and Support

The Assurance Statement will be signed and dated by the Service Provider and will provide details of the lead responsibility for each Quality Standard and the status i.e. In place assurance given; In Development; Not in place/development. Comments will be required for issues in development or not in place.

A formal inspection, designed to promote the highest possible standards of programme delivery and achievement, will take place on the Service Provider's premises at least every two years. This inspection will involve checking the evidence provided against

each Quality Standards criteria.

A report of the findings of the inspection will be issued by HWSB and will acknowledge good practice and outcomes and, where appropriate, provide a clear basis for improvement. If the Service Provider receives an overall grade of Medium or High Risk or a Limited or Unacceptable Audit Opinion for any aspect of its provision, an Improvement Plan will be required.

Departmental staff will visit the Service Provider to monitor the Grant Agreement on a regular basis. Monitoring will take place to ensure that the Service Provider has sound management systems in place that enable delivery of quality support to employees and employers which lead to performance levels being achieved, with due attention being made to Grant compliance, value for money and financial probity.

The Department's Internal Audit or the Northern Ireland Audit Office may also undertake visits to the Service Provider to evaluate the effectiveness of the Service Provider's systems and to provide the Department with an assurance that payments to the Service Provider are in accordance with requirements that public funds are protected and that value for money has been obtained in accordance with the agreed Grant requirements. This will entail formal inspection of management and administration procedures and systems.

The Service Provider will be required to capture all statutory data in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and report to the Department as required so that it can meet its legal obligations. In delivering the programme proper account will be taken to ensure that the Department shall “in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland, have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity” between:

- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation.
- Men and women generally.
- Persons with a disability and persons without.
- Persons with dependents and persons without.

Without prejudice to these obligations, the Department is also required, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religions, political opinion or racial group.

Other reviews and inspections may also be carried out by the Department’s Internal Auditors, the Northern Ireland Audit Office and others as required by the Department from time to time.

The Department will carry out periodical checks to ensure that the Service Provider is complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) requirements to the standards expected

of Departmental organisations and any third-party Service Providers.

The General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)

The Service Provider will have in place management and administrative systems to ensure that all appropriate information is collected and filed as detailed in a Data Sharing Agreement that will be put in place between the Department and the Service Provider to comply with the legal requirements. Electronic data will be shared by means of secure file transfer software. The Department will fund the software and software licence for the agreement period. The Service Provider must meet all security requirements as set out in the Data Sharing Agreement.

Data must not be transferred outside NI without the express permission of the Department, which must be applied for in writing.

9. Performance Management

Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) will monitor the performance of the Service Provider. The Service Provider will provide information in the format requested on a weekly/ monthly basis and within two working days of when asked to do so.

The Service Provider will be expected to complete Action Plans for all clients and will meet agreed timescales for completion of all documentation.

HWSB will work with the Service Provider to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will assist clients, employers and the Service Provider measure the progress that clients have made and progressions to unsupported employment. Measurement of the KPIs will demonstrate the benefits of providing this support and the associated outcomes.

Key Performance Indicators can include the following:

- The number of new clients starting the programme.
- The assessment of support requirements.
- Performance and timescale targets for progression against the assessment themes to monitor distance travelled.
- Percentage of annual reviews achieving in-programme progression.
- Number of clients progressing into unsupported employment.
- Assessment of the benefits for employers in providing supports.
- Quality Standard targets assessed through the Departmental Framework.
- Data relating to sustainable employment.

The Department's Workable (NI) (WNI) Programme Manager and/or HWSB staff may:

- Accompany the Service Provider's WNI ESO whilst they are carrying out a visit with the employee and/or employer, for monitoring purposes. Any such visits will be agreed in advance.

- Have the right to monitor the Service Provider to determine:
 - the achievement of Key Performance Indicators.
 - the efficiency and effectiveness of the agreement in terms of quality, value for money and agreed protocols.
- Carry out random sampling of Action Plans for quality and accuracy.
- Arrange quarterly Service Provider management meetings.

