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Interim Evaluation Report

Client: North East Combined Authority

Project Title: North of Tyne UKSPF Programme Evaluation (Interim)

Date: September 2024

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List of abbreviations

Full name or term	Abbreviation
Combined Authority	CA
Community Development Partnership	CDP
Department for Education	DfE
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	DLUHC
Department for Work and Pensions	DWP
Dynamic Purchasing System	DPS
European Regional Development Fund	ERDF
European Social Fund	ESF
European Structural and Investment Funds	ESIF
Grant Funding Agreements	GFAs
High Street Innovation Programme	HSIP
Investment Fund	IF
Local Authority	LA
Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	MHCLG
NewcastleGateshead Initiative	NGI
North of Tyne	NoT
North of Tyne Combined Authority	NTCA
Programme Assurance Team	PAT
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	UKSPF
Voluntary and Social Action	VOSA
Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise	VCSE

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment between March 2022 and March 2025.

The UKSPF is targeted at delivering a number of 'levelling up' objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

In 2022, A total of £51.2m[1] UKSPF funding was allocated to the North of Tyne area, to be invested over three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25, supporting projects within nine programmes across three Investment Priorities. In addition, the UKSPF programme included delivery of the Multiply numeracy programme. The fund was managed and administered by the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), which has since been replaced by the North East Combined Authority (North East CA).

In early 2024, the Combined Authority commissioned an independent evaluation of the North of Tyne (NoT) UKSPF programme. The key aims of the evaluation are to:

1. Evaluate impact and process, through understanding what the UKSPF has delivered; whether it has successfully achieved its own policy objectives and has contributed to wider NTCA goals; how effectively it has been implemented in North of Tyne and whether it has constituted good value for money.
2. To build the evidence and a narrative base on 'what works' for pride in place and life chances across North of Tyne and the wider North East region
3. To capture lessons learned from the programme to inform the development and long-term sustainability of the achieved results
4. To contribute to providing accountability that NTCA has delivered funding in the most effective way to support realisation of the UKSPF's outcomes.

The assignment includes interim and final evaluations of the UKSPF Programme through evaluation of appropriate sampling of projects and beneficiaries within each theme. This document is the report of the interim evaluation.

1.2 Evaluation method

The interim evaluation followed a mixed methodology which combined desk research, monitoring data analysis, primary data collection through two surveys and qualitative insight development via group sessions and one-to-one interviews. Primary data collection was focused on project delivery organisations and one set of project beneficiaries (Multiply). Further primary data collection, particularly from a broader set of beneficiaries, will be captured in the final evaluation.

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[1] Including £47.1m core SPF funding plus £4.1m for the Multiply programme which will improve adult maths skills

Extensive engagement a wide range of stakeholders has been a central part of the work to inform the interim evaluation. This has involved Combined Authority staff across a number of teams, lead officers from the three local authorities and project leads for the portfolio of UKSPF-funded projects. Monitoring data for the first two years of the programme, to end March 2024, was provided by the Combined Authority Programme Assurance Team (PAT), along with access to relevant project level documentation (business cases/proposals and latest quarterly project reports).

1.3 Key evaluation findings

1.3.1 Review of Process

- There is a significant and important theme of partnership development running through the programme. New approaches and relationships have been developed, tailored to local need and these are assessed as being highly effective in addressing the challenges, and achieving the objectives that the UKSPF funding is targeted at.
- The programme has also stimulated innovation, with 81% of project leads indicating that they had incorporated new and innovative approaches to project delivery or design.
- Project lead feedback indicated that there were potentially greater opportunities to innovate delivery, but timescales associated with UKSPF limited those opportunities in this round.
- Many delivery partners had prior experience of delivering similar projects in the past, and this experience has proven invaluable in establishing projects within the short and rapid timetable.
- Strategic alignment between UKSPF project goals and those of delivery organisations was deemed to be very strong. As well as supporting economic, regeneration, employability and net zero goals, the programme extends strategic reach into community development, which has been very welcomed.
- Feedback on programme monitoring and management has been positive, with systems and requirements deemed to be proportionate and more simple and flexible than seen with prior funding schemes (e.g. European Regional Development Fund, ERDF).
- Some teething issues regarding systems, output/outcome definitions, guidance and other matters that are central to the scheme were reporting. These were, in large part, resolved efficiently by the Combined Authority. Some issues in relation to outputs and outcomes remain, and work is ongoing to address them.
- The overall effect was to introduce contracting delays which have impinged delivery and narrowed the delivery window. This has put increased pressure on the final year of the programme for output and outcome achievement.
- Monitoring and reporting for the main UKSPF projects has been deemed to be straightforward and proportionate. However, within the Multiply programme these have been more complex and are arduous, particularly for providers with less capacity and experience.
- UKSPF has allowed for a response to community and local needs and provided the opportunity to try new ways of working with businesses and residents. A good example is the three Community Development Partnerships, which are structured differently and are focused on differing needs according to the communities captured by each partnership area.
- Project commissioning and delivery timescales have been the most significant challenge, for all parties.
- There is a degree of 'siloing' of project activity within the three investment themes. Looking forward, there is an important opportunity to break down any such siloes in order to encourage projects which deliver across multiple themes and to make procurement of such projects, and the participant/beneficiary journey, more straightforward.

1.3.2   Outputs, outcomes and impact

- The programme has suffered considerable delays in the commissioning and initiating of projects within the portfolio. This is reflected in the data relating to financial expenditure. To the end of year 2, 21% of the total committed project funds were spent compared to an anticipated 31% (as per the contractual arrangements with MHCLG).
- There is also a current under-commitment of UKSPF funding amounting to £6.4m. The programme was always designed to be a 'rolling' one, where projects would be commissioned across the three-year timetable according to need and strategic fit.
- Original MHCLG contracted output and outcome targets have been moderated as the programme has evolved, with some decreasing and others increasing – in some cases, considerably.
- Whilst the picture varies across different output and outcome indicators, project delivery across all three investment themes can be considered to be behind target overall, even if some individual projects are ahead of schedule or have already exceeded targets.
- However, these issues have been recognised by programme and project leads and productive discussions regarding future plans have led to confidence that commissioned projects are likely to meet target by the end of the programme timeline.
- Despite the challenges that have affected delivery and have delayed progress towards the achievement of output and outcome targets, some impressive results have been evidenced. There are numerous output targets which have already been exceeded, including:
  - Under the communities and Place theme:
    - the number of tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved (100%)
    - the outcome indicator of increased footfall (385%)
    - the outcome indicator of increased visitor numbers (107%)
  - Under the People and Skills theme:
    - the number of enterprises receiving non-financial support (1880% of target), and
    - the number of organisations receiving support (330%)
  - Under the Supporting Local Business theme, only the outcome target associated with the number of research and development (R&D) active enterprises has been achieved at the end of year 2 (125%).
- It is also important to note that the project portfolio is due to deliver against outputs and outcome areas which go beyond the original contract with MHCLG. A total of 30 'Additional Outputs and Outcomes' have been identified.
- Project delivery has created some direct benefits to delivery partners. In total, 76% of projects indicated that staff skills had improved moderately or significantly as a result of delivering the UKSPF-funded project.
- In addition, almost one in five project delivery partners indicated that involvement in the programme has unlocked access to additional funding (with an average of £146,000 per project). Additional sources of funding include national bodies such as Arts Council England, the National Lottery Community Fund, The Princes Trust, and other regional UKSPF consortia and local authorities.
- Project delivery in Multiply has been successful and made a big impact, notwithstanding some preliminary challenges. The majority of substantive intervention targets for year two have been met and a significant volume of outreach work – important to future recruitment – has also been undertaken.
- Prospects for year three and the final outturn of the programme appear positive across the broader portfolio, though significant risks associated with the compressed timetable remain.
- It is too early in the programme to make any objective assessment of impact, and this also requires further feedback from beneficiaries. This will be examined in detail in the final evaluation.

1.4   Lessons learned

This section highlights key lessons learned from an assimilation of the interim evaluation evidence, structured by investment theme.

1.4.1.1   *Supporting local businesses*

- The use of a DPS approach to commissioning was very much welcomed (once initial teething problems and delays were overcome). Now that the DPS is established it can be used more universally for future procured delivery in a timely manner. This simplified and clarified the process of application and is seen to work well for business support projects in particular.
- Flexibility in the programme was seen as significant positive – projects were able to focus their design on niche as well as broad need and this is seen as a significant strength of the UKSPF programme.
- The fairly narrow set of output and outcome indicators is likely to limit the insight gained from evaluation, given the multi-faceted ways in which growth, productivity and profitability can be achieved and expressed.
- More time to build and scale project delivery would enable achievement of an even more significant level of outputs and outcomes, as productivity increases the longer projects are in delivery.
- Time and space for innovative design of projects would help further the value and impact of projects.
- The advent of a Combined Authority for the North East bodes well for project delivery efficiency in the future, limiting duplication in administration and monitoring requirements.
- Opportunities to join up projects or design projects which have an 'escalator' dimension would assist in maximising impact, but this requires clarity on longer term funding.
- Anything that can be done to identify and break down siloes – whether between projects, or across investment themes, or between funders – is likely to have a very positive effect on the overall impact of funded programmes such as UKSPF. This includes where projects may need suppliers from different lots of the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

1.4.1.2   *Communities and Place*

- Flexibility and openness of guidance has enabled a wider range of projects, but more clarity on reporting requirements would have been welcome.
- "We could have done more, and in a less siloed way."
- Delays to grant funding agreements (GFAs) meant delivery partners faced a choice of pushing back start dates or delivering at risk.
- Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations are the experts in this area and could be further empowered and trusted to be left to administer funding in the way they know works.
- Partnership working is a real legacy of the programme. A continuation of partnership activity will prevent momentum and relationships being lost, which could harm the reputation of the Combined Authority in communities who have felt underserved in the past.

1.4.1.3   *People and Skills*

- Clearer monitoring guidelines and definitions of key words such as 'basic skill' and 'economically inactive' so all partners have the same understanding of claiming outputs and outcomes.
- Delivery partners would welcome longer delivery periods for maximum impact and reassurance. This is especially when individual participants who are furthest from the labour market would benefit from progressing through several rounds of support over time on their journey into employment.

- There was a huge administrative burden on delivery partners which was overwhelming. At times, this took time away from delivery.

1.4.1.4 Multiply

- The mix of delivery partners supports an inclusive, multi-dimensional approach to achieving the programme aims.
- The mix of providers complement rather than compete with each other.
- Tailored support to meet the specific needs of target groups is important.
- The Department for Education (DfE) reporting processes are complex, especially for small providers who may not be familiar with them.

1.4.1.5 Programme-wide lessons

Finally, discussions with management and stakeholders identified a number of programme-wide lessons:

- Tight timescales present a number of challenges. One is that they make planning for delivery, and estimating potential output and outcome levels relative to funding inputs, especially difficult.
- Longer programmes with a longer lead time would have a number of important benefits including greater opportunity for innovation, strengthening impact, providing certainty for delivery staff, building productivity in delivery organisations and providing beneficiaries with clarity and longer-term support.
- Where possible, approaches and mechanisms around the allocation of funding should be standardised as this would increase clarity amongst partners regarding their route to delivery. Within this, there needs to be a recognition that the design of the commissioning approach will determine the types of responses that are received. For example, if larger projects are being specified, this may have the result of squeezing out smaller, more specialised providers.
- Early teething issues with the DPS were reported, but the majority of feedback has been very positive. Internally, it is now important to learn lessons around how that was launched, promoted, monitored and how it could be employed moving forward.
- Additional effort needs to be applied to data gathering and analysis in relation to understanding the impact of the programme in addressing inequalities.

1.5 Recommendations

The interim evaluation has identified a number of recommendations for consideration by three key groups; the evaluation team, the Combined Authority and project delivery partners (to include local authorities). These are set out below.

For the evaluation team:

1. The evaluation team should work with the PAT to address identified issues regarding the suite and nomenclature of outputs and outcomes to ensure that the final evaluation accurately and comprehensively reports progress and impact.
2. The evaluation team should plan engagement with project leads which occurs outside of the months where project reporting is being prepared for the Combined Authority (January, April).
3. Contact should be made with projects not responding to the project lead survey and depth consultation to encourage participation later in the evaluation cycle.
4. Ensure that the value of the final evaluation is not affected by project staff leaving at or before the funding cut off dates. Engage early where this is likely to be the case.
5. Consider how a comparison of process and impact between Investment Fund and UKSPF could be delivered in the final evaluation.

For the Combined Authority:

6. The Programme Board should ensure that close monitoring of projects is undertaken in the coming months to identify any slippage and assist in the development of contingency plans, where required.
7. Programme underspend should be addressed as soon as possible, in order to give projects delivery organisations the maximum opportunity to achieve targeted outputs and outcomes.
8. Consideration should be given to how, in practice, any investment theme 'siloes' might be broken down through commissioning of projects which attend to cross-theme objectives.
9. Further validation of output and outcome targets across commissioned projects relative to targets contracted with MHCLG; some variance is to be expected, but some values are significantly different (by orders of magnitude).

For project delivery organisations and local authority partners:

10. Anticipate resource required to contribute to the programme evaluation over the coming 9 months, recognising that this will primarily be focused on the May-July 2025 period.
11. Anticipate supporting the evaluation team to engage with beneficiaries, which will likely entail emission of a survey link and encouragement to respond.

1.6   Next steps

Next steps for the evaluation of the North of Tyne UKSPF programme are as follows:

- Review and reflection on the interim evaluation findings, including presentations to the Programme Board and other relevant stakeholders.
- Preparation for primary research amongst projects which are delivering outputs in the summer and autumn of 2024, in order to seize any opportunities to engage with beneficiaries that may be lost if left to spring 2025.
- Ongoing liaison with project leads, local authority leads and investment theme leads in order to monitor and track any substantive changes and developments.
- Forward planning of engagement and evidence gathering exercises to be executed between September 2024 and July 2025.
- Identification and mitigation of any risks to the evaluation programme through engagement with Combined Authority and partners.

2. Introduction

This section sets out the background to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the North East Combined Authority's role in administering it, the broad aims and objectives of the programme and the objectives of the evaluation.

2.1 The North of Tyne UKSPF Programme

The North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) was a cross-party, cross-regional collaboration of local authorities led by a mayor and cabinet working hard to create inclusive, sustainable growth through devolution. Covering the areas of Newcastle, North Tyneside, and Northumberland, NTCA's focus was to drive jobs, inclusion, new homes, the net zero transition, and positive economic change in the region.

In May 2024, following new mayoral elections, NTCA ceased to exist, and devolved powers were taken up by the new North East Combined Authority (North East CA). This covered the spatial area that was previously allocated to NTCA, as well as the four local authority areas south of the Tyne (Durham, South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland).

Whilst in existence, NTCA was the responsible body for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocated to the North of Tyne area (the local authority areas of Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle) and accountable to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG[2]) which was the lead department for UK Government. Locations south of the Tyne were awarded and manage their own UKSPF allocations.

NTCA's vision for North of Tyne, supported by its Corporate Plan[3], was of a dynamic and more inclusive economy, one that brings together people and opportunities to create vibrant communities and a high quality of life, narrowing inequalities and ensuring that all residents have a stake in our region's future. As well as continuing its established successful approaches to investing in inclusive growth, NTCA was committed to supporting new and sustainable ways of working as our economy and communities recover from the pandemic and address the cost-of-living crisis.

Launched in Spring 2022, the UKSPF was the UK Government's scheme to replace European Structural Funds which ceased to be relevant to the UK following the UK's exit from the European Union. The Government's description of UKSPF is provided in Figure 1, below.

NTCA's responsibilities in administering the UKSPF funding include; allocating the funding to projects and delivery partners (based on the priorities described in the Investment Plan submitted to MHCLG); managing and monitoring successful project delivery against objectives and targets; reporting progress to Government and regional partners; and ensuring the funding is used in accordance with public spending guidelines and regulations.

A total of £51.2m[4] UKSPF funding was allocated to the North of Tyne area, to be invested over three years from 2022/23 to 2024/25, supporting projects within nine programmes across three Investment Priorities. These are set out in

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[2] Note that the department was renamed from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) following the general election and installation of a new government in July 2024.
[3] The prior NTCA Corporate Plan is no longer available as it is due to be superseded by a plan developed by North East CA
[4] Including £47.1m core SPF funding plus £4.1m for the Multiply programme which will improve adult maths skills

Figure 2, below.

Figure 1: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Description

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund

"The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF or the Fund) is a central pillar of the UK government's ambitious Levelling Up agenda and a significant component of its support for places across the UK. It provides £2.6 billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. It will help places right across the country deliver enhanced outcomes and recognises that even the most affluent parts of the UK contain pockets of deprivation and need support.

It seizes the opportunities of leaving the European Union, by investing in domestic priorities and targeting funding where it is needed most: building pride in place, supporting high quality skills training, supporting pay, employment and productivity growth and increasing life chances. It will reduce the levels of bureaucracy and funding spent on administration when compared with EU funds. It will enable truly local decision making and better target the priorities of places within the UK. It will lead to visible, tangible improvements to the places where people work and live, alongside investment in human capital, giving communities up and down the UK more reasons to be proud of their area.

Places will be empowered to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level, focused on pride in place and increasing life chances. Local places will be able to use the Fund to complement funding such as the Levelling Up Fund, and mainstream employment and skills provision to maximise impact and simplify delivery.

The Fund's interventions will be planned and delivered by councils and mayoral authorities across England, Scotland and Wales – 'lead local authorities', working closely with local partners and the Scottish and Welsh governments.

The UKSPF will support the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the levelling up objectives:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in those places where they are lagging
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency"

Source: UK Government[5]

Figure 2: NTCA Investment Themes and Programmes

Programmes within Investment Priority 1: Community and Place	Programmes within Investment Priority 2: Supporting Local Business	Programmes within Investment Priority 3: People and Skills
Regeneration of our Places	Raising innovation levels to boost productivity in key sectors	Employment support to out-of-work, including wrap-around support
Community Partnerships and Programmes	Start-up, social enterprise, and rural businesses	Basic skills support for those furthest from the labour market
Energy Efficiency and Lower Energy Costs	Business growth and improved energy efficiency	Skills to progress in work and address business needs

Source: NTCA Programme Documentation

In addition, the Multiply programme is being delivered through the UKSPF programme. Multiply is "the government's £560 million programme to help transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of adults across the UK and was launched in Spring 2022. Numeracy is the ability to understand and use maths in daily life, home, and work. Whether that be improving household finances, helping children with homework, making more sense of the stats and facts in the media, or improving numeracy skills specific to your line of work."[6]

Multiply is being implemented with a focus on three main themes: Community Engagement; Family Learning; and Numeracy Skills for the Workplace. Multiply is administered and managed by the Department for Education (DfE).

2.2 Programme design

The UKSPF funding therefore became an important part of NTCA's plans, complementing a range of other initiatives including the devolved Investment Fund, skills programmes, and housing funds. UKSPF investment was targeted, alongside our other funds and programmes, on enabling NTCA to:

- Maximise the benefits of the Economic Growth Corridors (the Northumberland Line; the Arc of Energy Innovation between Blyth and the Tyne; and the Urban Core), creating more opportunities for residents, businesses and communities.

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[5] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus
[6] See https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/10/27/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-multiply-programme/

- Grow businesses in key sectors (clean energy, digital, health & life sciences, professional services, culture and tourism), creating new high-quality jobs, supporting innovation, and boosting productivity.
- Build an inclusive economy, ensuring all residents benefit from economic growth and prosperity by investing in skills and access to good quality jobs, supported by our Good Work Pledge.
- Deliver sustainable growth by accelerating the net zero transition in the economy and communities.
- Invest in rural economy and communities recognising the opportunities presented by the unique environment and land assets, as well as the specific challenges facing rural areas.

The NTCA UKSPF Delivery and Resource plan was developed, outlining the projects and interventions that were planned to be delivered in accordance with the Investment Plan, agreed by Government in December 2022. Importantly, it should be recognised that the original Delivery Plan was designed to be an evolving document, as it was impossible to allocate all funding at the outset of the programme. The delivery plan has therefore changed and evolved as activities were commissioned and move into delivery.

The Plan includes the proposed approach to allocating the available UKSPF funding, presented by financial year up to 2024-25 and allocated across the three Investment Themes. The UKSPF budget (see Appendix II, page 64) shows the total UKSPF funding allocated to the North of Tyne area by investment theme, and the amount available to fund projects after the deduction of a 4% 'top slice' to contribute towards the costs of Programme management[7].

The Delivery and Resource Plan also identifies a small number of 'funding swaps', allowing for projects currently supported by or earmarked for NTCA Investment Fund (IF) funding to be funded instead from UKSPF, with selected eligible projects being 'swapped' out of the NTCA IF into the UKSPF programme. This was a step driven by the practicalities of the delivery timetable: it was designed to help achieve some early UKSPF spend in year 1 (2022-23), as well as helping to reduce current and future financial demands on the NTCA Investment Fund.

The Delivery and Resource Plan also provides a summary of the quantified target outputs and outcomes to be delivered by UKSPF funded projects. These are set out in section 2.3 below.

By March 2024, a total of 50 projects had been supported by UKSPF and had begun (or completed) delivery[8]. A number of these were projects originally funded through the Investment Fund which were then brought across into the UKSPF portfolio. Under the Multiply programme, there are 8 further projects being funded via UKSPF.

The programme is being overseen by a Programme Board, consisting of key internal and external stakeholders to the Programme (i.e. staff from the Combined Authority, including from policy and strategy, investment theme leads, representatives of the Programme Assurance Team, and then representatives from the three local authorities).

Investment themes are overseen by appointed individuals who work closely with the 'project leads' for each project which has received funding from the Programme. In addition, the Multiply theme is overseen by a member of the Combined Authority staff, who liaises closely with the external delivery partners.

2.2.1   Funding swaps

Funding swaps allow for projects previously supported by or earmarked for NTCA Investment Fund funding to be funded instead from UKSPF, with selected eligible projects being 'swapped' out of the

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[7] MHCLG allows lead authorities to deduct a 4% management fee from the UKSPF funding allocation. A separate management fee of 10% can be deducted for the delivery of the Multiply programme.
[8] No clear target for the total number of projects has been set, though it is anticipated that the final total will be above 50 under the three main investment themes, due to programme underspend.

NTCA IF into the UKSPF programme. The Combined Authority identified two reasons to implement funding swaps:

- To achieve some early spend of UKSPF funding in 2022/23 by substituting spend incurred by NTCA IF funded projects with UKSPF funding. This also enabled the achievement / reporting of some early UKSPF outputs. The UKSPF Investment Plan included a spend target of £5.71m in 2022/23 but because the Plan was not approved by UK Government until December 2022, there was limited time available in the 2022/23 financial year to achieve this level of spend. Funding swaps therefore provided a mechanism to make some progress towards the 2022/23 spend target, while recognising that Government guidance allows for UKSPF underspends in 2022/23 to be rolled forward into future years, provided all funding is spent by March 2025.
- Implementing funding swaps also helps to reduce current and future financial demands on the NTCA Investment Fund.

After careful consideration of a longlist of potential funding swaps projects, the final shortlist of four projects was recommended. The financial impact of making these swaps on the UKSPF programme and NTCA IF is summarised below. All recommended projects are consistent with the proposals in the North of Tyne UKSPF Investment Plan and are aligned to UKSPF eligible spend, interventions and outputs.