10. Unsatisfactory Performance

In the event that Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) identifies that the performance of the Service Provider does not meet the appropriate standard, HWSB staff shall liaise with the Provider to determine the action that needs to be taken. The process for addressing unsatisfactory performance will be detailed in the Service Provider Guidelines. Remedies could involve the withholding of grant payments or, in a major breach of the grant conditions, the termination of the grant award.

11. Funding and Grant Agreement period

The funding model will be set by Health and Work Support Branch (HWSB) and not through the Grant Call process. The funding model is as follows:

Table 3 – Workable (NI) (WNI) Funding Model

Successful application and action plan	£500 one-off payment
In Work support payments	£290 monthly per client
Progression (paid after 13 weeks sustained employment)	£300 one-off payment

- (i) The Grant payments shall only be made in arrears in response to claims submitted at monthly intervals using the Department’s official claim form. Such financial claims must be submitted and received by the HWSB within 10 days of the end of the relevant month. Supporting evidence to demonstrate how the claim is worked out must also be submitted with the claim.
- (ii) Grant shall not be payable in respect of VAT recoverable by the Service Provider.
- (iii) The Department will make every effort to pay claims promptly but accepts no liability in respect of loss attributable to delay in the payment of claims or to any suspension, reduction or cancellation of Grant.
- (iv) The Department will pay into the Bank Account as per details provided by the Service Provider.
- (v) The annual funding will be based on the number of participants on the WNI programme and the allocated Departmental budget for the programme.

(vi) The Grant will be for a maximum period of four years, subject to available funding.

12. Consortia / Partnership Bids

Applications will be welcomed from individual organisations as well as from consortia / partnerships wishing to deliver the programme. In all cases, the lead partner and each individual organisation within partnerships or consortia, will be expected to meet the required programme and quality standards.

Where a consortia / partnership bid is submitted, the lead partner(s) (Managing Agent) must be identified. The Managing Agent is required to take overall responsibility for the management and administration of the delivery of the programme. The Managing Agent, should their bid be successful, will be required to enter formal grant funding arrangements with the Department. This should include proposed contingency arrangements within the consortia/partnership in the event of Employment Support Staff being absent who would normally deliver the WNI service to participants.

DELIVERY OF THE WORKABLE (NI) (WNI) PROGRAMME EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT MANAGER – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To oversee the delivery of the WNI Programme.
2. To liaise with the Department for Communities, as required.
3. To plan, coordinate and manage work inputs and outputs of all reporting staff members.
4. To ensure delivery within financial constraints and achieve budgetary targets.
5. To manage timely and accurate programme and budgetary reporting processes in line with appropriate operational obligations and procedures.
6. To produce management reports on progress of WNI as required.
7. To contribute to the management of the delivery of accredited training by staff members as appropriate.
8. To put in place appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems and processes to ensure that all programme delivery/ training activities are evaluated and reviewed regularly.
9. To ensure quality standards are implemented, monitored and reviewed.
10. To contribute to effective implementation of staffing systems and processes relating to direct staff members, such as recruitment and selection, appraisal, staff development and health and safety.
11. To promote diversity and equality within the organisation and programme delivery in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (NI Order) 1995 and Section 75 duties.
12. To ensure all governance requirements as set out in the Grant Funding Agreement are in place and reviewed regularly.