Table 1: Investment Fund funding swaps

	UKSPF early spend	Reducing demand on NTCA IF				Funding Swaps Projects
Theme	2022/23 (£m)	2022/23 (£m)	2023/24 (£m)	2024/25 (£m)	Total (£m)	
Communities and Place	1,676,475	1,676,475	0	0	**1,676,475**	Towns and High Streets 22/23 only (£990,947) Tourism events 22/23 only (£685,528)
Local Business	0	0	1,345,000	1,545,000	**2,890,000**	NE Screen Industries (spend 23/24 and 24/25) (£2,090,000) SME Decarbonisation (spend 23/24 and 24/25) (£800,000)
People and Skills	0	0	0	0	**0**	No funding swaps
TOTAL	**1,676,475**	**1,676,475**	**1,345,000**	**1,545,000**	**4,566,475**	**Total £4,566,475 spend displaced from NTCA IF**
UKSPF Total Target	5,714,206					
Underspend	4,037,731					

Source: NTCA UKSPF Delivery and Resource Plan

It is important to highlight that other projects were considered for potential funding swaps. However, given the significant demands to fund other activities within each of the UKSPF themes it was concluded that there was insufficient headroom in the UKSPF budget to implement funding swaps in excess of the £4.57m recommended, at the same time as leaving sufficient funds to support the projects and programmes identified in the UKSPF Investment Plan and theme delivery plans as set out in the Delivery and Resource plan. The recommended funding swaps were intended to strike a pragmatic balance between achieving early spend and outputs, while retaining sufficient UKSPF resources needed to support new activity.

2.2.2 Programme Logic Model

UK Government, via MHCLG, has commissioned a national evaluation of the UKSPF programme. This has produced a number of outputs, including a published evaluation strategy[9]. This sets out a logic model, which articulates the programme theory of change, as set out in Figure 3 below. This articulates the step-by-step process of how the Fund's central and local inputs will support UKSPF interventions to generate outputs, outcomes and finally impacts. It also links the impacts back to Missions that were originally set out in the Levelling Up White Paper[10].

Figure 3: National Programme Evaluation Logic Model
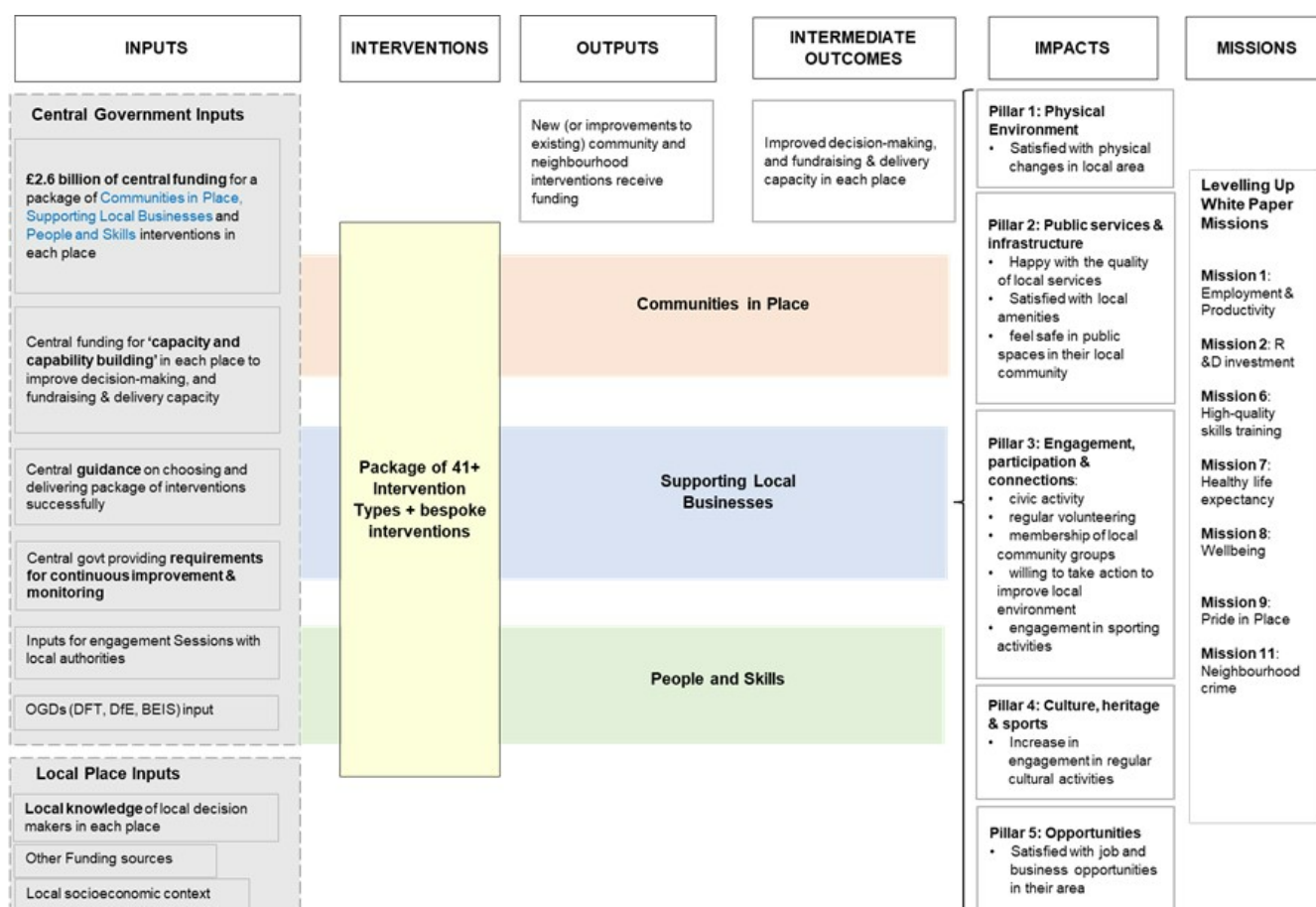
Source: MHCLG

As part of the development of an evaluation framework for the North of Tyne UKSPF Programme Evaluation, the evaluation team has developed a bespoke Logic Model for the North of Tyne programme. This can be found in Appendix I, page 63.

The North of Tyne Programme Logic Model presented in the Appendix is a summary of that being used to inform the evaluation. It has been abbreviated for presentational purposes. The full Logic Model contains further detail and description of the UKSPF Strategic Priorities and NTCA's approach to addressing them.

The Logic Model below has also been split into three elements, for presentational purposes. Each one focuses on a UKSPF investment priority (Communities & Place, Supporting Local Businesses and People & Skills). It is important to bear in mind that these are not mutually exclusive, in that projects funded under one priority may deliver outputs, outcomes and impacts which are identified under other

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[9] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-evaluation/ukspf-evaluation-strategy
[10] See https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom

priorities. As such, the evaluation will be considering the Logic Model as expressing a support 'system' that is intended to achieve, in aggregate, the overall targeted outputs, outcomes and impacts of the UKSPF Programme.

2.3 Programme objectives and targets

The Investment Plan summary document articulates a list of top-level outputs and outcomes for the North of Tyne UKSPF programme, across all themes and activities, as follows:

- 1,500 business supported
- 700 jobs created
- 350 people helped into employment
- 1,500 people helped to get work ready
- 780 households and businesses supported to reduce carbon emissions
- 285 VCSE organisations supported
- 4,000 people engaging in activities and events

A full list of the indicative target outputs and outcomes, arranged by investment theme and intervention, is provided in Appendix III, page 65. The indicative output and outcome targets in the Investment Plan were calculated using available performance data from past programmes, including projects funded by ERDF, ESF, and the NTCA Investment Fund, and the amount of funding available. The relevant Government Department at the time (The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities - DLUHC) did not provide national baseline data or indicative unit costs as a guide for UKSPF lead authorities. The quantified output and outcome targets in the NTCA Investment Plan were approved by DLUHC in December 2022.

DLUHC published definitions of the UKSPF outputs and outcomes in August 2022, alongside additional guidance. NTCA was afforded the flexibility to refine outputs as part of the reporting and performance process as UKSPF programmes were entering delivery. DLUHC indicated that they may also refine the output and outcome definitions throughout the programme. Lead authorities were encouraged to capture additional outputs and outcomes resulting from UKSPF interventions for evaluation and reporting purposes.

When developing the individual specifications for each project to be commissioned within each UKSPF theme, NTCA sought to ensure that contracted outputs and outcomes delivered value for money. The calculations for minimum unit costs for individual outputs and outcomes were designed to ensure that programme-level targets are comfortably achieved, with allowances for slippage and under-performance.

Output and outcome targets for individual projects were then developed as specifications were written and projects contracted. NTCA committed to provide regular reports to the Investment Panel on progress towards these targets as projects began to deliver.

2.4 Evaluation aims and objectives, and approach, challenges/limitations

2.4.1 Aims and objectives

The primary focus of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and impact of the UKSPF programme delivered by NTCA within each of the three UKSPF investment priorities. The four key objectives of the evaluation (identified in the evaluation brief) are as follows:

Objective 1: To evaluate impact and process, through understanding what the UKSPF has delivered; whether it has successfully achieved its own policy objectives *and has contributed to wider NTCA goals*; how effectively it has been implemented in North of Tyne and whether it has constituted good value for

money. The evaluation should include, but not be limited to, measuring the impact of the Programme on:

- regeneration of places: towns, high streets, rural centres, and local events
- development of communities through local partnerships
- improvement of energy efficiency
- boosting productivity in key sectors, including development of start-ups, social enterprises and rural businesses
- driving business growth in the region, in particular through employment
- skills development

These impacts will need to be considered across the North of Tyne and each partner local authority as well as beyond North of Tyne to the wider UK.

Objective 2: To build the evidence and a narrative base on 'what works' for pride in place and life chances across North of Tyne and the wider North East region; support developing understanding of how success in these areas can be measured.

Objective 3: To capture lessons learned from the programme to inform the development and long-term sustainability of the achieved results, and the use of this insight to inform future local growth programme design and to secure future investment in the region.

Objective 4: To contribute to providing accountability that NTCA has delivered funding in the most effective way to support realisation of the UKSPF's outcomes.

The assignment includes interim and final evaluations of the UKSPF Programme through evaluation of appropriate sampling of projects and beneficiaries within each theme.

The following questions, identified in the evaluation proposal, can be added to the list of objectives above:

- How does the UKSPF programme compare – at programme, investment priority and individual project levels – to other NTCA investments, projects and programmes?
- How well did UKSPF-funded projects support and complement other projects and investments? Is there evidence of a 'multiplier effect'?

2.4.2 Evaluation method

The interim evaluation followed a mixed methodology which combined desk research, monitoring data analysis, primary data collection through two surveys and qualitative insight development via group sessions and one-to-one interviews.

The evaluation has been very well supported by Combined Authority colleagues from across the organisation, including the evaluation team, Programme Assurance Team (PAT), policy, strategy and investment theme teams. It has also been well supported at the project level, with the vast majority of projects responding to the project lead survey and attending group or one-to-one discussions. Resource was focused on ensuring that the major projects provided feedback.

Only beneficiaries of Multiply were asked to provide primary data into the interim evaluation. There were two factors behind this decision;

1. Recognition that four groups of projects were subject to external evaluation, meaning beneficiaries would be engaged in evidence gathering and therefore any primary work as part of the programme evaluation would represent duplication; High Streets and Towns Programme, Creative and Cultural Zones, Community Partnerships and Festivals/Events.
2. Recognition that many projects were in the very early stages of delivery and therefore it was too soon to gather meaningful insight from beneficiaries.

The following group discussions were held:

- Two each with local authority partners involving the main programme lead and projects leads.
- One group session for the People and Skills and Supporting Local Business investment themes. These were supplemented by a number of one-to-one discussions.
- A number of one-to-one interviews with project leads in the Communities and Place theme. Some of the major projects under this theme, such as Community Partnerships, were covered during the local authority discussions, as they provided the leadership in such projects.
- A group session with Multiply delivery partners.
- A group session with Combined Authority staff and key stakeholders (i.e. local authority leads).

Monitoring data for the first two years of the programme, to end March 2024, was provided by the PAT, along with access to relevant project level documentation (business cases/proposals and latest quarterly project reports).

2.4.3 Challenges and limitations

A number of challenges and limitations to the valuation have been identified and should be considered when reviewing the findings of this interim evaluation:

- There have been issues for the Combined Authority and Programme Assurance Team (PAT) in particular regarding the funding 'swaps' that have taken place, in relation to the non-standardisation of outputs and outcomes between the Investment Fund and UKSPF. This has inevitably led to some complexities with respect to output and outcome definition and allocation. To a degree these persist within the management information and work to clarify any outstanding issues will continue between the evaluation team and PAT.
- The interim evaluation was conducted over June, July and August and this inevitably meant that scheduling engagement with individual project leads and stakeholders had to navigate a busy holiday period. However, the project lead survey achieved 43 responses from a total of 67[11] possible respondents (64%).
- It is notable that the project lead survey received no responses in relation to the eight events and festivals that are funded via UKSPF. Three of these are projects which were 'swapped' from the Investment Fund (IF) to UKSPF. This, along with the small number of projects that were swapped, makes comparisons between UKSPF and IF impossible at this stage.
- Key limitations of the interim evaluation relate to the limited amount of feedback from beneficiaries (which restricts evidence in relation to benefits and impacts), the non-exhaustive methodology which means that primary data from project leads and qualitative insight through the group and one-to-one discussions is indicative of the programme overall (rather than statistically representative) and the limited evidence from external evaluations which is available at this stage (which limits what can be concluded regarding a number of important projects within the portfolio).

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[11] Including 8 within Multiply

3. Evaluation findings – Process and Delivery

This section will set out the findings of the interim evaluation to end March 2024. It summarises findings from an online survey of those running projects funded through the NoT UKSPF programme and consultations with stakeholders.

Note that in some cases, graphs are presented in Appendix V, page 74. Where this is the case, the section number is referenced in superscript (i.e. [6.5])

3.1 Characteristics of Project Delivery Organisations

Most survey respondents led projects for public sector organisations (51%), or charities (19%)[6.5]. The graph below shows the main location of project lead's organisations. Most were based in Newcastle (43%), followed by North Tyneside (22%).
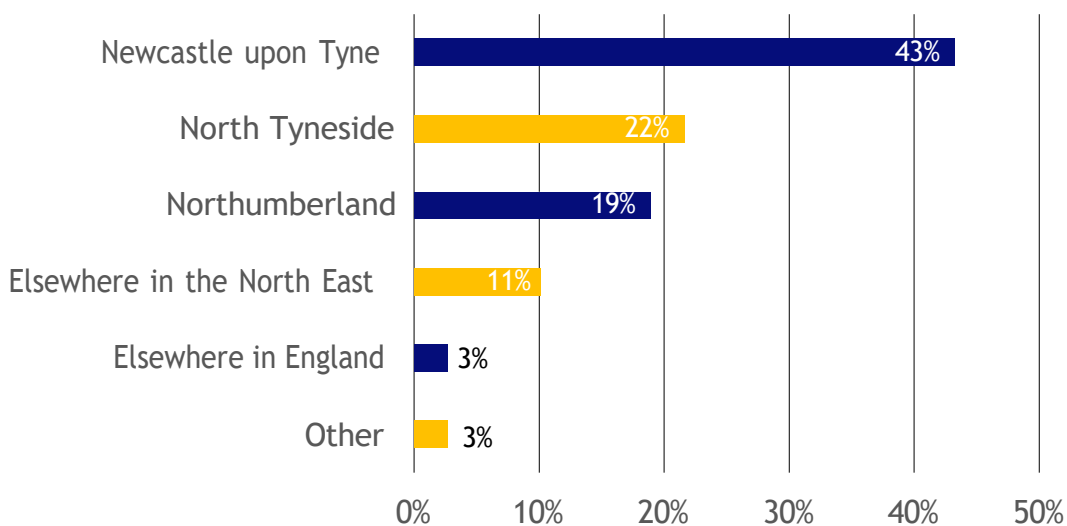
Source: Kada Survey Analysis, n=37

Operating areas for respondent organisations were primarily within one local authority in the North of Tyne area (43%). Of these, the most common local authorities were Northumberland (38%) and North Tyneside (38%)[6.5].
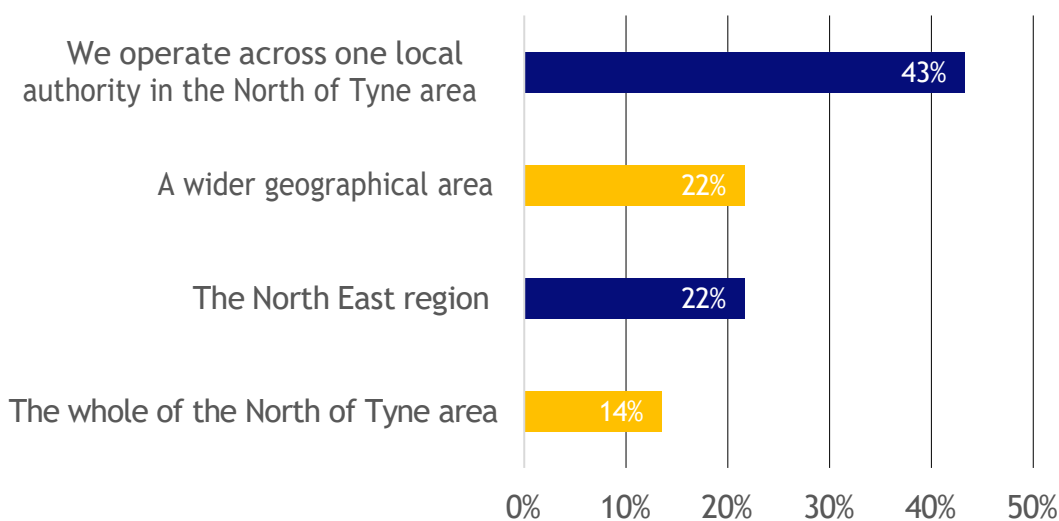
Source: Kada Survey Analysis, n=37

3.2   Feedback from Project Lead Survey

An online survey was disseminated to the project leads for all projects in the NoT UKSPF portfolio at the end of March 2024. This includes a number of 'closed' projects as well as those that were 'open' and in delivery. The survey sought quantitative and qualitative feedback on a range of topics of interest to the evaluation, with a strong emphasis on 'process' and assessing the delivery status (and outlook) of each project regarding targeted outputs and outcomes. The survey received 41 responses from project leads across the three investment themes and Multiply.

3.2.1   Project delivery and design

Around three-quarters (74%) of respondents worked with partners in project development[6.5] and 84% worked with partners in order to deliver the project.[6.5]

The majority (81%) of respondents incorporated new innovative approaches to project delivery or design[6.5], examples of which include:

"We were able to develop a wide range of programmes especially designed to engage and support those furthest from learning."

"The project allowed us to develop a white-label app-based solution to engage businesses that would not normally consider themselves as contributors to the visitor economy."

3.2.2   Project beneficiaries

The most common beneficiary of projects was individuals and businesses (46%) this was followed by community groups (41%)[6.5]. Businesses alone and event organisers were less represented as project beneficiaries (17% and 12% respectively).

3.2.3   Recruitment approaches

The most popular approach to recruitment was that of a direct approach, cited by 98% of respondents. This was followed by social media/marketing, which was adopted by 88% of project leads. A large number of respondents cited 'other', the majority of which involved promotion at events and referrals from other projects.

Figure 4: Beneficiary recruitment approaches
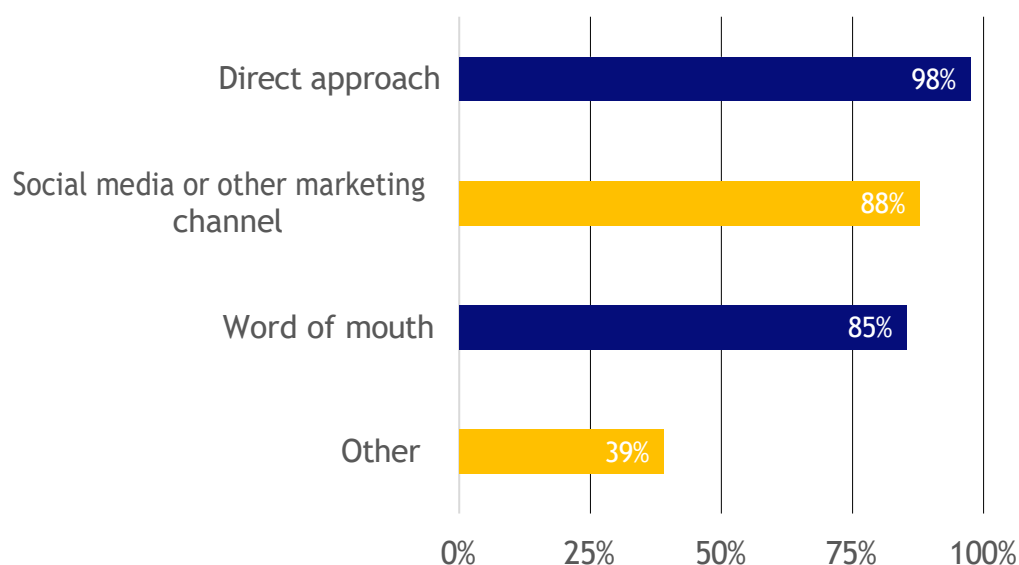
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=41

3.2.4 Effectiveness of recruitment approaches

The graph below displays the percentage of respondents who rated each recruitment approach as 'completely or mostly effective'. The majority (92% and 88% respectively) felt that a direct approach/word of mouth was effective compared to social media/marketing, which had fewer respondents (69%).

Figure 5: Effectiveness of beneficiary recruitment approaches
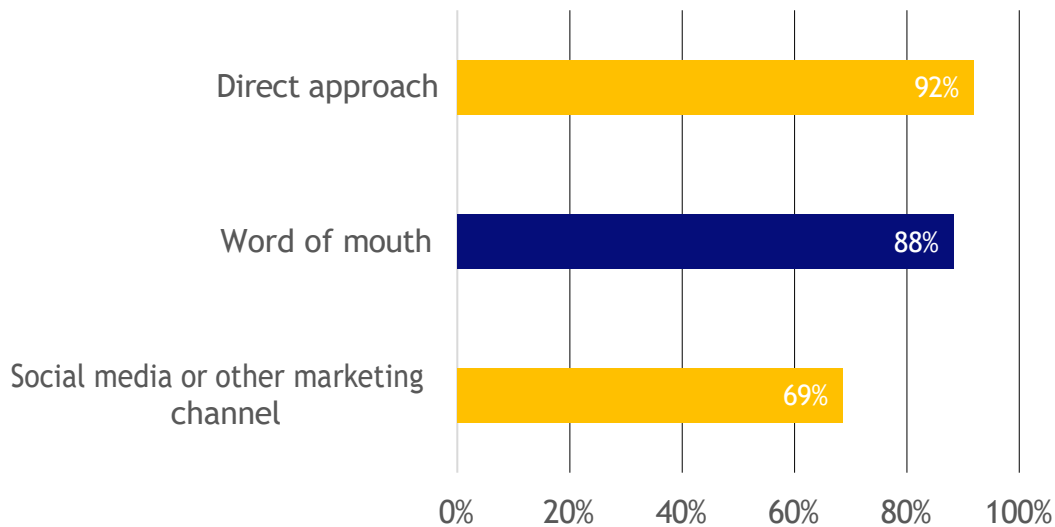
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=39

3.2.5 Recruiting participants

Responses below display the extent to which project leads found it 'easy' to recruit participants to the programme. Overall, responses were mixed – half of project leads cited 'very easy' (5%) or 'easy' (45%), while 23% found it 'difficult'. The remainder of respondents were neutral which is reflective of the differing experiences in participant recruitment.

Figure 6: Ease of recruiting participants
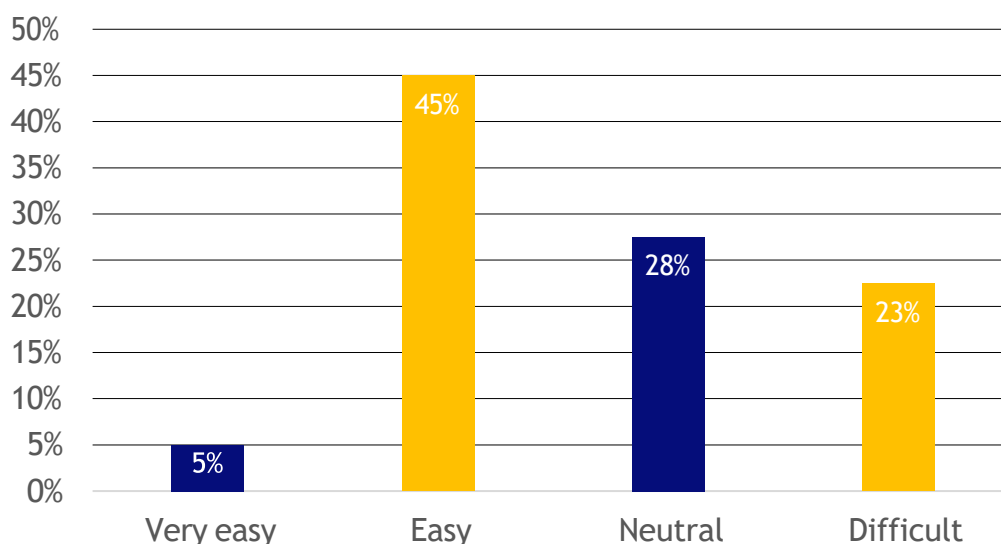
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=40

3.2.6 Project delivery

The graph below displays the delivery methods used by project leads. The most common methods were in person group support (74%) followed by in person 1-2-1 support (72%), indicative of a preference to avoid online delivery where possible. Nearly all respondents referred to the in-person group support (97%) and the 1-2-1 support in person (100%) as 'completely or mostly effective'[6.5].100% of respondents referred to the 1-2-1 online support and 83% to the group online support as 'completely or mostly effective'[6.5].

Figure 7: Mode of project delivery
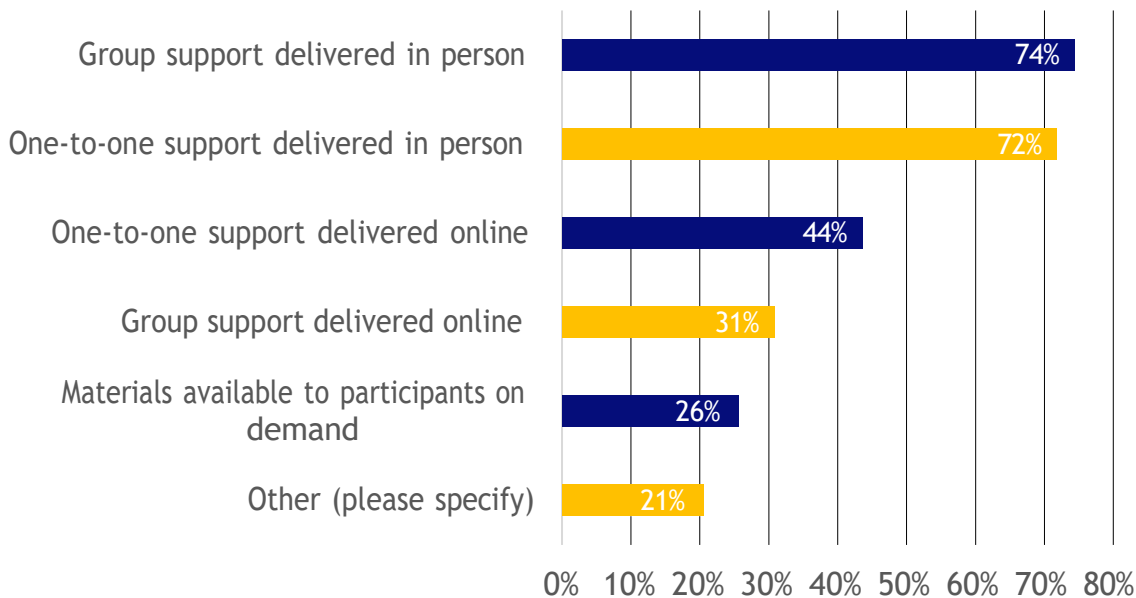
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=39

3.2.7 Project comparisons

Most (87%) project leads had past experience in delivering similar projects[6.5]. In comparison to previous projects, 42% felt their project was more effective than previous ones they'd delivered, while 48% said it was about the same[6.5].

3.2.8 Project recruitment

Just under three-quarters (73%) said they recruited staff specifically for the purpose of supporting project delivery[6.5] indicative of projects facilitating job creation.

Average no. of FTE staff recruited	Total no. of FTE staff recruited
5.8	134

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=23

3.2.9 Stakeholder perception of Process

This section presents evidence drawn from discussions with Combined Authority management and key stakeholders (including local authority leads).

3.2.9.1 Strategic alignment

Management and stakeholders expressed the view that there was good strategic alignment between the UKSPF programme and the broader strategic vision and aims of the Combined Authority and partner local authorities. It seeks to drive economic growth, regeneration, initiatives around net zero, increase

employability, building a greater sense of place; all of which are central to the goals of key organisations involved in administration and delivery of the programme. It was acknowledged that the UKSPF programme also extends strategic focus to include placing communities at the heart of initiatives to improve economic and social outcomes.

The programme therefore extends beyond a focus on pure economic outcomes and provides an opportunity for the funding of volunteering, pastoral care and other softer interventions that are often important inputs to delivering the more traditional outcomes or outputs associated with economic development programs or regeneration schemes. In this way, the programme also aligns with priorities such as Net Zero, poverty reduction and addressing inequalities.

"I think it's probably the detail of the programme and how we deliver it that is probably most important. The main pillars of the Shared Prosperity Fund are not that surprising, like business support, employability and skills, place. Having said that, what was a bit different is the focus on communities and place. This has meant a focus on soft delivery as well the more standard focus on economic growth, skills development and so on."

Whilst the broad pillars of the fund – the three investment themes and the levelling up missions that each should focus on – were set in stone, management and stakeholders recognised and welcomed the flexibility that the programme afforded around delivery planning in order to meet the programme aims. Delivery plans were able to reflect the ambitions of the Combined Authority and local authorities, therefore. Flexibility appears, therefore, to be the key characteristic which determines and drives strategic alignment, within a clear higher level framework.

"UKSPF provided some opportunities to do things that maybe otherwise we wouldn't have been able to do, such as investing in communities without it having to have an employability outcome or a business support outcome. I think it gave us opportunities and appeared to be flexible enough that we could take the broad, overarching aims and kind of flex them to what residents and partners thought was important."

3.2.9.2   Programme design and management

The programme also offered flexibility in designing the output and outcome framework. Most of the outputs and outcomes that were associated with prior schemes such as ERDF have been retained, though the programme did provide the opportunity to relax requirements in some areas. This served to limit the complexity of the programme and reduce the burden on delivery partners when applying for projects. As a result, some of the commissioned activity is effectively continuation of what was in place before.

"We've seen a lot of projects and programmes which have been set up to continue what had gone before, which is great because projects with strong pipelines have been able to capitalise on these, which of course helps drive impact."

Alongside this, however, is an acknowledgement that continuation – whilst having major positive aspects – may limit innovation within delivery organisations, and this needs to be considered moving forward. Opportunities to consider and develop new ways of doing things should be provided for in programme design and planning processes.

Another strength of the programme has been the opportunity that it has provided to the Combined Authority to identify opportunities where other organisations can play a more effective role in disseminating programme resources, such as grants. For example, the community partnerships offer a range of grants to communities – communities which the partners know well and have relationships with. Such an approach also provides importantly opportunities to learn about the key benefits of such approaches, where impact has been most significant and how such as model might best play a role in funding allocation and dissemination in the future. There was also some recognition that such an approach caused friction in relation to the Combined Authority's assurance framework, but again this is

seen as one of the ways in which the UKSPF programme has enabled new ways of working, including navigating key processes to make them happen.

"We've passed the money to local authorities and then on to community partnerships who are able to engage more effectively with organisations on the ground. Sometimes it is useful for [the Combined Authority] to get out of the way, because we're not necessarily best placed to do the grant management work."

The programme has also allowed commissioning of projects which have a range of different and complementary specialisms. For example, within the suite of projects which focus on employability, whilst there are common themes such as wraparound support, holistic approaches, person-centred support and so on, providers were encouraged to develop and offer unique approaches and schemes, based on their own specialisms. This has led to a portfolio of projects that specifically support, for example, 16 to 24 year olds, carers, women and different cohorts of disadvantaged people. As well as enabling a more focused approach, this is also seen to have reduced competition and duplication between providers.

The issue of short-term nature of funding was raised as a key challenge of the UKSPF programme, particularly for smaller providers.

"I think the short term nature of funding is really difficult, particularly for the smaller organizations who tend to deliver some of the employability support. They have less capacity to throw resource at time-limited exercises, and face challenges when scaling up for delivery"

The opportunity to link projects in different investment themes has been recognised by stakeholders and partners, and conversations have taken place regarding how this might be more effectively done. The perceived opportunity is to deliver a more joined-up and efficient programme, linking community development work with employability support, ensuring place-based projects are connected to relevant economic development projects and so on.

"We know that community partnerships are beginning to link with employment partnerships, which is great, and that that kind of pulls the employability and communities and place work together. Initial conversations have taken place about how we can link in with business support as well. But a lot of our employability projects do include employer engagement and focus with businesses, and it's just whether there's any opportunity to do a bit more there."

Stakeholders and partners also commented on early challenges associated with the misalignment of output and outcomes between UKSPF and other funding sources, such as the Investment Fund. The pace at which the programme needed to be designed and mobilised exacerbated this issue. Factors driving this issue including the 'swapping' of projects from Investment Fund to UKSPF, and also two of the UKSPF strengths; it's related funds (the Rural England Prosperity Fund, REPF, in particular) and the match UKSPF funding with other sources to deliver focused projects. Good examples include the Rural Asset Multiplier Pilot and the Northumberland Small Business Service (which whilst not exclusively focused on rural areas, contains some elements which are). In these cases, UKSPF, Investment Fund and REPF funding has been brought together to deliver these projects.

"With the Rural Asset Multiplier Pilot, we've been able to see some useful integration of support through strong stewardship of the project. The project has allowed us to bring the issue of rural growth to the fore and we are seeing an impact on our capacity to respond to such challenges, as well as better integration and partnership, working to address them. This is definitely leading to more innovative thinking in terms of the projects that are now are delivering on the ground."

3.3   Evaluation Findings by investment theme

3.3.1   Local Business Support

3.3.1.1   Strategic alignment

Supporting Local Business projects are strategically well-aligned with regional and local policy, particularly in regard to work around enterprise, innovation and the broader topic of economic growth. Project delivery partners are experienced providers of support in their particular area, and range from Universities, via enterprise agencies and sectoral bodies to privately-run enterprise support organisations. The application process, which was based around the establishment of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), ensured that proposal for projects were strategically aligned to both the aims and objectives of UKSPF (which itself aligns with the wider goals of the Combined Authority) and the competencies and expertise of the delivery organisations. By extension, this brought about good alignment between the UKSPF programme and those of the delivery organisations.

Many of the delivery organisations bring experience of delivering similar projects and interventions from the period leading up to UKSPF; for example, as supported via the previous European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) such as the European Regional Development Fund. A degree of continuity in the provision of business support has been achieved through UKSPF, therefore.

Some delivery partners are engaged in delivering their projects across multiple locations, with North of Tyne being one. For example, the Creative and Cultural Investment Programme is being delivered within North of Tyne as well as across the wider North East, meaning the delivery partner is engaging with numerous bodies responsible for local UKSPF administration. Careful coordination of the project is therefore required, to ensure that resources are committed proportionately and in a targeted manner.

For the In-Tune project, which covers Durham and the wider North of Tyne area, one challenge identified is in relation to the divergent nature of the business base between County Durham and the North of Tyne area, where the latter's urban areas contain a greater density of businesses and the total population of businesses is higher than for Durham. This presents challenges when targeting resources and in promoting the intervention to target businesses, were the pool of potential beneficiaries in some locations across the combined areas are comparatively constrained.

In some cases, projects have been designed to focus in on new areas of focus within what were, before UKSPF, quite broad themes. For example, the Social Enterprise Support project being led by NEEAL is not targeted at all social enterprises; instead, it focuses on supporting 'Socially Trading Organisations', which is defined as encompassing social enterprises (and socially trading business) operating hybrid business models that blend together their social ethos and impact with commercial trade. In this way, the project focuses on 'regenerative' rather than 'extractive' growth, which aligns very well with the aims and objectives of the UKSPF programme.

The project leads recognised that the programme scale and design allows for highly targeted projects;

"I think that one of the benefits of programme as large and diverse as this is that it has got room for really niche-type projects, to complement and wrap around the more mainstream ones"

The main areas of misalignment regarding Supporting Local Business projects were attributed to UKSPF timescales, and this has become a recurring theme in the evaluation evidence captured for the interim evaluation. Short-term funding results in compressed timescales for delivery following project approval and often leaves little time for capacity building before delivery is required to commence. Whilst such issues were reasonably common under the prior funding arrangement related to ESIF, the challenges with UKSPF – it being a new fund with the attendant need for the Combined Authority to install systems, develop a plan and create the resources needed to allow for the commissioning of projects, means that it was particularly acute for this programme.

3.3.1.2   Programme management

Experiences of project commissioning, management, and administration have been consistent and positive within the Supporting Local Business investment theme. Starting with commissioning, the use of the DPS was very much welcomed as it provided a clear and transparent route into the commissioning and procurement environment for potential delivery organisations. Furthermore, the use of a tender-style approach, as opposed to a business case approach, was also welcomed as it was seen to generate efficiencies through limiting the resource required to complete the required forms. That said, project delivery partners did indicate that there were early 'teething problems' with the DPS which added to initial delays. The teething problems were primarily around the DPS not being ready or available when some local authorities first wanted to procure.

Feedback regarding the support received by projects whilst in delivery has also been very positive. Whilst there were early teething issues in relation to the fund guidance, output/outcome definitions and other factors which relate to the fact that UKSPF was a new fund which was designed and administered in very short order by UK Government, feedback indicates that the Combined Authority was responsive in its efforts to expedite the process of establishing the programme and commissioning projects from it.

"We've been very, very pleased with the way that the programme's been monitored, administered and managed by the Combined Authority. We've had very regular and clear dialog, and we've managed to resolve any minor technical issues between ourselves quite quickly, and I'm struggling to see how that could be improved upon."

When in delivery, project leads have felt very well supported by Combined Authority colleagues working within the Supporting Local Business investment theme team. Relationships are strong and provide the basis for a positive experience. Regular meetings are held which help to communicate project delivery progress and provide a platform from which Combined Authority staff can support projects where required.

Monitoring arrangements are seen as proportionate and relatively straightforward.

"Documentation and monitoring requirements were agreed very early on in the program and have been adhered to. Governance and management of the programme and the liaison between the organisations have been very clear, very open and very productive".

The key issues outlined by delivery partners relates to complexities associated with running projects with multiple funders, which in turn requires multiple reporting mechanisms and processes. Whilst the advent of a region-wide Combined Authority will eradicate many of these issues moving forward, some will abide (e.g. for projects that receive funding from more than one Combined Authority fund, or receive external funding from other research funders or sectoral bodies). Delivery partners acknowledged that when commissioned to deliver a project, a transaction is effectively entered into which involves commitments on both sides. However, robust delivery and governance can often require greater resources than originally anticipated, and if funders wish to ensure these processes are robust, then there may need to be an increase in the proportion of funding that is allocated to such tasks. For example, engagement in evaluation exercises is often not priced in, and whilst the value and necessity is accepted, this does impact delivery organisations and their capacity to deliver.

"Ultimately it costs money to deliver, strong, robust, well-governed and objectively evaluated projects".

Project delivery partners did indicate that the flexibility within the programme design and, when compared to prior schemes such as ERDF, the monitoring and reporting processes, are very much a strength of the programme.

"The UKSPF programme seems more intuitive and more inclusive that prior funding programmes that has supported similar initiatives. It is great to see the constraints that were associated with ERDF – and the mindset that they drove – gradually being shed"

3.3.1.3   Project delivery

Project delivery within the portfolio of projects under the Supporting Local Business investment theme is perceived to be progressing well, following delays to the commissioning of projects and the time required from commissioning to output delivery as teams are built and capacity installed. The perception across project leads is that many projects face a short and rapidly closing window for delivery, but that the scale and pace of delivery is growing at a rate that gives confidence that outputs and outcome targets will be met.

One challenge that flows from the time-constrained delivery is that, particularly for larger projects, productivity improves the longer a project is in delivery. There are numerous reasons for this, including the internal capacity, skill and knowledge of the delivery team, the increased profile of an initiatives and growing awareness amongst target beneficiaries, and the increasing breadth of connections and networks that can be built over time.

"These kinds of schemes are usually more productive over a longer period of time. We've only got a 15-18, month period, and by the time we got started, that had been cut into a little bit more. So we'll be just building up a proper head of steam when the programme ends in March 2025."

Projects have used a range of mechanisms to recruit participants. Many projects have pre-existing networks of companies and individuals with whom they have worked previously, and these have proven to be fruitful sources of beneficiaries for the UKSPF-supported projects. A combination of direct marketing, social media promotions and attendance at events and conferences to make connections have also been employed to recruit participants and market support services.

"What we find really does work is social media marketing, and in particular, promoting case studies on social media; having real businesses talking about what their project is and its benefits, how it has got them from where they were to where they are now, in a few simple words. This, hands down, wins time and time again."

"Stories from the participants, often delivered via case study or voxpop, is a massively powerful recruitment tool."

One key benefit of UKSPF has been that it has been able to build on prior expertise and experience in delivering initiatives to support local business growth, productivity improvements, innovation and low carbon projects. Such needs are quite universal across local economies, and the programme is sufficiently flexible that it allows for the nuances of local economies and places to be accounted for in delivery. For example, balancing support for businesses that are located in urban or rural locations and supporting delivery via mechanisms that lower barriers to participation for businesses and individuals of different characteristics.

That said, it was also suggested that the apparent continuity that UKSPF has supported has meant that, in large part, prior approaches and methodologies have been rolled forward with little time to consider whether improvements could be made.

"What we got with UKSPF was a framework to replace what was already there. What it didn't do is provide a framework to improve what was already there and that may be a missed opportunity. More time for reflection and innovation needs to be built in to the funding cycles."

The main risks to ongoing success are the short-term nature of delivery, and the definitive end point (and the lack of guidance from government on what happens beyond March 2025) which leads to staff attrition and impacts delivery.

"Those outputs and outcomes are ultimately delivered by people employed on the project who work with businesses. And the retention of those people to the end of March 2025, is absolutely critically important. But we know some are already thinking about their next move, and even actively pursuing it."

3.3.2 Community and Place

3.3.2.1 Strategic alignment

Communities & place projects are strategically aligned with regional and local policy, particularly in regard to work around inclusive growth, engaging hard to reach groups, and diversifying audiences. This is enhanced by the flexibility of activity, outputs and outcomes afforded by UKSPF, which enables projects to deliver activity identified as a community priority or aligned with their focus. This was not a unanimous view, with some delivery partners wanting to see greater recognition of local differences.

"Sometimes I felt we have been encouraged to design a project to be delivered in all three local authorities in a similar way. But our local communities are so different that we need to do things differently."

Alignment exists in different ways. In terms of the policy aim of building capacity in local organisations, UKSPF has enabled this, whether for creative artists and event organisers or community organisations. In turn, Community & Place projects align with policy aims of promoting the North of Tyne area to visitors and enhancing social inclusion at the hyper-local level.

Specifically looking at events, partnership working between officer groups from the LAs, council Members, and representatives from NGI and Visit Northumberland were effective to ensure the delivery of a balanced range of projects which complement each other.

In one respect UKSPF has also made the North East CA more aligned with the priorities of the VCSE sector:

"This isn't the kind of activity the Combined Authority would have funded had the UKSPF not come along. I think the benefit of the UKSPF was that objective around pride in place, which was not really an objective that the Combined Authority necessarily had up front. UKSPF has introduced some new objectives, outputs and outcomes that previously we didn't have, and I think created the space for this work to happen."

The main areas of misalignment regarding Communities and Place projects were attributed to UKSPF timescales and funding mechanisms. Short-term funding results in compressed timescales for delivery following project approval and staff recruitment– as little as six months in some cases. This is a contrast to the way in which some hyper-local VCSE projects would ideally be delivered, whereby building a relationship with participants over time and across a range of activities can be important. This issue also affects capital projects, which can take up most of the funding period to be delivered with little time left for wider activity.

Similarly, siloing of investment themes and projects was at times not wholly aligned with holistic project delivery by a single organisation. In one instance, an organisation had to submit four funding applications to deliver a series of projects as part of a package of support to participants, duplicating effort and expenditure.

3.3.2.2 Programme management

Experiences of project commissioning, management, and administration have varied depending on the type of projects and project delivery organisations.

For events, the North East CA culture tourism and events portfolio had a previously established an effective way of commissioning. Business case processes have been straightforward for those leads familiar with funding applications and compared favourably against funders like the Arts Council. However, they are still viewed as onerous and complex for those new to the process.

Funding award decisions were made by a business case review panel within the CA. This was well regarded, although some project leads felt the process was not always transparent and at times were unclear why some projects were awarding and others not.

"I would say we would have delivered more quickly and effectively if the money had just come straight to us. I would struggle to put my finger on real added value of the money going through the Combined Authority."

Unlike previous ESIF programmes, guidance from the North East CA on output and outcome target setting and reporting was felt to be less detailed or prescriptive in the reflection of aims and objectives. This is seen as a positive in that it allows flexibility and agility in terms of projects coming forward; it allows for expansion on wider benefits, highlighted as a strength of UKSPF. However, at times this left project leads uncertain when it came to monitoring data collection and claims reporting. The CA management team are viewed positively and as helpful and responsive and stakeholders are understanding of the pressure placed on CAs around the country by the way UKSPF was launched, with the North East CA also managing the expansion of the CA. The external factors to do not diminish the fact that some stakeholders have found administration frustrating, but perceptions do vary:

"The financial claims side of things has not been smooth and has been quite a frustrating process. Claim reporting requirements changed between rounds, so claims were sent back with requests for more information on several occasions when we submitted what had previously been accepted. The Combined Authority did engage in meetings to discuss this and answer questions."