DELIVERY OF THE WORKABLE (NI) (WNI) PROGRAMME EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT OFFICER (ESO) – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To assist applicants to WNI during the application process and engage with employer representatives as necessary to identify support needs and complete the initial Action Plan.
2. To provide a professional and quality-based assessment of both the client and employer needs and offer impartial information, advice and guidance on all aspects of work-related issues within programme parameters.
3. To complete and deliver on agreed Action Plan for clients to enhance opportunities of retaining paid employment, progressing within their job and future career and ultimately aiming towards unsupported employment, wherever possible.
4. To carry out reviews of Action Plans on an ongoing basis and provide the Department with copies of updated Action Plans and associated scoring against assessment themes following each six-monthly review. Actions Plans to be revised as necessary.
5. To continually assess needs of clients and employers to enable appropriate supports to be put in place to sustain employment requirements.
6. To liaise and develop relationships with referral partners, other relevant external organisations and statutory agencies to ensure agreed formal targets and obligations are met within the agreed timescale and to a high-quality standard.
7. To assess, monitor and review the effectiveness of support actions for both employees and employers against the aims and objectives of the WNI programme.
8. To ensure that the WNI employee and employer have a clear understanding of the Provider's and ESO's role within the delivery of the programme.
9. To ensure that a written agreement between the Provider and the employer which divides their responsibilities exists.
10. To ensure that relevant administration standards and requirements are adhered to.
11. To ensure that Management Information systems are maintained and updated thoroughly and in a timely manner.

Workable (NI) 'WORKS' Assessment Model

The 'WORKS' assessment model is the framework used by Support Workers to identify your support needs on the Workable (NI) programme. It covers 5 themes where you are most likely to need help at work and will identify actions to aid your progression in your role. The WORKS model will be used throughout your participation on the programme to track and monitor your progress and provide you with appropriate support whenever you need it.

How to Use the 'WORKS' Assessment Model

The WORKS assessment model will help you and your Support Worker monitor the progress you have made in work as a result of the support you have received. The progression scale below is marked 1-5 and is applied to each of the 5 themes in **Table 1** to assess where you are on your journey to unsupported employment.

You and your Support Worker will assess each theme, consider the indicators under each one and discuss with your employer. This will then establish your agreed score for each theme. The Support Worker will record these scores at the application stage and at each review stage to monitor your progress.

The assessment under each theme will help you and your Support Worker build an action plan in which to set specific measurable targets and objectives. This

action plan will inform the necessary supports and actions that need to be put in place. Your progress under each theme will then be reviewed during support visits/meetings.

Workable(NI) 'WORKS' Progression Scale

Willing to accept help – 1

At this level you have recognised the need for assistance to help overcome barriers you are facing in work but don't know how to. You acknowledge that you need specific help and training and are engaging with your Support Worker to help you progress within the identified areas.

Open to learning – 2

At this point you are learning skills to overcome barriers in the workplace and can take on board the advice and guidance from your Support Worker. You are starting to build on your skills and engaging with your employer to address issues.

Re-focus - making changes – 3

At this stage you can make changes to improve your skills, address barriers and focus on your health and wellbeing. You are actively engaging with your employer with guidance from your Support Worker and making progress to achieving future goals and aspirations.