"Once a project is approved, the monitoring and spend process is fine. There is enough scrutiny that I feel like, it is being taking seriously, but not so much that it becomes onerous."

The CA's responsiveness and desire to help has been recognised, with changes made in response to delivery partner challenges, especially surrounding expenditure and financial claim profiles:

"One issue was a lack of payment in advance and expecting community organisations to claim quarterly in arrears. VCSE organisations do not have that level of money sitting in their reserves. The MCA agreed to provide funding up front and I would hope that that has established good practice."

The North East CA have also recognised where the on-the-ground experience and expertise of VCSE organisations means the lighter-touch management allowed by UKSPF can achieve better outcomes:

"UKSPF has enabled much better partnership working and has allowed the Combined Authority just to get out the way in terms of the delivery of a small grants programme. There's a lot of groups that still fly under our [the CA) radar. So that devolving of a grants program to delivery partners has made it far more inclusive and accessible than we would have been able to make it."

3.3.2.3   Project delivery

Project delivery in the Community and Place theme has been successful, notwithstanding challenges posed by delays to the programme start and grant funding agreements, and the short delivery timescale.

A key factor in this success is that the UKSPF has enabled project leads to build on, and enhance, existing ways of delivering community projects and events and recruiting participants through existing relationships and networks with little need for new marketing. UKSPF has allowed for a response to community and local needs and provided the opportunity to try new ways of working with businesses and residents.

In Newcastle and Northumberland the LAs led-on Community Development Partnerships (CDP). In North Tyneside, a third-party community organisation was 'contracted' to deliver CDP and grant programme to quickly disseminate funding into the VCSE community projects. Across all three LAs, CDP built on the delivery model of Community Led Local Development. Funding provided to the LAs for a preparatory phase to develop project ideas before bidding for full funding for projects was an was welcome and enabled engagement and co-design before moving on to full business case.

Partnership working was an important strength of project delivery in this investment theme. This includes knowledge sharing between LAs and deepening of partnerships between community organisations, and between community organisations and LAs. In some cases, partnership working has been integral. For example, where minimum funding awards for medium and large grants meant some organisations would not have capacity to bid alone. This was overcome by community organisations grouping together, and sometimes working with partners they previously would not have done so. This has real potential to generate a lasting legacy, funding permitting.

"We're running an event in October where the aim is to get as many of the small, medium and large grants together and really get them partnered up and focused and talking and working together and building as we aim at the legacy of this to really build that up."

Positive partnership working and regular communication with North East CA has allowed for any particular issues to be escalated and dealt with quickly and has created an environment without inter-project competition.

The main risk to ongoing success is the truncated delivery period. For example, supporting people to volunteer is a focus of the Voluntary and Social Action project (VOSA), however there is less time for people to volunteer than originally hoped. Condensed timescales have also had a particular impact on capital high street regeneration projects, with some concerns around project completion by March 2025.

The fixed term nature of funding also disrupts delivery. Staff in delivery organisations face uncertainty over job security, and often have to reapply for their jobs as funding sources change. A specific ask here is for a staffing budget which can offer more long-term certainty.

As well as more certainty of revenue funding for staff, another concern with the delivery model and funding mechanism is revenue funding for maintenance – particularly for public art installations or public realm improvements. There is a specific ask for contingency and, in turn, legacy costs to be accounted for in budgets going forward in order to maintain improvements delivered.

"Factoring in [maintenance costs] to the development phase would be really helpful as we have had to become experts at fixing things ourselves."

Elements of UKSPF activity has been bolted onto high street regeneration projects delivered through High Street Innovation Programmes (HSIPs). Governance and monitoring have been dovetailed into the framework already in place for high street development work and has worked well. On the contrary, some elements of project delivery have felt mismatched, for example, inconsistencies between project size and funding to deliver them as well as staff capacity to manage them. Further integration and alignment of activity would have improved delivery.

"UKSPF almost felt like an afterthought, and it gave such a tight window from a programme manager's point of view. It would have been better to know from the outset so that we could integrate the scope of projects and timescales across funding streams."

In addition to the fixed nature of the timelines, outputs were reasonably tight. In the same vein, some project leads encountered challenges regarding counting beneficiary outputs which can only be claimed once. The North East CA did allow for flexibility to work within output headings and have been accommodating regarding any issues arising throughout delivery. Good relationships with claims managers were highlighted.

3.3.3   People and Skills

3.3.3.1   Strategic Alignment

The UKSPF was well aligned strategically to the skills related aims of delivery partners. It recognised the achievement of softer skills as an outcome for the first time. Delivery partners under the People & Skills intervention often work with economically inactive and socially excluded people who have a range of challenges and barriers to employment. These people need longer term support and are more likely to meet individual soft skills related milestones before they can achieve concrete quantifiable outcomes.

"We can work with those individuals we have previously supported to address their immediate barriers and to support them further and closer."

The UKSPF also encourages ongoing support for beneficiaries via multiple interventions. Partners can refer beneficiaries within and across the projects, so they receive support better tailored to their needs. This change from previous government funded projects received positive feedback from delivery partners. It has led to a collaborative rather than competitive environment.

3.3.3.2   Project management

Delivery partners had a positive experience of working with the People & Skills management team. The team at the Combined Authority were approachable and communication channels were appropriate and accessible. Engagement events were held by the Combined Authority to share information on the various aspects of the Programme, other delivery partners and their roles in the Investment Theme.

There was room for more pre-emptive planning with regards to putting processes in place for the recording and evidencing of outcomes. Whilst there were some templates of declaration forms, registration and referral forms, guidance from central government was vague. This led to each local authority developing their individual evidence requirements based on their own interpretations. The lack of clear processes from the outset meant that the delivery team had to be agile and reactive rather than proactive. As a result, understanding what kind of evidence was to be collected added a level of administrative burden to managing the multiple projects. This caused delays in collecting outputs and outcomes.

"It creates a backlog which nobody wants, and it almost takes away and detracts from us being able to support the new people that are coming on to the programmes."

Additionally, the level of administrative requirements for the monitoring of the UKSPF programme were considered onerous and became a burden for delivery partners. This added to administration costs as well as the time spent to keep up with these tasks. Organisations were not used to the level of monitoring that was required.

"I've had big grants before, and they would only monitor over once a year. So, this has been a bit of a shock to our system."

3.3.3.3   Project delivery

The UKSPF allowed for support activities which were carried out under the European Social Fund (ESF) to continue. In the context of the People & Skills theme, the variety of commissioned projects worked well. Support was available in all stages from skills development, personal development, job seeking and in-work support. Examples of people supported include those who have been excluded from the labour market for a long period of time, for example those who are neurodivergent and unpaid carers.

"Commissioning has been really clever, because we're not all fishing from the same pool of people. We each have our own specialisms."

The Programme had relaxed the reporting requirements of outputs and outcomes and what could be claimed. While this was welcomed, some guidance was requested on the definition of specific terms such as 'basic skills' and 'economically inactive'. Partners were cautious about funding being reclaimed and sought reassurance that they were allowed to count certain delivery methods and outcomes in their targets.

"Is somebody going to come back and say, well, we need a year's worth of evidence on what a life skill is. As a small organisation, we can't take that risk."

Programme contracts were delayed which had a knock-on effect on the start of the Programme delivery. Partners were unable to advertise for the recruitment of resources until contracts were finalised. This meant that recruitment was staggered, and some staff were not in post until June. This led to a tight timeframe in which partners were able to deliver the Programme.

"We were going to take the risk and go out to advert prior to contracts received but because not everybody had been told the outcome, we then couldn't go out and announce where the funding was from."

Delivery partners would welcome longer delivery periods. Whilst funded programmes can last 1-3 years, the time it takes to set up processes and resources for delivery, and then wind down on activity are not taken into account. This takes away valuable time needed to deliver support which can impact outcome targets. Funding longer term projects can also reassure people who are employed to support delivery that there is some security in the role they take on.

Delivery partners recruited beneficiaries in a variety of different ways. Some partners already had strong internal support services in place and therefore did not need to seek referrals outside of their organisation. For example, Reviving the Heart and Building Futures East are two charities who have drop-ins for people who seek support. Some partners used word of mouth, using organisations such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to share information about the support available. One delivery partner developed their marketing presence from a standing start by developing 'on the ground' interpersonal relationships. The City Council also highlighted the website as a point of access. Partners had no difficulty in onboarding people in need of support.

A great need was identified in the region for the services that were being offered under the People & Skills theme. The most common strand people sought support from was the stage one projects focusing on engaging people and getting them ready for a journey back to work. This included key financial support and mental health support. There was a significant level of demand from unpaid carers. Delivery partners agree that the Programme was a significant opportunity for the North of Tyne.

3.3.4   Multiply

3.3.4.1   Strategic Alignment

From a Local Authority (LA) perspective, the main aim of the Multiply support offering was to engage harder reach individuals through community-based outreach facilities. The Multiply support was strategically aligned with the wider adult education aims of the LA in reducing inequalities and encouraging inclusive and economic growth in the region. Funding for numeracy support has been beneficial for the LA as not all forms of support are easily funded through other streams such as the Adult Education Budget.

"At the Local Authority, we wouldn't normally have targeted numeracy as a basic skills need."

The Multiply Programme aligned well with the aims of delivery organisations in providing people with the capabilities to develop functional skills, increase their confidence in maths to further their route to employment. Multiply interventions were made to be informal and engaging in a move away from the formal educational institutions. This suited voluntary sectors where they were able to access hard-to-reach people who may not be comfortable attending mainstream educational courses.

"They [the beneficiaries] would never have engaged in this type of learning without the Multiply Programme."

3.3.4.2   Programme Management

The Multiply Programme was well managed by the Combined Authority. The management team were responsive and approachable through a variety of communication channels such as email, and online meetings. The team were aware of the different partners and their role in wider activity.

"The team came to see us in-person to better understand what we are doing as part of the Multiply Programme."

Some delivery partners found it difficult to understand the monitoring and reporting requirements. The initial lack of information provided by DfE on the intervention strands, and guidance on target parameters was confusing and meant that they were working through predicaments unnecessarily. More time was needed to set up and share clear guidance prior to the delivery period. Additionally, funds were contracted later than expected which impacted the time available to allocate resources and deliver the Multiply Programme.

The output monitoring systems were found to be difficult to use. Partners used online systems such as the Learner Engagement Tool (LET) and the Individual Leaner Record (ILR) to input beneficiary data. The lack of clear guidance or advice around filling in these online forms made this a very time-consuming task for delivery partners. Partners questioned the suitability of the systems and cited high levels of administrative time required to complete the monitoring process for each beneficiary. There is opportunity to implement a wider learning channel where partners can learn how to use these systems.

"It'll (ILR) bounce back and tell you how many errors there are. And really, to correct those errors, you have got to provide less information, which to me, doesn't make sense,"

"We ended up only using the underspend on extra short courses for a while, because what we realized was that the admin involved in doing that just made it not worth our while and easier for us to deliver direct."

Despite these challenges the team did their best to assist partners in trying to make the reporting as user friendly as possible while recognising that the guidelines were not always clear.

"I was just on a Teams call with them earlier today for a review, and they shared some tips around the queries that I had."

3.3.4.3   Project delivery

Project delivery in Multiply has been successful and made a big impact, notwithstanding some preliminary challenges.

All geographical areas were affected by an initial delay between the Department for Education and the Combined Authority regarding the clarification of funding to be received to facilitate Multiply. This uncertainty caused a number of complexities around project commencement.

Recruitment of project delivery staff such as tutors/lecturers and support workers across organisations was delayed.

"There was a lot of miscommunication and lack of communication at the beginning. We weren't in a position to recruit staff until we knew we had the money."

Delivery timescales were significantly reduced as a result of the delay and lack of guidance at the point of project launch. Providers were forced to be adaptable and condense delivery over a shorter period and as a result, having to change and be flexible was an important skill in the first year of delivery.

"We were delivering a full years' worth of delivery in a short space of time (4/5 months)."

There was a lack of communication on delivery guidance which effected Multiply provision in different areas. Some stakeholders outlined inequalities in the treatment of providers; some authorities were told

they could flex learning aims against original guidelines to ease pressure on delivery, however this was not communicated to all.

The Combined Authority were left to work out practicalities around delivery and management themselves, noting a lack of guidance from central government. This was reflected by the way in which they guided local authorities. In some cases, this was seen as an advantage and facilitated bespoke provision to learners within communities.

"It was quite vague in terms of there was no sort of narrow definition of [Multiply], but that's good, because it allowed providers to be flexible in how they delivered it. I think sometimes too much choice can also be a bit of a curse as well."

Recruitment of beneficiaries also posed challenges; it took some time to get partnerships going and build good working relationships with learners. However, since Multiply has been in full delivery, the outcomes have been very impactful.

"So what we wanted to do was really go out into the community where it was needed, so that then we could engage the people, get them confident to come and do a maths course."

"We have had some really, really great success with working with community groups and, you know, some of the most successful courses that were run from Multiply have been through these new relationships that have been built."

4. Evaluation Findings – Outputs, outcomes and impact

4.1 Project Leads Survey Findings - Programme Impact

This section provides some context to further evidence regarding current progress towards output and outcome targets. It draws evidence from the project lead survey, focusing on current delivery status, objectives and outcomes, effectiveness of different elements of the programme, elements of projects that were identified as working especially well and the identification of areas where the programme could be improved. It also touches on benefits arising from the programme, such as development of staff skills and funding impacts.

4.1.1 Project completion

The majority (92%) of respondents' projects were still in delivery[6.5]. Of those who had completed their project, all were satisfied that the project met its objectives, and all referenced some outcome targets that were exceeded[6.5].

4.1.2 Project objectives and outcomes

Project leads were confident in project progress. This was evidenced by 92% of respondents with projects still in delivery citing that they were 'completely or mostly' satisfied that objectives will be met. A minority (3%) stated that they were 'somewhat dissatisfied' that their project will meet its objectives[6.5].

Regarding outcomes, respondents were equally positive – the majority (78%) felt that their project would achieve all outcome targets[6.5] or exceed some outcome targets (61%)[6.5].

4.1.3 Project effectiveness

The graph below depicts the proportion of respondents that cited each element of delivery as 'completely or mostly effective'. The most effective elements of delivery, according to respondents, were the 'communication with partners' and 'internal project management (97% each)'. The delivery timeframe was the least effective aspect of delivery, with just 40% citing it as effective.

Figure 8: Effectiveness of project delivery - % indicating 'completely or mostly effective'
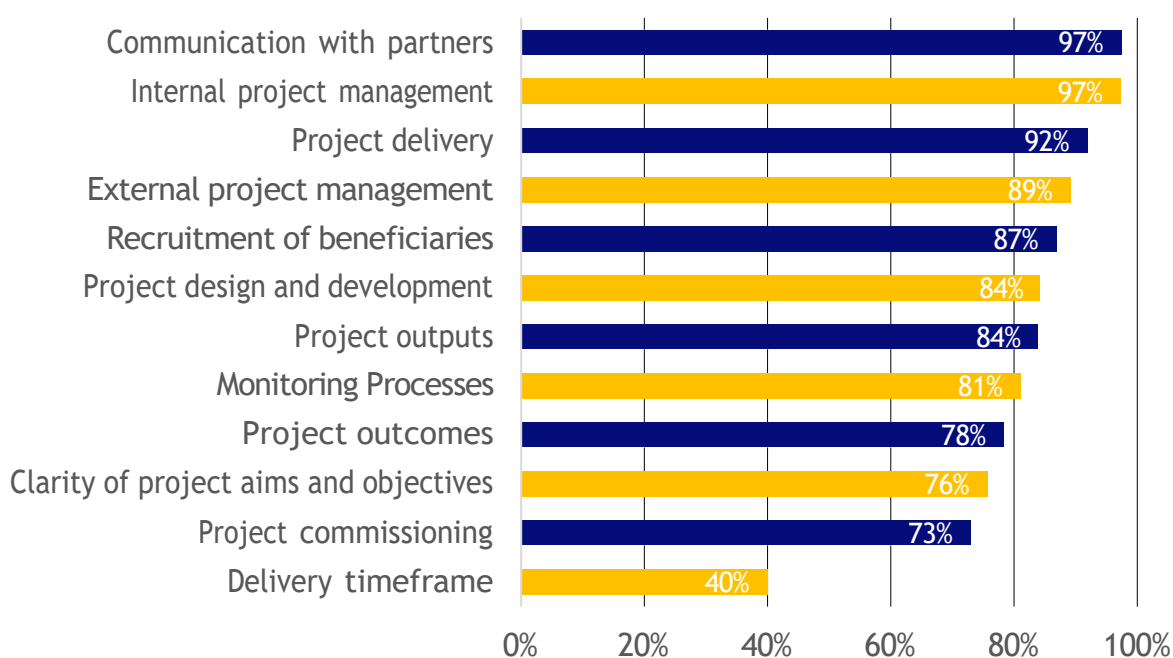
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=38

4.1.4 Successful project elements

The following data represents the themed qualitative responses for elements of projects that leads felt were working well. The most common (39%) theme related to the successes of participant engagement and the benefits resulting from positive engagement. This was followed by the relationships and partnerships built and or developed during the project that led to effective delivery. Respondents also cited responses relating to flexibility/communication (14%), learner progression (7%), and the demand (7%) for the project.

Figure 9: What is working well in project delivery
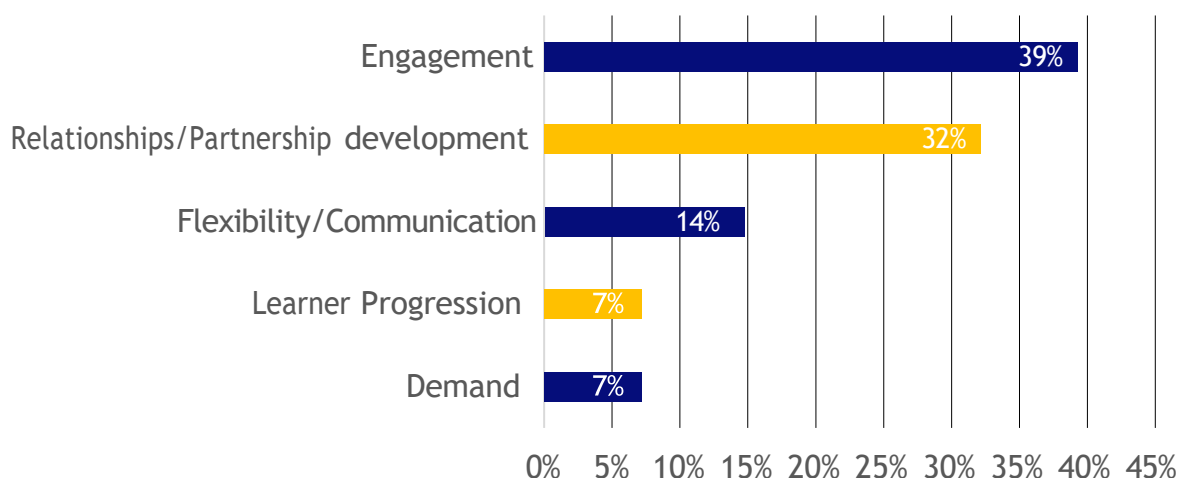
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=32

4.1.5 Project improvements

Qualitative responses were also provided in relation to elements of the project that could be improved. The most common response (33%) related to the timeframe constrains on projects, that if negated would have allowed for a better delivery. Strict monitoring processes were cited numerous times as an element that could be improved. Funding constraints (10%), clarity on targets (10%), business engagement (10%), and recognising impact and success (7%) were all referenced.

Figure 10: Potential areas for improvement
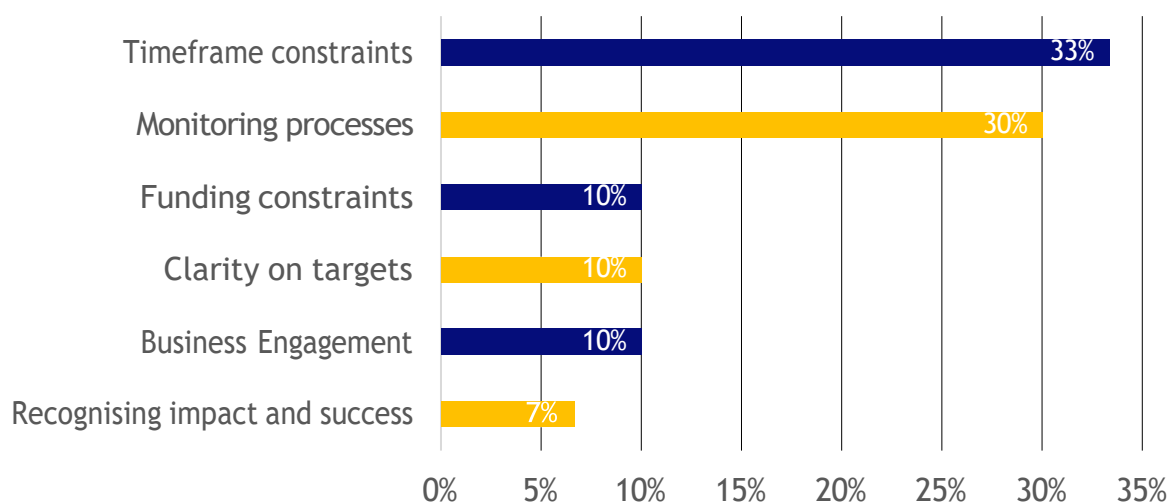
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=32

4.1.6　Staff skills

The vast majority (90%) of project lead respondents stated that their staff's skills have improved as a result of delivering the project (46% moderately, 30% significantly, and 14% a little). Just 3% cited no improvement in staff skills.

Figure 11: Impact on staff skills
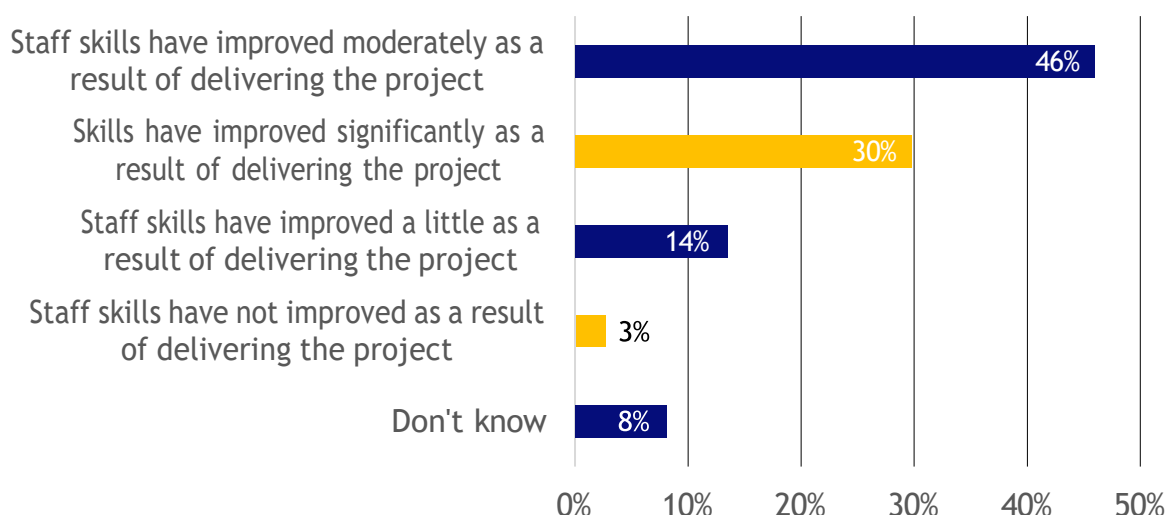
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=37

30% were able to identify skills gaps among staff as a result of delivering their project[6.5]. The gaps identified were grouped into the themes presented in the graph below. With the most common (45%) being technical skills relating to their organisation. 82% of these respondents stated that they had taken steps to address these skills gaps[6.5].