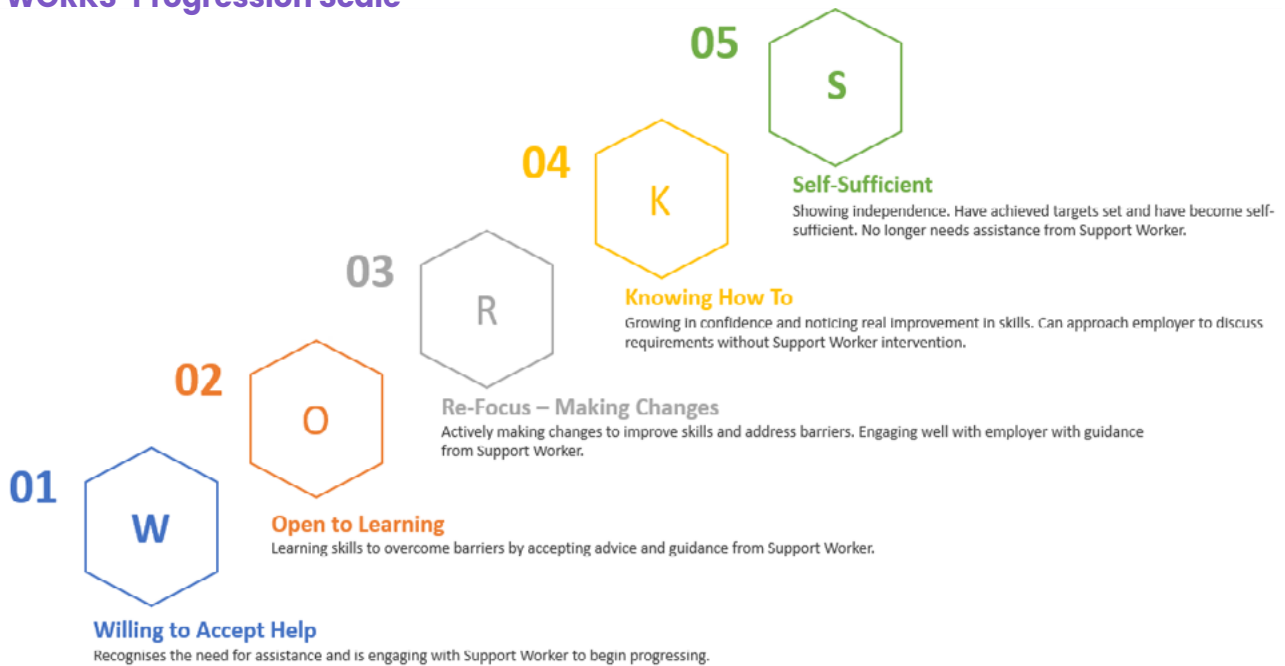
Knowing how to - 4

You know how to overcome barriers and are growing in confidence in carrying out your role and noticing a real improvement in your skills. You can maintain a good level of health and wellbeing. You now have the confidence to approach your employer and discuss your requirements without Support Worker intervention.

Self-Sufficient – 5

At this level you are showing independence and are actively working with your employer to manage any requirements. You have achieved targets set and improved your skills and knowledge in your role. You have become self-sufficient to the point that you do not need assistance from your Support Worker.

'WORKS' Progression Scale



Five Themes

Work Role Skills and Experience

This theme is about developing the core skills you need to carry out your job. You and your Support Worker will work together to improve your soft skills, such as decision making, problem solving, time and task management and improving your knowledge of, and confidence in, your workplace policies and procedures.

Personal Skills

This theme is about improving your personal skills to help you address barriers in your work life. You will work with your Support Worker to introduce methods to improve your focus, motivation, confidence, reliability, resilience and how you adapt to changes at work.

Workplace Skills

This theme is about developing and maintaining the necessary social skills

required at work. You will work with your Support Worker to find tailored approaches to communicating effectively with colleagues and to improve your professional conduct and presentation in the workplace.

Professional Development

This theme is about increasing your ability to progress and reach your full potential in the workplace. For some this is focused on support with training to succeed in your current role. While for others, this may be gaining new skills and qualifications to progress, as far as you desire, in your career.

Health and Wellbeing

This theme is about being able to manage your disability, health and wellbeing in the workplace. You will work with your Support Worker to develop a better understanding of how to manage your condition, the adjustments needed and the confidence and ability to communicate this to your employer.

TABLE 1 – Areas to be considered under each theme.

Work role skills and experience	Personal Skills	Workplace skills	Professional Development	Health & Wellbeing
Required numeracy, literacy and IT skills	Adaptable	Social skills	Role Development	Communicates clearly about mental health, disability, health condition(s) & wellbeing support needs
Follows workplace policies and procedures	Self-esteem / confidence	Professional Conduct	Aspirations	Engages well with support(s)
Decision Making & Problem solving	Focus and motivation	Team working	Training and qualifications	Manages mental health, disability, health condition(s) & wellbeing
Communication skills	Resilient	Personal presentation	Creativity and Innovation	Maintains health and wellbeing focus
Time and task management	Reliable			

'WORKS' Assessment Model Guide

For each of the five themes, you should work with your Support Worker to agree on a level which you feel describes you best.