Figure 12: Skills gaps in delivery teams
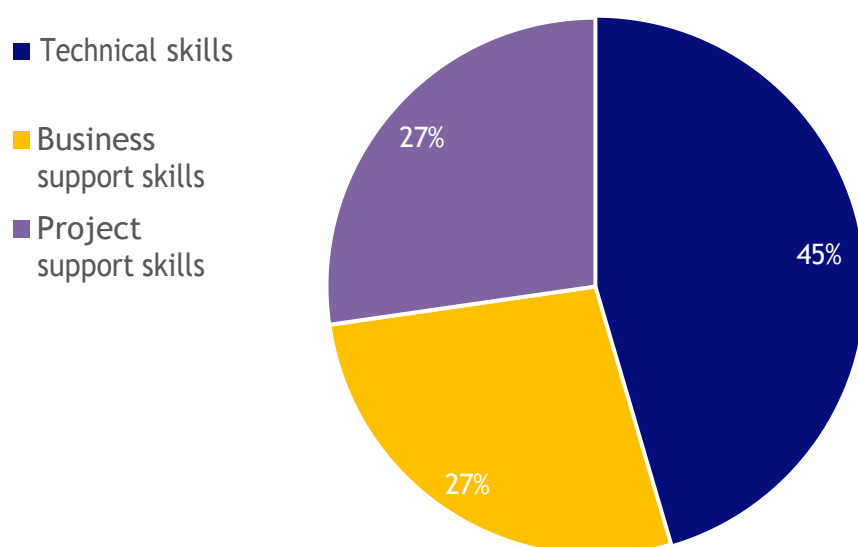
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=11

4.1.7 Funding impacts

The project lead survey findings suggest there is less evidence of funding unlocked due to project delivery, compared to staff upskilling and addressing skill shortages. 19% of respondents stated that they have been able to unlock funding sources for their organisation, as a result of delivering the project. Most were either unsure (30%) or indicated that receiving UKSPF funds did not unlock additional funding (51%).

Figure 13: Programme's ability to unlock additional funding
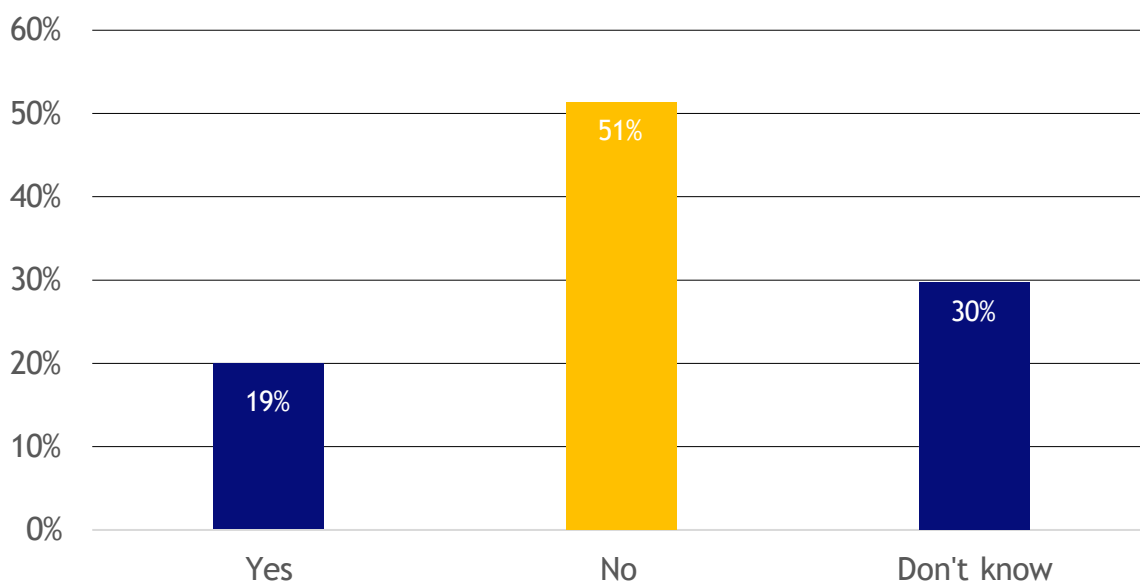
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=37

Average amount of additional funding unlocked	Total additional funding unlocked
£145,452	£872,713

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=6

Sources of this additional funding included the National Lottery Community Fund, Arts Council England and further UKSPF consortiums.

4.1.8 Further projects

43% of project leads cited that their organisation has been able to accelerate other projects or programmes as a result of delivery[.1]. Examples of these included:

"Multiply has supported our delivery of CPPP pillar 3 as an extra support and opportunity for learning for employers we're working with."

"The project has been able to refer into other UKSPF funding programmes."

"Coordination with SPF Rural Asset Multiplier Pilot and potential levering of future funds through organisations engaged in the partnership (National Lottery, Community Foundation, Coalfields Regeneration Trust)."

Internal impacts

30% of project leads cited experiencing internal impacts as a result of delivering their project[6.5]. Examples of these impacts included:

"Wider links with the community, we now have a number of community organisations that previously we would not have been involved with."

"Because of the additional staffing we have been able to increase our capacity and boost the numbers of people we support."

"Increased internal collaboration between different teams (multi-disciplinary approach)."

4.2   Progress towards financial targets

The UKSPF programme required contracted authorities to respond extremely quickly to both the process of applying for funding, and the process of commissioning projects once funding was secured and in place. In practice, this became perhaps the most significant challenge, affecting not only NTCA but also the prospective project delivery partners. Furthermore, the rules of the fund meant that projects under the People & Skills investment theme could start no earlier than 2023/24. The first year of the fund (2022/23) was therefore targeted at projects under the Supporting Local Business and Communities & Place investment themes only.

Table 2 sets out the financial expenditure and forecast position for the North of Tyne UKSPF programme at the end of March 2024. The figures demonstrate the challenges associated with establishing and administering a new fund with the spending profile heavily backloaded into the final year of delivery (£26.7m or 69% contracted for 2024/25 and £30.5m or 79% forecasted to be spent).

By the end of the second year of the programme, expenditure was forecast to total £8.1m, which represents 21% of the planned programme expenditure. The figures also indicate that the programme fund was underspent in 2022/23 and 2023/24 compared to the contracted position. However, a plan has been designed and installed which aims to respond to this challenge by allocating additional funds to the final year of the programme. It should be noted that once commissioned, it is the project delivery partners that are responsible for delivery and claims will reflect progress towards targets.

Table 2: NoT UKSPF Financial Position

YEAR	UKSPF Profile - As per Project GFAs & Contracts	Actual Spend to Date	Current Forecasted Profile	Difference Against Contract	Difference Against Actual	% Slippage	**Difference**
2022/23	1,646,500	786,894	859,572	-786,927	-859,606	-48%	-786,928
2023/24	10,344,567	6,774,040	7,259,674	-3,084,892	-3,570,526	-30%	-3,084,893
2024/25	26,716,445		30,501,158	3,784,713		14%	3,784,713
TOTALS	38,707,513	7,560,934	38,620,405	-87,107		0%	-87,107

Source: NTCA UKSPF Programme Documents

With any new fund, there comes a significant workload in the early months related to establishing the systems and processes through which projects can be commissioned, from establishing guidance around output and outcome definitions to creating the systems for commissioning the projects, to installing the appropriate governance, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Furthermore, delivery partners face a significant task of establishing the approaches, capacity and systems needed to deliver projects once commissioned, which also serves to push delivery back. Finally, NTCA's approach to delivery was to allocate a significant proportion of the funding in the early stages but to deliberately hold funding back to commission projects later in the programme timetable, thereby allowing a more responsive and targeted approach. The figures set out in Table 2 indicate that shortfalls in planned expenditure were evidenced in both of the first two years of the programme, pointing to the delays and challenges associated with implementation and delivery within the first two years.

The figures above, when compared to those set out in Appendix II, suggest that there remains approximately £6.4m of UKSPF budget that remains to be committed to projects (based on £41.8m allocated at the end of March 2024 out of a programme total of £48.2m).

4.2.1 Multiply

Monitoring data for Multiply has been provided for year 2 only (2023/24) and this indicates that of the £1.44m allocated to the programme, £1.29m had been allocated to providers (90%).

4.3 Progress towards output and outcome targets

4.3.1 Outputs and outcomes

This section sets out the position regarding progress towards contracted output and outcome targets. The tables below set out the position at the end of March 2024 with respect to the following measures:

- MHCLG Contracted Targets – these are the targets agreed and contracted with MHCLG at the outset of the NTCA UKSPF programme
- Project Contracted Targets – these are the targets contracted to projects which have received NTCA UKSPF funding.
- % MHCLG Targets – This column expresses the project contracted targets as a proportion of the MHCLG contracted targets, to aid an assessment of the extent to which the programme project portfolio, as it stood at end March 2024, was aligned to the original targets contracted with UK Government.
- Actual to End March 2024 – This sets out the output and outcomes achieved up to the end of March 2024 by the contracted projects. The data is based on claims submitted and approved for that date.
- % Progress to Project Targets – This column expresses the progress towards project contracted targets at end March 2024, to aid an assessment of delivery and the extent to which outputs and outcomes have been achieved.

Note that in some cases, outputs and outcomes are being delivered which are outwith those contracted with MHCLG. These are annotated as 'additional outputs and outcomes' using the abbreviation 'AOO'.

The tables below provide an analysis of the current position by investment theme, firstly for outputs and then for outcomes. Note that a RAG rating will be used in the final evaluation, but given the early-stage nature of many of the interventions and their delivery profile, it was deemed premature to apply such an approach in this interim evaluation. The programme level assessment is set out in Table 10 to Table 12 inclusive (see Appendix IV, page 70). These are derived from an aggregation of all data by project and investment theme. Commentary below focuses on an examination of progress within each investment theme, however, this approach is considered to be focused on the structure of the programme and avoids repetition in the narrative.

The key findings drawn from the analysis of progress to output and outcome targets, by investment theme, are as follows:

Communities & Place (Table 3 and Table 6)

- There are a number of outputs whereby the contracted project targets are significantly below those agreed with MHCLG, including the amount of commercial buildings completed or improved and the amount of public realm created or improved, the number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed and the number of people receiving support to gain employment (where project targets are less than 30% of the MHCLG targets).
- However, there are also a considerable number of 'Additional Outputs and Outcomes' (AOOs) which demonstrate that the programme is generating benefits which extend beyond those contracted with government. These include the creation of green/blue space, creation of new cycle or pathways, supporting economically inactive residents, improving or creating new amenities/facilities, the delivery of events and participatory programmes, new feasibility studies,

households taking up energy efficiency measures, the creation or improvement of tourism, cultural and heritage assets and the planting of trees.

- Furthermore, the contracted projects are forecast to deliver outputs which are above MHCLG targets in a number of output areas (some of which are considerably greater), including the number of households receiving support (123%), the number of local activities or events supported (225%), the number of organisations receiving non-financial support (129%), the number of people attending training sessions (211%), the number of people reached, (16307%), the number of projects successfully completed (403%) and the number of volunteering opportunities supported (134%).

- In terms of progress to project contracted targets, there are 14 output targets against which there has been no progress by end March 2024 (out of a total of 23 identified output areas). There are a further three where progress has commenced but achievements have been limited (i.e. less than 10%, being the number of people attending training sessions, the number of people reached and the number of volunteering opportunities supported).

- The monitoring data indicates that encouraging progress is being made in delivering against targets in five output areas, namely the number of events/participatory programmes (34%), the number of local events or activities supported (32%), the number of organisations receiving grants (21%), the number of organisations receiving non-financial support (24%) and the number of projects successfully completed (17%).

- One output has been fully achieved which involved creation or improvement of tourism, cultural or heritage assets (1 output).

- When it comes to the achievement of targeted outcomes, Table 6 shows that the programme has already achieved two outcomes, which are increased footfall (385%) and increased visitor numbers (107%). Marginal progress has been made towards the outcome related to the provision of volunteering opportunities (7%), whilst four other targeted outcomes are yet to be progressed. There are four outcomes which, when contracted with MHCLG, were expressed in percentage terms, whereas the monitoring data expresses those targets and the achieved outcomes in absolute terms. This discrepancy has been highlighted by the PAT and a solution is being sought.

People & Skills (Table 4 and Table 7)

- This investment theme has been successful in contracting a significantly higher number of targeted project outputs relative to the levels contracted with MHCLG. There are only four (of fourteen) where the proportion of contracted project outputs is below 100% of the MHCLG contracted targets, indicating that NTCA has identified and commissioned projects which are potentially more efficient and productive than those envisaged when developing the programme delivery plan. The four output areas whereby contracted projects are targeting outputs below those agreed with MHCLG are; number of organisations receiving grants (9%), number of people attending training sessions (90%), number of people supported onto a course through providing financial support (24%), and number of volunteering opportunities supported (56%).

- A number of the project contracted targets are very significantly above the MHCLG contracted output levels, such as for the number of people taking part in work experience opportunities (1362%), the number of socially excluded people accessing support (1090%) and the number of effective engagements between keyworkers and additional services (820%).

- There are also three 'Additional Outputs and Outcomes' (AOOs) within the project contracted targets, which again demonstrates that the programme is generating benefits which extend beyond those contracted with government. These include the number of enterprises receiving non-financial support, the number of people receiving support to sustain employment, and the number of people supported to gain a qualification.

- In terms of progress to project contracted targets, there are just three output targets against which there has been no progress by end March 2024 (out of a total of 17 identified output areas). Two of these output areas have significant project contracted targets (number of people receiving support to gain employment, and the number of people supported to sustain employment), so it will be important for the Combined Authority to monitor closely the early delivery of related projects into 2024/25 to ensure that suitable and realistic plans are in place.
- Projects have achieved significant proportions of their targeted outputs in three areas; number of enterprises receiving financial support (1880% of target), number of organisations receiving support (330%) and number of people supported onto a course through financial support (69%). A range of other targeted outputs are being progressed in addition to these, though performance is at a significantly lower level.
- Given that delivery of People and Skills projects was restricted to year 2 and 3 of the programme, in this context the performance of projects aligned to this investment theme is encouraging.
- When to comes to the achievement of targeted outcomes, Table 7 presents a similar picture as for outputs, above. There are numerous outcome areas where the project contracted targets are well above those agreed with MHCLG, and only three where the data indicates that project contracts that were in place in March 2024 will significantly undershoot those agreed targets (jobs safeguarded, enterprises adopting new to firm technologies and processes, people gaining qualifications, licences and skills and people in education/training following support).
- Progress towards delivery of outcomes is behind that on outputs, as would be expected given the project delivery profile and the time that needs to elapse for outputs to generate people and skills outcomes. Good progress is being made in stimulating the number of active or sustained participants in community groups (28%), whilst others are beginning to be generated by project delivery; people in education/training as a result of support (14% of contracted targets), people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services (10%), people with basic skills following support (10%) and economically inactive individuals engaging with benefits system following support (8%).

Supporting Local Business (Table 5 and Table 8)

- Outputs in this investment theme are typified by there being a significant number of AOOs (11 out of 19), with the majority of other output tartes being above or close to the MHCLG contracted targets (seven at or above 80% of the target) and one where the project contracted targets are significantly below those agreed with MHCLG (in relation to enterprises being provided with a non-repayable grant, 27%).
- The number of AOOs indicates that the programme, if successful in achieving its targets, will significantly extend beyond the expectation of government, as expressed by the contracted MHCLG targets.
- There does appear to be some overlap between outputs and outcomes registered within the monitoring data, as jobs created and safeguarded appear as both outputs and outcomes of project delivery. This is to be discussed with the PAT, with some redefinition or reallocation potentially arising. Furthermore, the similarity between some output classes (e.g. 'organisations' and 'enterprises' receiving non-financial support as two separate categories) suggests that some cleaning or realignment may be necessary.
- The contracted projects are forecast to deliver outputs which are significant above MHCLG targets in two output areas; the number of enterprises receiving grants (515%) and the number of people attending training sessions (186%).
- In terms of progress to project contracted targets, there are nine output targets against which there has been no progress by end March 2024 (out of a total of 19 identified output areas). There are a further three where progress has commenced but achievements have been limited

(i.e. less than 10%, being the number of enterprises receiving grants, the number of enterprises receiving support, and the number of people attending training sessions). These are outputs with high targets, so the Combined Authority should ensure that delivery plans for the coming year reflect the significant scaling up of activity that will be required.

- The monitoring data indicates that encouraging progress is being made in delivering against targets in six output areas, namely the number of decarbonisation plans being developed (51%), the number of enterprises receiving non-financial support (31%), the number of local events and activities (63%), the number of organisations receiving grants (38%), the number of organisations receiving non-financial support (35%) and the number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready (28%).

- When it comes to the achievement of targeted outcomes, Table 8 shows that the programme has already achieved one outcome, which is the number of research and development (R&D) active enterprises, achieving five such outcomes against a target of four (125%). However, this target is only one fifth of that agreed with MHCLG (21). Two other outcome areas have targets well below those agreed with MHCLG (number of new to market products at 15%, and number of enterprises adopting new to firm technologies or processes, at 29%). Both relate to innovation, and whilst an additional outcome is close to the MHCLG target (enterprises adopting new or improved products or services, at 57%) the overall effect of the project-level contracted outcomes is that the programme may fall short on innovation ambitions unless further investment is made in the final year of the programme. Good progress has been made towards achieving the target level of outcomes in relation to enterprises adopting new or improved products or services (50%) whilst the remaining six outcome areas are either yet to record any delivered outcomes or are in the early stages of achievement (less than 10%).

Multiply (Table 9)

Monitoring data for Multiply has been provided for year 2 (2023/24) only, and this is presented in Table 9. The analysis indicates the following findings:

- Delivery in year 2 is broadly on track, with targets met or over-achieved in three of the five intervention areas. In two cases (B: courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage money, and C: innovative numeracy programme delivered with employers) there has been substantial over-delivery. This is especially encouraging for intervention C: innovative numeracy programme delivered with employers, as this had previously been identified as an 'at risk' area.

- Two intervention areas were running behind target in year 2, however; A: courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications (72%), and F: courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children with their own progression (70%).

- Outreach work has been delivered at or above the targeted levels, with work around intervention B: courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage money (220%) and I: numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners (215%). The target for intervention C: innovative numeracy programme delivered with employers was zero, but delivery partners have achieved 73 outreach interventions in this category.

Table 3: Communities & Place – Progress to Output targets at end March 2024

Outputs	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual to End March 2024	% Progress to Project Targets
Amount of commercial buildings completed or improved (m^2)	1,500	410	27%	0	0%
Amount of green or blue space created or improved (m^2)	0	6,000	AOO	0	0%
Amount of new or improved cycleways or paths	0	2	AOO	0	0%
Amount of public realm created or improved (m^2)	20,000	2,160	11%	0	0%
Economically inactive participants not in education or training receiving support or an intervention	0	240	AOO	0	0%
Number of amenities/facilities created or improved	0	28	AOO	0	0%
Number of commercial buildings completed or improved	5	2	40%	0	0%
Number of events/participatory programmes	0	53	AOO	18	34%
Number of feasibility studies supported	0	3	AOO	0	0%
Number of households receiving support	1,200	1470	123%	0	0%
Number of households supported to take energy efficiency measures	0	600	AOO	0	0%
Number of local events or activities supported	55	124	225%	40	32%
Number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	55	2	4%	0	0%
Number of organisations receiving grants	108	157	145%	33	21%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support	400	516	129%	125	24%
Number of people attending training sessions	350	740	211%	32	4%
Number of people reached	1,500	244,600	16307%	4,257	2%
Number of people receiving support to gain employment	665	24	4%	0	0%
Number of projects successfully completed	30	121	403%	21	17%
Number of rehabilitated premises	5	4	80%	0	0%
Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved	0	1	AOO	1	100%
Number of trees planted	0	600	AOO	0	0%
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	791	1,063	134%	63	6%

Source: NTCA UKSPF PAT

Table 4: People & Skills – Progress to Output targets at end March 2024

Outputs	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services	878	3,372	384%	481	14%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system	395	825	209%	164	20%
Number of effective engagements between keyworkers and additional services	395	3,240	820%	756	23%
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	0	30	AOO	564	1880%
Number of organisations receiving grants	108	10	9%	33	330%
Number of people accessing mental and physical health support leading to employment	176	584	332%	150	26%
Number of people attending training sessions	350	315	90%	32	10%
Number of people receiving support to gain employment	665	1470	221%	0	0%
Number of people receiving support to sustain employment	0	705	AOO	0	0%
Number of people supported onto a course through providing financial support	213	52	24%	36	69%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching	790	1,895	240%	96	5%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills	638	1,579	247%	90	6%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification	0	57	AOO	0	0%
Number of people supported to participate in education	41	142	346%	37	26%
Number of people taking part in work experience programmes	26	354	1362%	15	4%
Number of socially excluded people accessing support	263	2,867	1090%	304	11%
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	791	443	56%	63	14%

Source: NTCA UKSPF PAT

Table 5: Supporting Local Business – Progress to Output targets at end March 2024

Outputs	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Creation / safeguarding of space for shared community and business activities	0	5	AOO	0	0%
Direct Jobs Created	0	6	AOO	0	0%
Direct Jobs Safeguarded	0	28	AOO	0	0%
Indirect Jobs Created	0	20	AOO	0	0%
Indirect Jobs Safeguarded	0	50	AOO	0	0%
Number of apprenticeship/ traineeship opportunities achieved	0	15	AOO	0	0%
Number of decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support	183	120	66%	61	51%
Number of enterprises engaged in new markets	0	33	AOO	0	0%
Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants	0	23	AOO	0	0%
Number of enterprises receiving grants	73	376	515%	14	4%
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	0	1,821	AOO	564	31%
Number of enterprises receiving support	0	60	AOO	2	3%
Number of enterprises provided with financial support in the form of a non-repayable grant	73	20	27%	2	10%
Number of local events or activities supported	55	64	116%	40	63%
Number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	55	49	89%	0	0%
Number of organisations receiving grants	108	86	80%	33	38%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support	400	359	90%	125	35%
Number of people attending training sessions	350	650	186%	32	5%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	0	1,519	AOO	427	28%

Source: NTCA UKSPF PAT

Table 6: Communities & Place – Progress to Outcome targets at end March 2024

Outcomes	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Improved Engagement Numbers	0.05%	520	tbc	0	tbc
Increased Footfall	0.05%	20,830	tbc	80,200	385%
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	0.03%	55	tbc	0	tbc
Increased visitor numbers	0.10%	15	tbc	16	107%
Jobs created as a result of support	713	17	2%	0	0%
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills	129	48	37%	0	0%
Number of people in education/training following support	319	24	8%	0	0%
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	353	24	7%	0	0%
Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support	750	956	127%	71	7%

Source: NTCA UKSPF PAT

Table 7: People & Skills – Progress to Outcome targets at end March 2024

Outcomes	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support	245	60	24%	0	0%
Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support	0	290	AOO	81	28%
Number of economically inactive individuals engaging with benefits system following support	176	512	291%	41	8%
Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	305	10	3%	0	0%
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	702	1639	233%	35	2%
Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	398	2006	504%	100	5%
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills	129	101	78%	0	0%
Number of people in education/training following support	319	112	35%	16	14%
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	353	830	235%	15	2%
Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills	351	2667	760%	40	1%
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	351	1242	354%	128	10%
Number of people with basic skills following support	513	574	112%	55	10%
People gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	129	350	271%	4	1%

Source: NTCA UKSPF PAT

Table 8: Supporting Local Business – Progress to Outcome targets at end March 2024

Outcomes	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Jobs created as a result of support	713	472	66%	0	0%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support	245	276	113%	14	5%
Number of early-stage enterprises which increase their revenue following support	41	121	295%	1	1%
Number of enterprises adopting new or improved products or services	7	4	57%	2	50%
Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	305	88	29%	9	10%
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	0	301	AOO	17	6%
Number of new to market products	26	4	15%	0	0%
Number of R&D (Research & Development) active enterprises	21	4	19%	5	125%

Source: NTCA UKSPF PAT

Table 9: Multiply – Progress to targets at end March 2024

Intervention	Description	Substantive activity			Outreach activity		
		Target	Actual	% of target	Target	Actual	% of target
A	Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications	228	164	72%	144	152	106%
B	Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money	300	483	161%	220	483	220%
C	Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace	201	344	171%	0	73	n/a
F	Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children and help with their own progression	320	225	70%	130	137	105%
I	Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners – for example, those not in the labour market or other groups identified locally as in need	380	480	126%	200	430	215%

Source: NTCA Multiply Programme Lead

4.3.2   Findings by investment theme

4.3.2.1   Local Business Support

Monitoring data indicates a mixed picture in terms of achievement of targeted outputs and outcomes by March 2024, with many outputs yet to have any claims against them, and a handful of others beginning to show encouraging progress to targets. This is understandable given when projects were commissioned (primarily in year 2) and the time required to install capacity for delivery, recruit participants and deliver the intended support.

However, project delivery leads are confident that the scale and breadth of outputs and outcomes is beginning to build and that plans are in place to achieve contracted targets by the end of the programme period.

Project leads indicated that within this investment theme, the use of the selected output and outcomes indicators meant that an understanding of the true impact of the initiatives was difficult to grasp. The best example is the use of 'jobs created' as an outcome indicator. Many successful business support initiatives, including but not limited to those that provide grants for capital equipment, may result in growth which is not measured in terms of jobs. An expansion of capacity, via machinery, may lead to revenue, profit and productivity growth without adding a single additional job. It is therefore important to recognise that positive impact from such programmes may not be captured through the programme output and outcome indicators, and a more sophisticated approach should therefore be sought.

"The project outputs are pretty objective. You either have or you haven't engaged with a business. The outcomes are more intangible, slightly more 'slippery'. And inevitably, they take time to come to fruition. The product doesn't get launched in two months, a new process doesn't get implemented in a business in a couple of months, and certainly, investments and job creation don't happen overnight. So they're always going to be back and loaded, or even occur well after the support has been delivered."

4.3.2.2   Community and Place

As suggested by the project monitoring data, project delivery leads are broadly positive about achievements and expect to meet or exceed targets by the project close. There is also agreement that output data does not capture the range of impacts emerging across the Communities and Place portfolio.

"Supporting capacity building, bringing people together, making connections there. That's the real impact that it has in communities. These projects have that impact. The outputs are how many volunteers are supported, we measure all of those things, these projects will deliver all of those things, that is missing the main, the main impact in communities."

Projects have been designed with impact in mind. For CDP, grant applications from local community projects used a two-stage process adopted by delivery organisations. Applications where the rationale and potential impacts were not clear were filtered out after expression of interest and would not be asked to fill in a full application form, with feedback provided. This meant time and effort was focused on higher quality bids. Similarly for events, the funding application process has meant funding awards could be targeted at more impactful activities – for example events who had a plan to use the money to reach new audiences, add more venues, or diversify content, rather than those just seeking to fill holes in a budget. For events, grants to support organisations to put on events which they otherwise would not have been able to has been an additional impact, with thousands of participants attending these events.

"80% of the Novum event funding is from UKSPF so the event just would not happen without it."

The spatial nature and scale of impacts vary depending on the type of project. In terms of regional economic growth and profile raising, the larger events and tourism development activity are perceived

as creating the most impact, although this has not been measured. Conversely, hyper-local projects are creating visible impacts and making a real difference to participants and community organisations, but the limited geographical coverage means there is not yet a regional-level impact. There is potential however for this impact to be realised over a long period of time.

> *"If you ask businesses in the city centre whether big events have an impact on their business, they would say yes, because there are additional people in the area spending money. We will notice a hyper local impact, although it is really difficult to tell whether that's going to change the overall picture."*

The impact of projects under Communities and Place have been enhanced by inter-project crossover and a strong building in confidence within local communities. UKSPF projects have built on activity within strong communities at a hyper-local level and have encouraged collaboration. The legacy impact will be realised in time as the willingness to help and collaborate continues to grow. For example:

> *"One Music Promoter we work with commented that when she's promoting work, she doesn't do it in one particular venue, they put a flyer in every venue, and all are happy for them to do so, even if events are on the same night. The community recognises that if the venue down the road is successful, people are attracted to the area."*

4.3.2.3   People and Skills

The UKSPF Programme had a bigger scope than previous funding programmes with regards to the number of different outputs, interventions and outcomes which were more complimentary to the needs of people in the region. Delivery organisations felt they had increased visibility and more opportunity to support people they would not normally support. As a result, the programme has increased the level of understanding delivery partners have of potential beneficiaries and their barriers to employment. Furthermore, there has been an increase in engagement with employers.

Different interventions worked together in the form of a customer journey. For example, the Boost project focused on supporting economically inactive people in developing their soft skills. These beneficiaries would then be signposted to the Newstart project where they are supported to gain paid placements.

> *"Having different organisations deliver the different interventions really worked, because somebody can come on board and be supported by all those interventions, or just take the one if that is what they need."*

There was no difficulty in reaching onboarding targets due to the significant level of demand. Considering the significance of the barriers and the level of support beneficiaries need, delivery partners agree that the achievement of some outcomes will take time to come to fruition. Most of the support for beneficiaries focused on enabling and equipping people with the ability to continue their trajectory to a significant outcome such as employment. Targets were generally met at a Programme level and softer outcomes such as self-esteem and improved wellbeing were more achievable.

Without the UKSPF, partners would have looked to continue support efforts utilising in-house resource but as support is reliant on financial input, there was a consensus that this would have been difficult. To continue the support, one delivery partner attempted to put together a delivery team and then use some funds to spark interest amongst employers, but available funds were scarce.

Delivery partner organisations embedded in the local communities earn the trust of local people who may need support. With the understanding that the government cannot support everyone in silo, particularly in the rural communities, community sector organisations are needed to reach people in secluded areas.

> *"People didn't end up economically inactive and, in some cases, socially excluded overnight. This has been the cumulative effect over many years that has resulted in such high demand. And I think without the UKSPF, then the problem would continue to compound with little support available."*

4.3.2.4 Multiply

Project delivery leads are broadly positive that contracted output targets will be achieved, yet notably the impacts of the Multiply project reach more widely.

The Multiply intervention allowed beneficiaries to take ownership of the way they want to use the support and be tailored to their end goal. It has allowed cohorts of learners who are usually averse to numeracy or mathematics skills, to build confidence and be more open to embracing how basic maths skills can impact their day-to-day lives.

"We very quickly found out that our niche was one-to-one support."

Provision of one-to-one support has facilitated this bespoke level of support and has had an extensive impact on the real lives of learners. Multiply has been a mechanism for unlocking experiences to understand where numeracy can expedite and enhance managing everyday challenges. The bespoke nature and flexibility of some of the Multiply courses has been a huge delivery strength and has impacted greatly on the life of learners.

"I think it's been really good provision just to build confidence in some really practical areas. And it is that really good steppingstone onto something else, whether that be functional skills or just a longer program of learning."

Multiply has also afforded participants movement into further education and employment.

"We've had several people get job promotions. We've had several people get to university, and so without one-to-one through Multiply, which nobody ever could have been in a position to provide, and there's real impact there."

"A guy who worked at a warehouse who got through his numeracy learning, he got promoted to a coordinator"

The impact of the Multiply project has been enhanced by its complementarity to other support in the region and it's fit with the wider curriculum service.

"Multiply really complements a lot of the work that we already do around the region. But without Multiply, I wouldn't be able to offer some of the funded training and learning elements that sit within our current provision."

"As part of the overall package of support, we provided in-house numeracy refresher courses for the workforce. It fit directly with Multiply. I think that was a bit easier to arrange than it would have been without Multiply."

4.3.2.5 Multiply Beneficiary feedback

A survey of Multiply beneficiaries was conducted, with the survey link being sent to current and past participants in the Multiply support programme. The survey received 48 responses, which is a modest sample size and insufficient to provide statistically meaningful results. However, the feedback does provide some indicative evidence in relation to motivations for, and the perceived benefits of taking part.

Figure 14 shows that for almost six in ten Multiply beneficiaries, a key motivation was to improve practical skills or learn new ones (59%), followed by the motivation to develop knowledge (49%) and to improve self-confidence (44%). Other motivations include to meet new people (26%), find a job or progress career path (21%) and manage mental or physical health (21%).

Figure 14: Motivations for signing up to Multiply
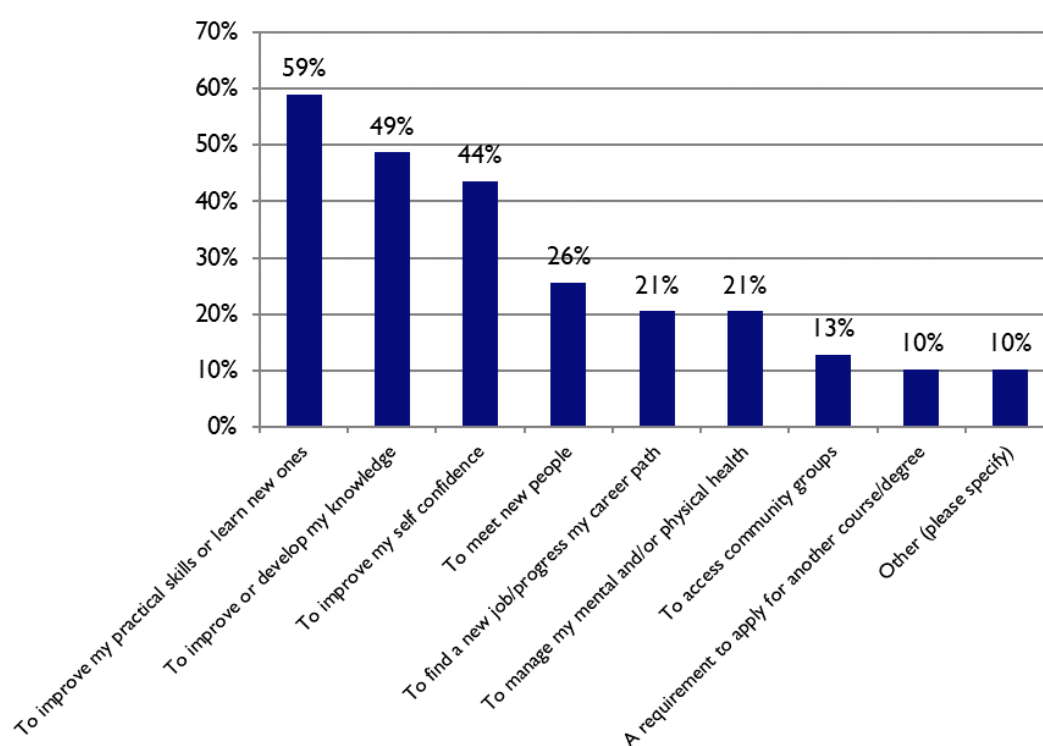
When participating in the Multiply programme, Figure 15 shows that participants reported that the mode of delivery was typically group support delivered in person (64%) or one-to-one support delivered in person (53%). Some delivery did occur online, either in groups (6%) or one-to-one (3%).

Figure 15: Mode of Multiply support delivery
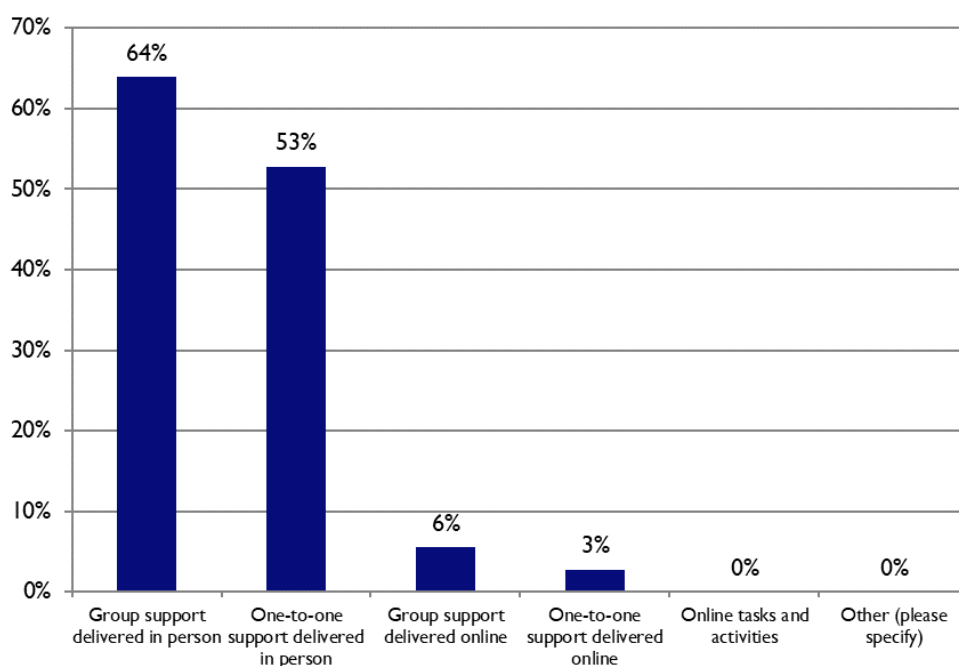
The survey also gathered feedback regarding the level of satisfaction that beneficiaries felt towards different elements of the Multiply programme, and the results are set out in Figure 16. This shows that at least 75% of beneficiaries felt 'completely satisfied' with all elements except 'sharing of other places I can get support' which suggests that there may be an opportunity to better signpost beneficiaries to additional or other support which meets their ongoing needs. Satisfaction levels were highest for 'the chance to speak with people who supported me' (92%), the way in which the project was delivered (89%) and the 'advice and support received' (89%).

Figure 16: Satisfaction with Multiply elements
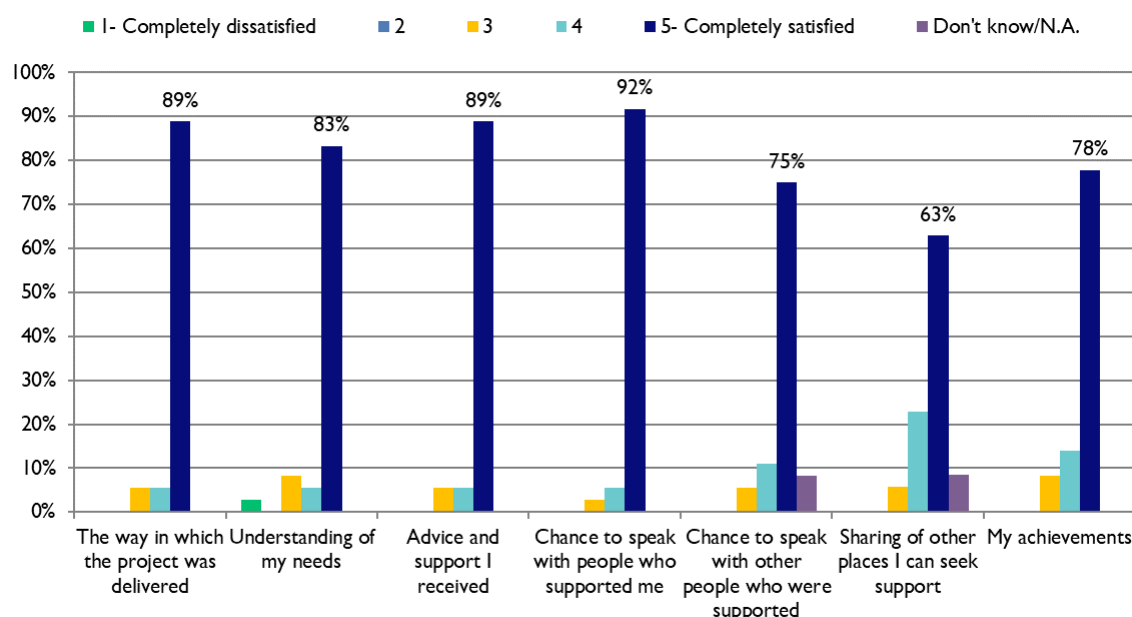
Source: North of Tyne Multiply Beneficiary Survey Analysis, n=36

Overall satisfaction levels were also expressed through the beneficiary survey, and Figure 17 shows that 69% of beneficiaries were 'extremely satisfied', and a further 22% were 'very satisfied'.

Figure 17: Overall satisfaction with Multiply support and how it met initial needs
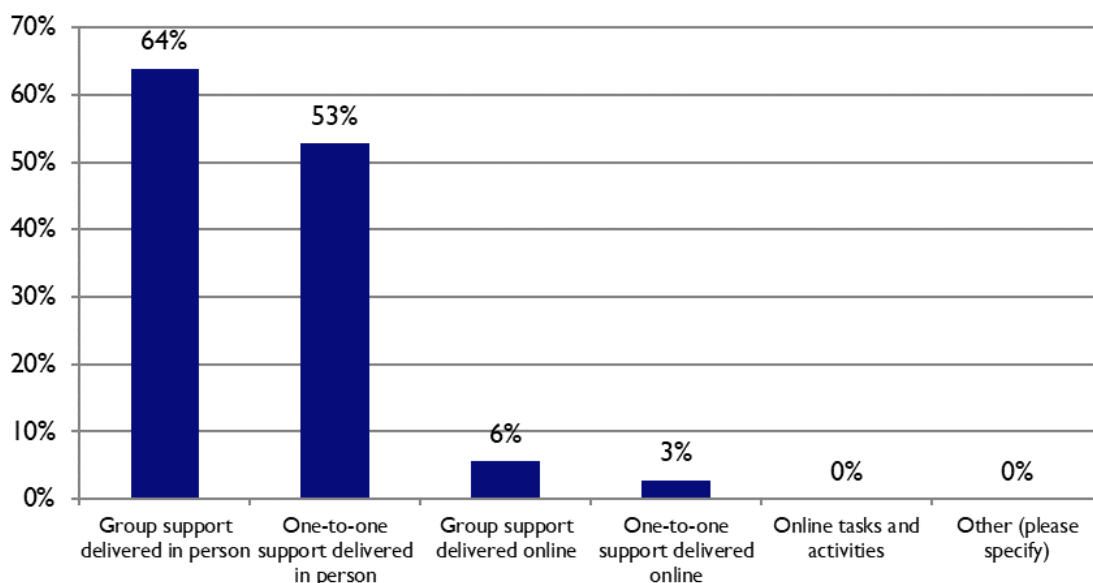
Source: North of Tyne Multiply Beneficiary Survey Analysis, n=36

Finally, the survey asked beneficiaries to identify the key benefits that they received by taking part in Multiply. The results, set out in Figure 18, indicate that over half found they had built confidence in their own skills and knowledge (54%), almost one half (49%) found that they had increased their ability to engage in further learning opportunities, and 40% had built their confidence in maths. Almost one third (31%) indicated that their health and wellbeing had improved, which a similar proportion indicated that their employability had improved.

Figure 18: Main benefits of taking part in Multiply

Source: North of Tyne Multiply Beneficiary Survey Analysis, n=36

The survey also identified a number of additional findings, as follows:

- 65% of Multiply beneficiaries indicated that they would not have experienced the benefits they described without receiving support, and a further 21% indicated that some benefits would have been experienced but not as quickly.
- 30% indicated that their circumstances had changed since engaging with Multiply, with one third of such beneficiaries going into work and a further third preparing themselves to do so (e.g. when circumstances change, such as when a child starts nursery).

4.3.3   Addressing inequalities

The interim evaluation has found that there are elements of the programme design and delivery which contribute to goals in relation to addressing challenges associated with economic and social inclusion. This is an important point as it links back to the wider goals of the Combined Authority, as articulated in the Corporate Plan. The interim evaluation has found that within the project portfolio, there are projects which target support and resource at particular groups suffering disadvantage or that face particular challenges when seeking to participate in the North East economy. For example, within the Community and Place investment theme, whether through Community Partnership projects or stand-alone projects, there is evidence of providers targeting the specific needs of communities and groups – whether based on geography, employment status, or health and well-being – as and designing

and delivering support projects which address those needs. This is also the case within the People and Skills portfolio, as well as the related Multiply programme which has supported individuals who are from the labour market and would not normally engage with numeracy training. Such evidence has been highlighted through the group and 1-2-1 discussions with local authority partners and delivery organisations. The beneficiary survey also sought to understand demographics of respondents and, whilst the sample size is insufficiently large to support robust or statistically reliable analysis, this did provide an indication that the programme is attracting participants from a diverse range of ethnicities and backgrounds. More robust evidence is being sought for the final evaluation.

At the time of the interim evaluation, there was no quantitative evidence being acquired through the project monitoring and reporting systems to support such qualitative insight. However, it is understood that the PAT is now seeking to collect demographic data regarding supported individuals and groups in order monitor how the programme is interacting with communities and individuals within them. The final evaluation will seek to add quantitative insight to further qualitative insight in relation to the important lines of enquiry in relation to tackling inequalities.

4.4 Evaluation Insights from other evaluation exercises

As mentioned in the methodology, a number of projects within the North of Tyne UKSPF portfolio are subject to project level evaluation, or form part of a national evaluation of the UKSPF programme. The evaluation team has been provided with outputs from two evaluations and this section highlights soe headline findings from these. They relate to the Culture and Creative Zones and Crowdfund North Tyne. An evaluation of the High Streets programme is also underway but reports were not available at the time of producing this interim evaluation.

4.4.1 Culture and Creative Zones (CCZ)

Key learnings from the North East CA CCZ Evaluation in relation to each UKSPF theme[12]:

Communities and Place

- CCZs benefitted from community led projects - "Allowing ideas to emerge from the community - rather than imposing top-down provision".
- The evaluation recognised the opportunity for the Combined Authority to be more active in promoting the scheme.
- Local creatives provided and developed distinctive local identity in CCZs.
- Programme leads played a key role in developing trusting relationships with communities.
- The Programme brought challenges in balancing cultural delivery and economic development, such as requirements for different approaches to delivery and reporting.
- Maintaining continuity with programme management and governance was highlighted as a priority, especially when considering programme legacy.