Work Role Skills and Experience

I am struggling with developing the relevant skills needed for my job.	1. I need help.
I am learning the relevant skills needed for my job.	2. I know I can learn.
I am making changes and noticing a difference in my confidence levels. I am starting to be able to carry out tasks independently, with guidance.	3. I am making changes to improve.
I have noticed a real improvement in my skills and feel more comfortable doing my job and working on my own initiative.	4. I can apply the knowledge I have gained in work.
I feel confident and self-sufficient. I have the necessary skills needed to carry out my job.	5. I am confident and can apply my skills independently.

Personal Skills

My confidence levels are low; I struggle to deal with change, and I find it difficult to concentrate in work.	1. I need help.
I am learning new tools that I need to improve my confidence, concentration, and how I adapt to changes.	2. I know I can learn.
I am introducing the new skills I have learned, and with guidance, I am making progress.	3. I am making changes to improve.
I am feeling more confident and resilient in work, and I know how to look after myself to increase my concentration levels.	4. I can apply the knowledge I have gained in work.
I feel confident, resilient, and can handle change more easily.	5. I am confident and can apply my skills independently.

Workplace Skills

I struggle to communicate with others and find it hard to understand behaviours expected of me in the workplace.	1. I need help.
I am learning how to improve my communication skills, the behaviours I need to display in work, and how to work with others.	2. I know I can learn.
I am introducing the new skills I have learned, and with guidance, I am making progress.	3. I am making changes to improve.
I am using my new skills in the workplace and feeling more confident in knowing what is expected of me.	4. I can apply the knowledge I have gained in work.
I can independently and comfortably communicate as needed in the workplace.	5. I am confident and can apply my skills independently.

Professional Development

I struggle with motivation and can't see a time where I will be good at my job and able to progress in work.	1. I need help.
My motivation is increasing as I learn new skills in work.	2. I know I can learn.
I am feeling more confident in my abilities and more motivated. I believe I can succeed in my job and continue making progress.	3. I am making changes to improve.
I am motivated and feel confident to bring new ideas and learning to my job.	4. I can apply the knowledge I have gained in work.
I am comfortable with my own career aspirations, and I am motivated to work to my full potential.	5. I am confident and can apply my skills independently.

Health and Wellbeing

I find it difficult to manage my disability/health condition when working. I can't communicate my needs to my employer openly. Engaging with support sometimes feels overwhelming.	1. I need help.
I want to learn how to recognise what I need and how to communicate this with my Support Worker and employer.	2. I know I can learn.
I know what adjustments I need in the workplace but still struggle with communicating this with my employer.	3. I am making changes to improve.
I am gaining confidence when communicating my requirements with my employer.	4. I can apply the knowledge I have gained in work.
I feel confident in managing my condition in the workplace and can openly advocate for myself with my employer.	5. I am confident and can apply my skills independently.

Range of Supports

The package of support for each participant will be designed to meet their employment needs. The Service Provider will be expected to ensure the provision of some of the types of support below:

- The use of a specialist ESO to assist the employee in learning and performing the duties of the job and adjusting to the work environment and developing natural supports. The ESO will devise appropriate support systems for the individual and monitor and assess these systems adapting and revising as required. The ESO will work with the employee, the employer, supervisors, colleagues, family/carers and other disability professionals as appropriate.
- Buddying and mentoring from colleagues within the workplace.
- On and off the job training to assist the employee to carry out the full range of duties relating to the job to the best of their abilities.
- Support to help colleagues mentor the employee.
- Advice and disability awareness training to the employer and other employees.
- Other supports appropriate to meet the individual employee's assessed needs.
- Advice and support to help the employee consider development and progression with their employer.

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