People and Skills

- The evaluation concluded that it remained to be seen how zones would scale up effective skills programmes proposed by the community.
- The importance of reaching beyond the cultural sector and engaging the wider public in activity in the zones was recognised by the evaluation.

Local Business Support

- Small grants appeared to fill gaps in the funding landscape to enable small-scale activity.

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[12] North East CA, Creative and Cultural Zones Annual Evaluation Report, 2024

- The evaluation recognised the importance of signposting to existing provision and identifying gaps in support.
- CCZs could support cultural occupiers and developers to promote cultural infrastructure.

4.4.2 Crowdfund

Key learnings from the NTCA Crowdfund Evaluation report[13] are as follows:

Communities and Place:

- Civic crowdfunding model was found to bring a range of positive impacts in relation to participatory community development. It was found that community led ideas were more likely to receive support.
- The place-based approach to development was operationalised, developing ownership and civic pride. This approach was said to link to supporting the foundational economy "as a means of stimulating equitable and sustainable socio-economic development across the region."
- The civic crowdfunding model was said to prove effective in seeing projects through to completion. As well as enabling the Combined Authority to financially support a greater number of projects, as opposed to fully funded projects.
- Around '40 organisations' successfully implemented a "range of community development and environmental projects", supported by a "third-party specialist company and an online platform".
- There was said to be a need for improvements in communicating project impacts to the public and engaging new communities. "It is likely that there are many organisations who need support but do not know about the initiative."
- It was highlighted that in some cases issues were raised relating to "the amount of money required from members of the community", particularly "in areas of low economic status".

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[13] NTCA, Evaluation of Crowdfund North of Tyne, 2024

5. Conclusions, lessons and recommendations

This section brings together the findings of the interim evaluation into a set of concluding comments, structured against key evaluation themes. It also identifies major lessons arising from the evidence and makes a number of recommendations for funders, stakeholders and delivery partners.

5.1 Conclusions

The interim evaluation has drawn on a range of primary and secondary data in order to inform findings and conclusions. Primary data is limited to a survey of project leads and a survey of beneficiaries of the Multiply programme, due to the fact that some projects are subject to external evaluation and others are in their very early stages of delivery. Further primary data, particularly in relation to project beneficiaries, will be captured for the final evaluation in spring 2025.

The focus of the evaluation is to present interim findings and conclusions regarding the success of the programme; its design and the processes established for its implementation and ongoing management; the early evidence of progress towards output; outcome and impact targets; to identify lessons learned around what works in promoting pride of place and life chances; and to identify recommendations for consideration by the Combined Authority and other programme stakeholders. The commentary below follows this structure.

5.1.1 Review of Process

There is a significant theme of partnership development running through the programme. Three quarters of delivery organisations worked with other partners in developing their project offer, and qualitative evidence outlines the real strength of partnership behind many of the project, especially within the Communities and Place theme. New approaches and relationships have been developed, tailored to local need and these are assessed as being highly effective in addressing the challenges, and achieving the objectives that the UKSPF funding is targeted at.

The programme has also stimulated innovation, with 81% of project leads indicating that they had incorporated new and innovative approaches to project delivery or design. For example, one project lead commented that their approach had been innovative in terms of both its design and delivery. Firstly, in the design, the project focuses on a specific economic development and growth challenge for a section of the social enterprise sector. Second, when designing the response to that challenge, the delivery lead pulled together a new consortium of partners with the requisite expertise and capacity to provide targeted support.

Within the Supporting Local Business theme, project lead feedback indicated that there were potentially greater opportunities to innovate delivery, but timescales associated with UKSPF limited those opportunities in this round. This suggests that the capacity for this programme and others like it to stimulate innovation (in project design and delivery) is considerable, but sufficient time to explore and develop such approaches is needed if such opportunities are to be maximised.

Many delivery partners had prior experience of delivering similar projects in the past, and this experience has proven invaluable in establishing projects within the short and rapid timetable.

Strategic alignment between UKSPF project goals and those of delivery organisations was deemed to be very strong. This is to some extent to be expected, given the commissioning process had considered (directly or indirectly) such factors. However, this again demonstrates that the UKSPF programme has provided soe continuity in support for individuals and businesses across North of Tyne, based on shared goals and objectives between the programme and delivery partners, and the often extensive experience that delivery partners have brough to the programme. Feedback also indicates that the programme has

enabled the Combined Authority to align better with the aims and objectives of community development organisations and the voluntary sector.

Feedback on programme monitoring and management has been positive, with systems and requirements deemed to be proportionate as well as more simple and flexible than seen with prior funding schemes (e.g. ERDF). However, the flexibility has also caused some uncertainty with parameters for claims reporting not always viewed as clear and consistent by some project leads. Partners have welcomed the opportunity to engage with the Combined Authority early on in the process to gain a deeper understanding of aims and ambitions. There were reports of early teething issues and somewhat inevitable delays in establishing the frameworks, systems and guidance for the programme, but partners were keen to indicate that this is a national challenge and not only isolated to the Combined Authority. Programme contracts were delayed which had a knock-on effect on the start of the Programme delivery. However, when issues have arisen, the Combined Authority is reported to have responded as promptly as possible. Ongoing support and engagement between the Combined Authority and projects, via teams aligned to investment themes, has also been positively praised.

Monitoring and reporting within the Multiply programme has been more complex. The programme is run by Department for Education and the systems used are different to UKSPF and seen as confusing and time consuming. A significant investment of time has been required to get to grips with the systems, exacerbated by an initial lack of information provided by DfE on the intervention strands, and confusing guidance on target parameters. Additionally, funds were contracted later than expected which impacted the time available to allocate resources and deliver the Multiply Programme.

UKSPF has allowed for a response to community and local needs and provided the opportunity to try new ways of working with businesses and residents. A good example is the three Community Development Partnerships, which are structured differently and are focused on differing needs according to the communities captured by each partnership area.

In some cases, project delivery partners are running projects which cover a spatial area of the North of Tyne and at least one other local authority area (but commonly the remainder of the North East region). This has led to complexities and duplication in project administration, including monitoring and reporting requirements and calls to engage with evaluations. The advent of the North East Combined Authority and the prospect that this brings of eradicating such duplication is seen as a positive outcome for future programmes.

Project commissioning and delivery timescales have been the most significant challenge, for all parties. For the Combined Authority, this required a very significant effort to create the architecture for the programme, especially given the diverse nature of the investment themes and the variety in delivery approaches that these necessitated. Project commissioning, once it commenced, was driven through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) ,for the Supporting Local Business theme, and open calls for the two other themes. The DPS has not been universally used by local authorities who, in the interests of starting delivery before the DPS was established, have used existing internal and external providers, or their own procurement, to deliver support. The lack of guidance from central government in relation to programme details, including challenges over output and outcome definitions, led to further delays and consumed significant effort in the early stages. Now these have been overcome, the hope is that whatever successor fund follows the first round of UKSPF can build on such infrastructure, rather than require the development of something new from scratch. Given the commonality of issues across all authorities with responsibility for UKSPF, there may be opportunities for the sharing of learning and good practice.

There is a degree of 'siloing' of project activity within the three investment themes. This is somewhat inevitable, given the overall structure of the programme and the pace at which it had to be established. However, looking forward, project leads believe there is an important opportunity to break down any

such siloes in order to encourage projects which deliver across multiple themes and to make procurement of such projects, and the participant/beneficiary journey, more straightforward.

5.1.2   Outputs, outcomes and impact

The programme has suffered considerable delays in the commissioning and initiating of projects within the portfolio. This is reflected in the data relating to financial expenditure. To the end of year 2, 21% of the total committed project funds were spent compared to an anticipated 31% (as per the contractual arrangements with MHCLG), representing a current under-commitment of UKSPF funding of £6.6m. The programme was always designed to be a 'rolling' one, where projects would be commissioned across the three-year timetable according to need and strategic fit.

It is also important to note that the original MHCLG contracted output and outcome targets have been moderated as the programme has evolved, with some decreasing and others increasing – in some cases, considerably.

Whilst the picture varies across different output and outcome indicators, project delivery across all three investment themes can be considered to be to be somewhat behind target on the whole, even if some individual projects are ahead of schedule or have already exceeded targets. However, the issues have been recognised by programme and project leads and productive discussions regarding future plans have led to confidence that commissioned projects are likely to meet target by the end of the programme timeline. There are major risks associated with delivery, however. Delays at the outset have compressed delivery timetables with many projects initiating in late year two and into early year 3. In March 2024, 92% of project leads indicated that their projects were in delivery, which serves to emphasise the point that there is much to do in year 3. Only four in ten project delivery leads identified the delivery timetable as 'completely or mostly effective'.

Despite the challenges that have affected delivery and have delayed progress towards the achievement of output and outcome targets, some impressive results have been evidenced. There are numerous output targets which have already been exceeded, including:

Under the communities and Place theme:

- the number of tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved (100%)
- the outcome indicator of increased footfall (385%)
- the outcome indicator of increased visitor numbers (107%)

Under the People and Skills theme:

- the number of enterprises receiving non-financial support (1880% of target), and
- the number of organisations receiving support (330%)

Under the Supporting Local Business theme, only the outcome target associated with the number of research and development (R&D) active enterprises has been achieved at the end of year 2 (125%).

It is also important to note that the project portfolio is due to deliver against outputs and outcome areas which go beyond the original contract with MHCLG. A total of 30 'Additional Outputs and Outcomes' (AOOs) have been identified.

Project delivery has created some direct benefits to delivery partners. In total, 76% of projects indicated that staff skills had improved moderately or significantly as a result of delivering the UKSPF-funded project. In addition, almost one in five project delivery partners indicated that involvement in the programme has unlocked access to additional funding (with an average of £146,000 per project). Additional sources of funding include national bodies such as Arts Council England, the National Lottery Community Fund, The Princes Trust, and other regional UKSPF consortia and local authorities.

Project delivery in Multiply has been successful and made a big impact, notwithstanding some preliminary challenges. The majority of substantive intervention targets for year two have been met and a significant volume of outreach work – important to future recruitment – has also been undertaken.

Prospects for year three and the final outturn of the programme appear positive across the broader portfolio, though significant risks associated with the compressed timetable remain.

The main risk to ongoing success is the truncated delivery period. For example, many projects reported risks associated with attempting to increase the scale of their activity in a limited time window. Condensed timescales have also had a particular impact on capital high street regeneration projects, with some concerns around project completion by March 2025.

The fixed term nature of funding also disrupts delivery. Staff in delivery organisations face uncertainty over job security, and often have to reapply for their jobs as funding sources change. This can see staff leaving project teams to new roles before the programme is complete, placing more pressure on delivery towards the end of projects. A specific ask here is for a staffing budget which can offer more long-term certainty to deliver staff.

It is too early in the programme to make any objective assessment of impact, and this also requires further feedback from beneficiaries. This will be examined in detail in the final evaluation.

5.1.3 Lessons learned

This section highlights key lessons learned from an assimilation of the interim evaluation evidence, structured by investment theme.

5.1.3.1 *Supporting local businesses*

- The use of a DPS approach to commissioning was very much welcomed (once initial teething problems and delays were overcome). Now that the DPS is established it can be used more universally for future procured delivery in a timely manner. This simplified and clarified the process of application and is seen to work well for business support projects in particular.
- Flexibility in the programme was seen as significant positive – projects were able to focus their design on niche as well as broad need and this is seen as a significant strength of the UKSPF programme.
- The fairly narrow set of output and outcome indicators is likely to limit the insight gained from evaluation, given the multi-faceted ways in which growth, productivity and profitability can be achieved and expressed.
- More time to build and scale project delivery would enable achievement of an even more significant level of outputs and outcomes, as productivity increases the longer projects are in delivery.
- Time and space for innovative design of projects would help further the value and impact of projects.
- The advent of a Combined Authority for the North East bodes well for project delivery efficiency in the future, limiting duplication in administration and monitoring requirements.
- Opportunities to join up projects or design projects which have an 'escalator' dimension would assist in maximising impact, but this requires clarity on longer term funding.
- Anything that can be done to identify and break down siloes – whether between projects, or across investment themes, or between funders – is likely to have a very positive effect on the overall impact of funded programmes such as UKSPF. This includes where projects may need suppliers from different lots of the DPS.

5.1.3.2   Communities and Place

- Flexibility and openness of guidance has enabled a wider range of projects, but more clarity on reporting requirements would have been welcome.
- "We could have done more, and in a less siloed way."
- Delays to GFAs meant delivery partners faced a choice of pushing back start dates or delivering at risk.
- VCSE organisations are the experts in this area and could be further empowered and trusted to be left to administer funding in the way they know works.
- Partnership working is a real legacy of the programme. A continuation of partnership activity will prevent momentum and relationships being lost, which could harm the reputation of the CA in communities who have felt underserved in the past.

5.1.3.3   People and Skills

- Clearer monitoring guidelines and definitions of key words such as 'basic skill' and 'economically inactive' so all partners have the same understanding of claiming outputs and outcomes.
- Delivery partners would welcome longer delivery periods for maximum impact and reassurance. This is especially when individual participants who are furthest from the labour market would benefit from progressing through several rounds of support over time on their journey into employment.
- There was a huge administrative burden on delivery partners which was overwhelming. At times, this took time away from delivery.

5.1.3.4   Multiply

- The mix of delivery partners supports an inclusive, multi-dimensional approach to achieving the programme aims.
- The mix of providers complement rather than compete with each other.
- Tailored support to meet the specific needs of target groups is important.
- The DfE reporting processes are complex, especially for small providers who may not be familiar with them.

5.1.3.5   Programme-wide lessons

Finally, discussions with management and stakeholders identified a number of programme-wide lessons:

- Tight timescales present a number of challenges. One is that they make planning for delivery, and estimating potential output and outcome levels relative to funding inputs, especially difficult.
- Longer programmes with a longer lead time would have a number of important benefits including greater opportunity for innovation, strengthening impact, providing certainty for delivery staff, building productivity in delivery organisations and providing beneficiaries with clarity and longer-term support.
- Where possible, approaches and mechanisms around the allocation of funding should be standardised as this would increase clarity amongst partners regarding their route to delivery. Within this, there needs to be a recognition that the design of the commissioning approach will determine the types of responses that are received. For example, if larger projects are being specified, this may have the result of squeezing out smaller, more specialised providers.
- Early teething issues with the DPS were reported, but the majority of feedback has been very positive. Internally, it is now important to learn lessons around how that was launched, promoted, monitored and how it could be employed moving forward.
- Additional effort needs to be applied to data gathering and analysis in relation to understanding the impact of the programme in addressing inequalities.

5.2   Recommendations

The interim evaluation has identified a number of recommendations for consideration by three key groups; the evaluation team, the Combined Authority and project delivery partners (to include local authorities). These are set out below.

For the evaluation team:

1. The evaluation team should work with the PAT to address identified issues regarding the suite and nomenclature of outputs and outcomes to ensure that the final evaluation accurately and comprehensively reports progress and impact.
2. The evaluation team should plan engagement with project leads which occurs outside of the months where project reporting is being prepared for the Combined Authority (January, April).
3. Contact should be made with projects not responding to the project lead survey and depth consultation to encourage participation later in the evaluation cycle.
4. Ensure that the value of the final evaluation is not affected by project staff leaving at or before the funding cut off dates. Engage early where this is likely to be the case.
5. Consider how a comparison of process and impact between Investment Fund and UKSPF could be delivered in the final evaluation.

For the Combined Authority:

6. The Programme Board should ensure that close monitoring of projects is undertaken in the coming months to identify any slippage and assist in the development of contingency plans, where required.
7. Programme underspend should be addressed as soon as possible, in order to give projects delivery organisations the maximum opportunity to achieve targeted outputs and outcomes.
8. Consideration should be given to how, in practice, any investment theme 'siloes' might be broken down through commissioning of projects which attend to cross-theme objectives.
9. Further validation of output and outcome targets across commissioned projects relative to targets contracted with MHCLG; some variance is to be expected, but some values are significantly different (by orders of magnitude).

For project delivery organisations and local authority partners:

10. Anticipate resource required to contribute to the programme evaluation over the coming 9 months, recognising that this will primarily be focused on the May-July 2025 period.
11. Anticipate supporting the evaluation team to engage with beneficiaries, which will likely entail emission of a survey link and encouragement to respond.

5.3   Next steps

Next steps for the evaluation of the North of Tyne UKSPF programme are as follows:

- Review and reflection on the interim evaluation findings, including presentations to the Programme Board and other relevant stakeholders.
- Preparation for primary research amongst projects which are delivering outputs in the summer and autumn of 2024, in order to seize any opportunities to engage with beneficiaries that may be lost if left to spring 2025.
- Ongoing liaison with project leads, local authority leads and investment theme leads in order to monitor and track any substantive changes and developments.
- Forward planning of engagement and evidence gathering exercises to be executed between September 2024 and July 2025.
- Identification and mitigation of any risks to the evaluation programme through engagement with Combined Authority and partners.

6. Appendices

6.1 Appendix I – North of Tyne UKSPF Programme Logic Model

Inputs	Strategic Priority	NTCA Themes	NTCA Project Title	Outputs	Targets	Outcomes	Targets	Impacts
£51.2m in UKSPF funding Human resources in NTCA, local authority partners and project delivery organisations Expertise and Governance of the Programme Board Expertise and Evidence from Programme Management Office (PMO) Expertise and resources from business support providers Expertise and resources from Community and voluntary sector organisations Expertise/insight from other support delivery organisations Resources and expertise from the Multiply programme Funding from other sources Existing assets, facilities and infrastructure	Communities &	Regeneration of our Places	High Streets and Towns programme Rural place-based investment Cultural and Creative Zones (CCZs) Tourism Events programme Tourism Products	Number of commercial buildings developed or improved Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved (m2) Number of rehabilitated premises Amount of rehabilitated land (m2) Amount of public realm created or improved (m2)	5 1,500 5 20,000 20,000	Improved engagement numbers Increased footfall Increased take up of energy efficiency measures Increased visitor numbers Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Volunteering numbers as a result of support	5%* 5%* 3%* 5%* 54 71 750	Wellbeing improved, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing Increased pride in place Places are revitalised Carbon emissions are reduced Local / regional regeneration is accelerated or leveraged
		Community Partnerships and Programmes	Community Partnerships Crowdfunding Volunteering programme	Number of organisations receiving grants Number of organisations receiving non-financial support Number of households receiving support Number of households supported to take energy efficiency measures Number of facilities supported/created Number of local events or activities supported Number of volunteering opportunities supported Number of projects Number of people reached Number of people attending training sessions	108 400 1,200 600 15 55 750 30 1,500 300			
		Energy Efficiency and Lower Energy Costs	Energy Efficiency One-Stop-Shop					
	Supporti	Raising innovation levels to boost productivity in key sectors	Innovation programme Driving Up Innovation and R&D Innovation programme (Offshore Wind Phase 2) Innovation programme (DPS open call) Ecosystem and supply chain coordination	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support Number of businesses receiving grants Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready Number of decarbonisation plans developed	986 73 112 183	Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support Number of new businesses created Number of new to market products Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity Number of R&D active businesses	659 174 7 305 41 5 26 26 21	Pay and employment have risen Investment in R&D and broader private sector investment increased The North of Tyne economy is more inclusive Economic output (GVA) and productivity increase Other funding is leveraged
		Start-up, social enterprise and rural businesses	Local Area Business Support Start-Up Support (DPS open call) Social Enterprise Support (DPS open call)					
		Business growth and improved energy efficiency	Ecosystem and supply chain coordination North East Screen Industries Partnership Local Area Business Support Growth Support and Scale-Up (DPS open call) Capital Grants for Business Growth (DPS open call) Revenue Grants for Business Growth (DPS open call) SME Decarbonisation Programme					
	People & Skills	Employment support to out-of-work, including wrap-around support	VCSE Employability (restricted call) Employment Support Programme	Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system Number of socially excluded people accessing support Number of people accessing mental and physical health support leading to employment	878 395 263 176	Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support Number of people engaged in job-searching following support Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills Number of people in education/training Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services Number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL)	351 176 702 398 201 129 319 353 351 351 513	Labour market participation is improved Skills and qualifications are acquired and lead to improved life chances Barriers to work are reduced, especially for those furthest away from the labour market Participation in education is improved
		Basic skills support for those furthest from the labour market	VCSE Employability (restricted call) Employment Support Programme					
		Skills to progress in work and address business needs	In-Work Support Programme Skills to Progress In Work (Green Skills Training)	Number of people supported to engage in job-searching Number of people receiving support to gain employment Number of people receiving support to sustain employment Effective working between keyworkers and additional services (number of engagements) Number of people supported to engage in life skills	790 665 10 615 638			
		Multiply	Multiply Grant Programmes Multiply Community Engagement Programmes Multiply Family Learning Activity	Number of people supported onto a course through providing financial support Number of people supported to participate in education Number of volunteering opportunities supported Number of people taking part in work experience programmes Number of people retraining Number of people in employment engaging with the skills system Number of people attending training sessions Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	213 41 41 26 30 215 50 374			

Source: Ortus & Kada – NTCA UKSPF Evaluation Framework

6.2 Appendix II – NTCA UKSPF Budget

		Revenue				Capital					TOTAL
		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total		
Communities and Place	Projects Total	£1,676,475	£4,565,000	£4,551,000	£10,792,475	£0	£3,325000	£1,250,000	£4,575,000		£15,367,475
	UKSPF after top slice	£2,194,560	£2,894,400	£6,048,000	£11,136,960	£0	£1,233,600	£2,880,000	£4,113,600		£15,250,560
	Variance	£518,085	-£1,670,600	£1,497,000	£344,485	£0	-£2,091,400	£1,630,000	-£461,400		-£116,915 (1%)
Local Business	Projects Total	£570,000	£6,685,000	£8,485,000	£15,740,000	£0	£1,100,000	£2,000,000	£3,100,000		£18,840,000
	UKSPF after top slice	£2,553,407	£3,024,078	£8,235,656	£13,813,140	£737,671	£906,367	£2,884,800	£4,528.838		£18,341,978
	Variance	£1,983,407	-£3,660,922	-£249,344	-£1,926,860	£737,671	-£193,633	£884,800	£1,428,838		-£498,022 (3%)
People and Skills	Projects Total	£0	£1,517,100	£10,320,146	£11,837,246	£0	£0	£0	£0		£11,837,246
	UKSPF after top slice	£0	£2,912,832	£8,696,289	£11,609,121	£0	£0	£0	£0		£11,609,121
	Variance	£0	£1,395,732	-£1,623,857	-£228,125	£0	£0	£0	£0		-£228,125 (2%)
UKSPF IP Total	-	£4,945,799	£9,199,281	£23,937,442	£38,082,522	£768,408	£2,229,132	£6,005,000	£9,002,540		£47,085,061
UKSPF after top slice	-	£4,747,967	£8,831,310	£22,979,944	£36,559,221	£737,671	£2,139,967	£5,764,800	£8,642,438		£45,201,659
Projects Total	-	£2,246,475	£12,767,100	£23,356,146	£38,369,721	£0	£4,425,000	£3,250,000	£7,675,000		£46,044,721
Variance	-	-	-	-	-£1,810,500	-	-	-	£967,438		-£843,063 (2%)
Multiply	Projects Total	£1,296,199	£1,209,782	£1,209,782	£3,715,763	£0	£0	£0	£0		£3,715,763
	UKSPF after top slice	£1,296,199	£1,209,782	£1,209,782	£3,715,763	£0	£0	£0	£0		£3,715,763
	Variance	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0		£0 (0%)

Source: NTCA UKSPF Delivery & Resource Plan

6.3 Appendix III – Indicative output and outcome targets by investment theme

6.3.1 Communities and place

Investment theme	Intervention	Output(s)	Outcome(s)
Communities and Place	E1: Improvements to town centres & high streets	Number of commercial buildings developed or improved: 5 Amount of commercial buildings developed or improved: 1500 m² Number of rehabilitated premises: 5 Amount of rehabilitated land: 20000 m² Amount of public realm created or improved: 20000 m²	Jobs created: 38 Jobs safeguarded: 71 Increased visitor numbers: 5%*
Communities and Place	E6: Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities	Number of organisations receiving grants: 12 Number of organisations receiving non-financial support: 40 Number of local events or activities supported: 25 Number of volunteering opportunities supported: 250	Jobs created: 16 Increased visitor numbers: 5%*
Communities and Place	E8: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area	Number of organisations receiving grants: 21 Number of organisations receiving non-financial support: 150	Increased footfall: 5%* Increased visitor numbers: 5%*
Communities and Place	E9: Impactful volunteering and/or social action projects	Number of organisations receiving grants: 30 Number of organisations receiving non-financial support: 60 Number of local events or activities supported: 30 Number of volunteering opportunities supported: 500 Number of projects: 30	Volunteering numbers as a result of support: 750
Communities and Place	E11: Capacity building & infrastructure support local groups	Number of organisations receiving grants: 45 Number of organisations receiving non-financial support: 150 Number of facilities supported/created: 15 Number of people attending training sessions: 300	Improved engagement numbers: 5%*
Communities and Place	E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living	Number of households receiving support: 1200 Number of households supported to take up energy efficiency measures: 600 Number of people reached: 1500	Increased take up of energy efficiency measures: 3%*

6.3.2 Supporting local businesses

Investment theme	Intervention	Output(s)	Outcome(s)
Supporting local business	E19: Investment in research & development at the local level	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support: 86	Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity: 11 Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes: 32 Number of new to market products: 16
Supporting local business	E20: R&D grants supporting innovative product and service development	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support: 49 Number of businesses receiving grants: 6	Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity: 7 Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes: 21 Number of new to market products: 10 Number of R&D active businesses: 21 Number of businesses adopting new or improved products or services: 7
Supporting local business	E23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support: 82	Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes: 10
Supporting local business	E24: Training hubs, business support offers, incubators and accelerators	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support: 586 Number of businesses receiving grants: 67 Number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready: 112	Jobs created: 636 Jobs safeguarded: 163 Number of new businesses created: 5 Number of organisations engaged in new knowledge transfer activity: 8 Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes: 128 Number of early stage firms which increase their revenue following support: 41
Supporting local business	E29: Supporting decarbonisation & improving natural environment	Number of businesses receiving non-financial support: 183 Number of decarbonisation plans developed: 183	Jobs created: 23 Jobs safeguarded: 11 Number of businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes: 114

6.3.3 People and skills

Investment theme	Intervention	Output(s)	Outcome(s)
People and Skills	E33: Employment support for economically inactive people	Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services: 878 Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system: 395 Number of socially excluded people accessing support: 263 Number of people accessing mental and physical health support leading to employment: 176 Number of people supported to engage in job searching: 790 Number of people receiving support to gain employment: 439 Effective working between keyworkers and additional services: 615 engagements	Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support: 176 Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support: 351 Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF: 351 Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services: 351 Number of people engaged in job-searching following support: 702 Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support: 105 Number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL): 88
People and Skills	E34: Courses including basic, life & career skills	Number of people supported to engage in life skills: 638 Number of people supported onto a course through providing financial support: 213 Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support: 213	Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support: 248 Number of people in education/training: 319 Number of people with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL): 425 Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision: 354
People and Skills	E35: Enrichment & volunteering activities	Number of people supported to participate in education: 41 Number of volunteering opportunities supported: 41 Number of people taking part in work experience programmes: 26	Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision: 44
People and Skills	E37: Tailored support for the employed to access courses	Number of people in employment engaging with the skills system: 215	Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills: 129
People and Skills	E39: Green skills courses	Number of people receiving support to gain employment: 201 Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support: 161	Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support: 161
People and Skills	E40: Retraining support for those in high carbon sectors	Number of people receiving support to gain employment: 25 Number of people receiving support to sustain employment: 10 Number of people retraining: 30 Number of people attending training sessions: 50	Number of people gaining a qualification or completing a course following support: 40

6.3.4   Multiply

Intervention	Output(s)
a) Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers for those needing the first steps towards formal numeracy qualifications.	Target Number of participants in substantive Multiply provision: 452 Target Number of participants in outreach Multiply provision: 292 Number of different types of provision: 10 Number of initiatives developed with community groups: 13 Number of initiatives expected to lead to a qualification: 2 Number of people referred from partners onto upskill courses: 150 Number of people achieving a qualification: 127 Number of different cohorts participating in numeracy courses (Economically Inactive, Parents/Carers): 8
b) Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money.	Target Number of participants in substantive Multiply provision: 503 Target Number of participants in outreach Multiply provision: 426 Number of different types of provision: 14 Total number of initiatives developed with employers: 20 Number of initiatives developed with community groups: 28 Number of initiatives expected to lead to a qualification: 1 Number of people referred from partners onto upskill courses: 136 Number of people achieving a qualification: 75 Number of different cohorts participating in numeracy courses (Economically Inactive, Parents/Carers): 6
c) Innovative numeracy programmes delivered together with employers – including courses designed to cover specific numeracy skills required in the workplace	Target Number of participants in substantive Multiply provision: 381 Target Number of participants in outreach Multiply provision: 60 Number of different types of provision: 14 Total number of initiatives developed with employers: 10 Number of initiatives expected to lead to a qualification: 2 Number of people referred from partners onto upskill courses: 188 Number of people achieving a qualification: 45 Number of different cohorts participating in numeracy courses (Economically Inactive, Parents/Carers): 4

Intervention	Output(s)
f) Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills in order to help their children, and help with their own progression	Target Number of participants in substantive Multiply provision: 485
	Target Number of participants in outreach Multiply provision: 182
	Number of different types of provision: 20
	Number of initiatives developed with community groups: 13
	Number of initiatives expected to lead to a qualification: 4
	Number of people referred from partners onto upskill courses: 77
	Number of people achieving a qualification: 28
	Number of different cohorts participating in numeracy courses (Economically Inactive, Parents/Carers): 6
i) Numeracy activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners aimed at engaging the hardest to reach learners	Target Number of participants in substantive Multiply provision: 707
	Target Number of participants in outreach Multiply provision: 380
	Number of different types of provision: 22
	Total number of initiatives developed with employers: 2
	Number of initiatives developed with community groups: 28
	Number of initiatives expected to lead to a qualification: 7
	Number of people referred from partners onto upskill courses: 279
	Number of people achieving a qualification: 149
	Number of different cohorts participating in numeracy courses (Economically Inactive, Parents/Carers): 8
Total across all interventions:	Target Number of participants in substantive Multiply provision: 2,528
	Target Number of participants in outreach Multiply provision: 1,340
	Number of different types of provision: 80
	Total number of initiatives developed with employers: 32
	Number of initiatives developed with community groups:82
	Number of initiatives expected to lead to a qualification: 16
	Number of people referred from partners onto upskill courses: 829
	Number of people achieving a qualification: 423
	Number of different cohorts participating in numeracy courses (Economically Inactive, Parents/Carers): 32

6.4 Appendix IV – Programme level targets and achievements to end Year 2

Table 10: Programme level outputs

Output	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Amount of commercial buildings completed or improved	1500	410	27%	0	0%
Number of amenities/facilities created or improved	0	28	AOO	0	0%
Number of commercial buildings completed or improved	5	2	40%	0	0%
Number of decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support	183	120	66%	61	51%
Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services	878	3372	384%	481	14%
Number of economically inactive people supported to engage with the benefits system	395	825	209%	164	20%
Number of effective engagements between keyworkers and additional services	395	3240	820%	756	23%
Number of enterprises engaged in new markets	0	33	AOO	0	0%
Number of enterprises receiving grants	73	376	515%	14	4%
Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	0	1851	AOO	564	30%
Number of events/participatory programmes	0	53	AOO	18	34%
Number of households receiving support	1200	1470	123%	0	0%
Number of households supported to take energy efficiency measures	0	600	AOO	0	0%
Number of local events or activities supported	55	188	342%	69	37%
Number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed	55	51	93%	9	18%
Number of organisations receiving grants	108	253	234%	54	21%
Number of organisations receiving non-financial support	400	875	219%	184	21%
Number of people accessing mental and physical health support leading to employment	176	584	332%	150	26%
Number of people attending training sessions	350	1705	487%	280	16%
Number of people reached	1500	244600	16307%	4257	2%
Number of people receiving support to gain employment	665	1494	225%	110	7%
Number of people receiving support to sustain employment	0	705	AOO	0	0%
Number of people supported onto a course through providing financial support	213	52	24%	36	69%
Number of people supported to engage in job searching	790	1895	240%	96	5%
Number of people supported to engage in life skills	638	1579	247%	90	6%
Number of people supported to gain a qualification	0	57	AOO	0	0%
Number of people supported to participate in education	41	142	346%	37	26%
Number of people taking part in work experience programmes	26	354	1362%	15	4%
Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	0	1519	AOO	427	28%

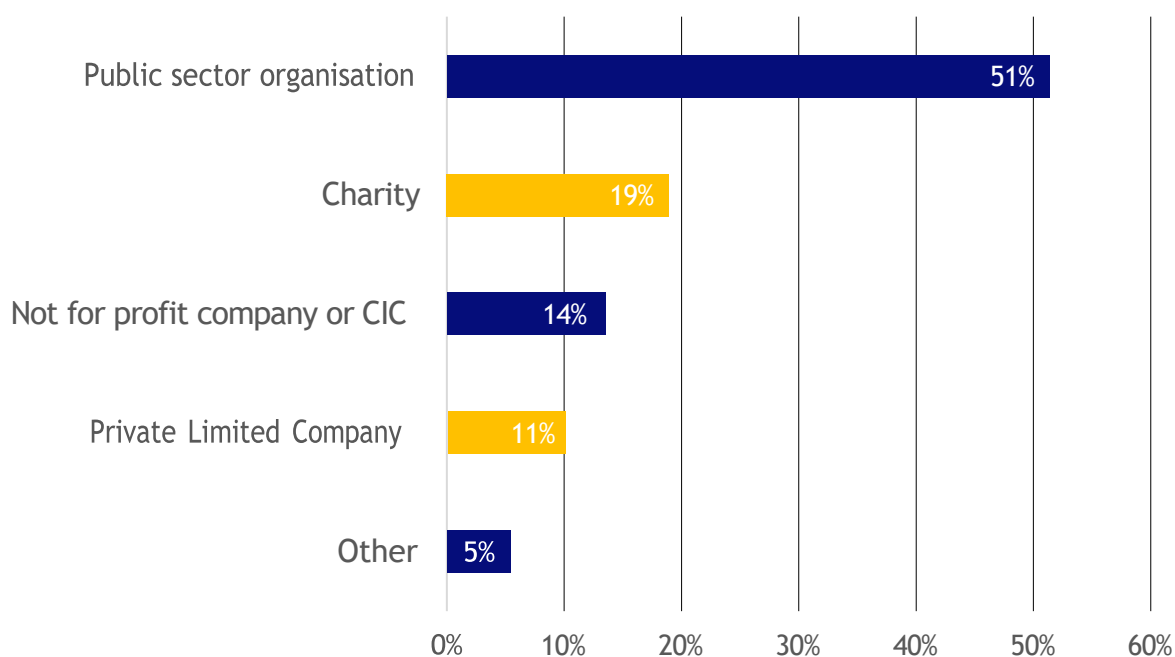| Output	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Number of projects successfully completed	30	121	403%	21	17%
Number of rehabilitated premises	5	4	80%	0	0%
Number of socially excluded people accessing support	263	2867	1090%	304	11%
Number of Tourism, Culture or heritage assets created or improved	0	1	AOO	1	100%
Number of volunteering opportunities supported	791	1506	190%	75	5%
Direct Jobs Created		6	AOO	0	0%
Direct Jobs Safeguarded		28	AOO	0	0%
Number of enterprises receiving support	0	60	AOO	2	3%
The number of enterprises provided with financial support in the form of a non-repayable grant	73	20	27%	2	10%
Creation / safeguarding of space for shared community and business activities	0	5	AOO	0	0%
Indirect Jobs Created	#N/A	20	AOO	0	0%
Indirect Jobs Safeguarded	#N/A	50	AOO	0	0%
Number of apprenticeship/ traineeship opportunities achieved	0	15	AOO	0	0%
Number of enterprises receiving financial support other than grants	0	23	AOO	0	0%
Amount of green or blue space created or improved	0	6000	AOO	0	0%
Amount of new or improved cycleways or paths	0	2	AOO	0	0%
Amount of public realm created or improved	20000	2160	11%	0	0%
Economically inactive participants not in education or training receiving support or an intervention	0	240	AOO	0	0%
Number of feasibility studies supported	0	3	AOO	0	0%
Number of trees planted	0	600	AOO	0	0%

Source: North East CA UKSPF PAT

Table 11: Programme level outcomes

Output	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
Improved Engagement Numbers	0.05%	520		0	0%
Increased Footfall	0.05%	20830		80200	385%
Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	0.03%	55		0	0%
Increased visitor numbers	0.10%	15		16	107%
Jobs created as a result of support	713	489	69%	40	8%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support	245	336	137%	14	4%
Number of active or sustained participants in community groups as a result of support	0	290	AOO	81	28%
Number of early-stage enterprises which increase their revenue following support	41	121	295%	1	1%
Number of economically inactive individuals engaging with benefits system following support	176	512	291%	41	8%
Number of enterprises adopting new or improved products or services	7	4	57%	2	50%
Number of enterprises adopting new to the firm technologies or processes	305	98	32%	9	9%
Number of new enterprises created as a result of support	0	301	AOO	17	6%
Number of new to market products	26	4	15%	0	0%
Number of people engaged in job-searching following support	702	1639	233%	35	2%
Number of people experiencing reduced structural barriers into employment and into skills provision	398	2006	504%	100	5%
Number of people gaining qualifications, licences and skills	129	149	116%	0	0%
Number of people in education/training following support	319	136	43%	16	12%
Number of people in employment, including self-employment, following support	353	854	242%	15	2%
Number of people reporting increased employability through development of interpersonal skills funded by UKSPF	351	2667	760%	40	1%
Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services	351	1242	354%	128	10%
Number of people with basic skills following support	513	574	112%	55	10%
Number of R&D (Research & Development) active enterprises	21	4	19%	5	125%
Number of volunteering opportunities created as a result of support	750	956	127%	71	7%
People gaining a qualification or completing a course following support	129	350	271%	4	1%

Source: North East CA UKSPF PAT

Table 12: Programme level outputs and outcomes (REPF)

Output	MHCLG Contracted Targets	Project Contracted Targets	% MHCLG Targets	Actual	% Progress to Project Targets
REPF: Number of facilities supported/created	0	5	AOO	0	0%
REPF Outcome: Jobs created	0	15	AOO	0	0%
REPF: Number of organisations receiving grants	0	12	AOO	0	0%
REPF: Number of organisations receiving non-financial support	0	115	AOO	0	0%
REPF: Number of tourism, culture or heritage assets created or improved	0	1	AOO	0	0%
Grand Total		316464	AOO		0%

Source: North East CA UKSPF PAT

6.5 Appendix V – Additional Project Lead Survey Findings

Which of the following best describes your organisation?

Category	Percentage
Public sector organisation	51%
Charity	19%
Not for profit company or CIC	14%
Private Limited Company	11%
Other	5%

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=37

Which local authority area does your organisation operate in? Choose all that apply

Area	Percentage
Northumberland	38%
North Tyneside	38%
Newcastle upon Tyne	25%
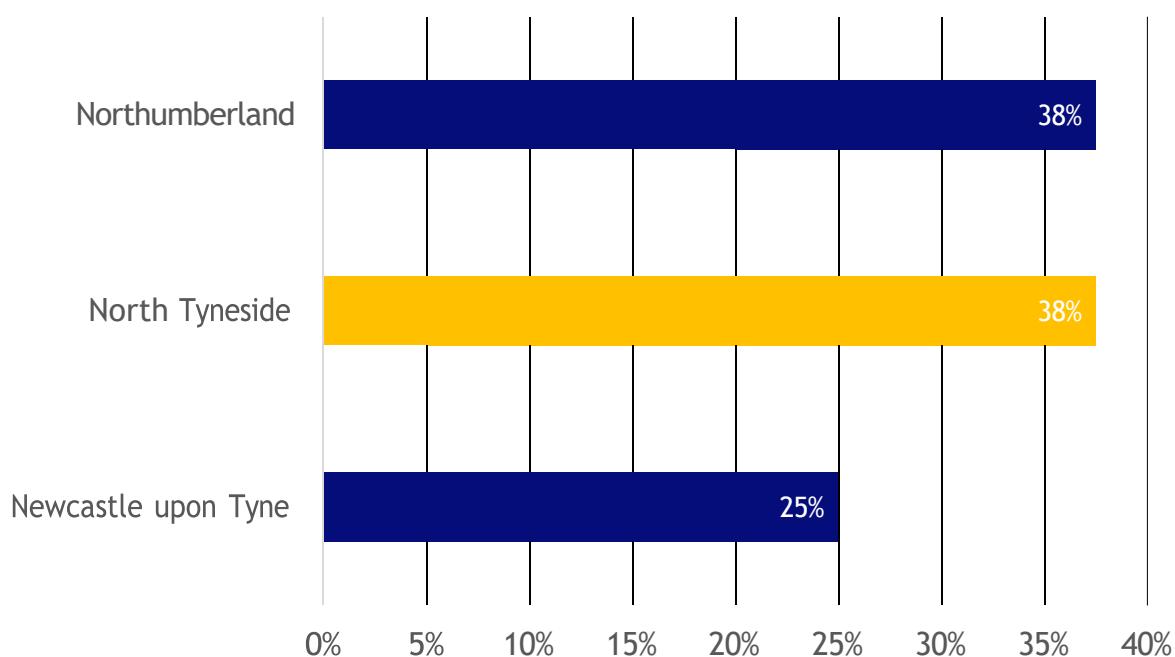
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=16

Did you work with partners to develop the project?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

7%

19%

74%
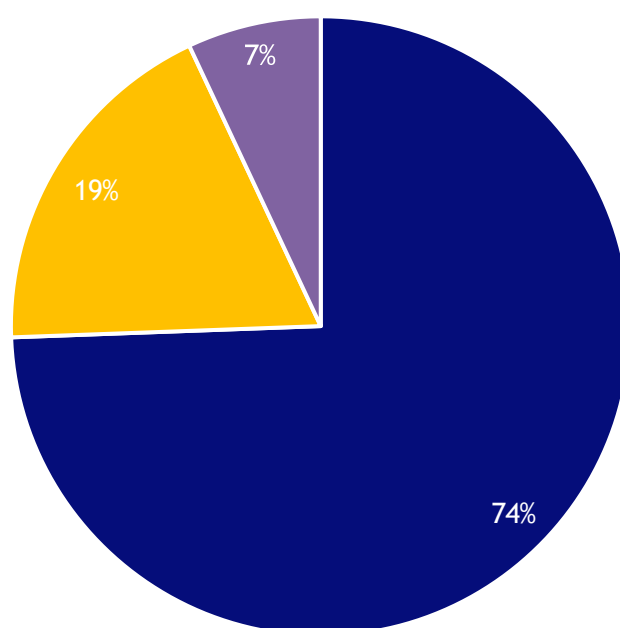
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=43

Are you working with any partner organisations to deliver the project?

- Yes ■ No

16%

84%
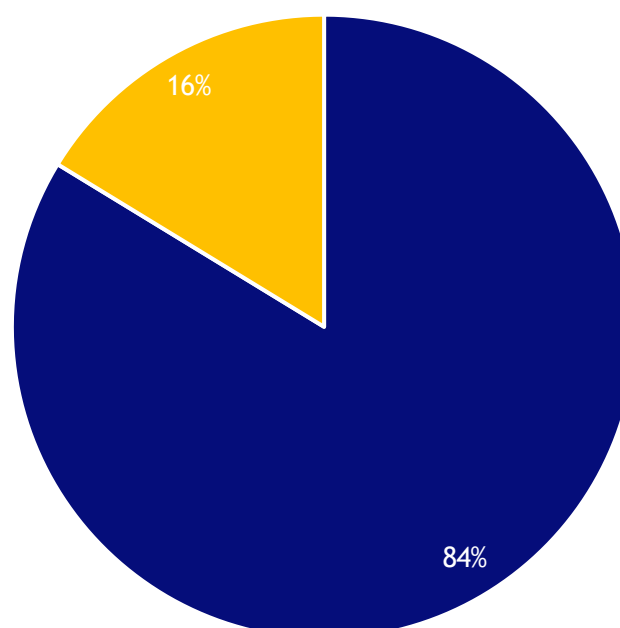
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=43

Did the project involve any new or innovative approaches to delivery or design?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

7%

12%

81%
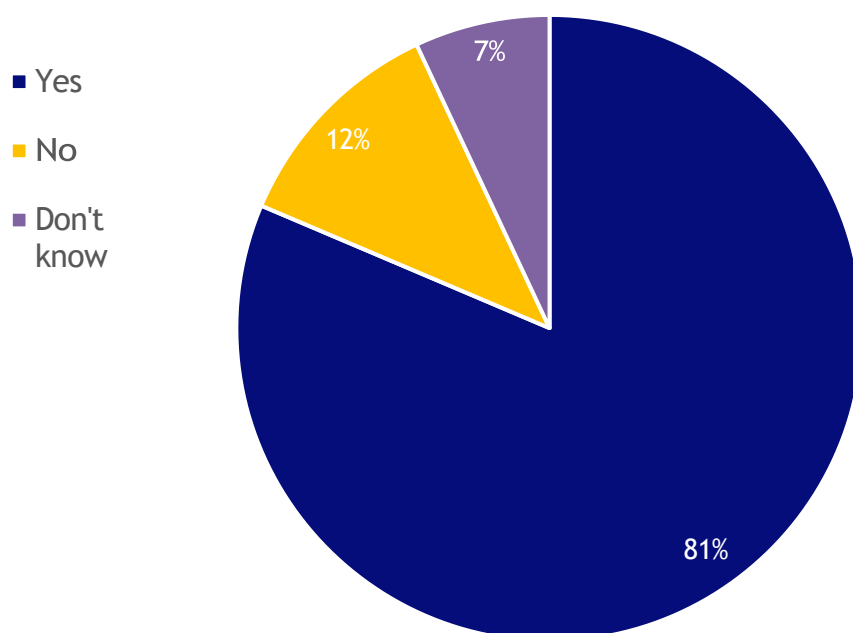
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=43

Who are, or were, the main (direct) beneficiaries of your project? (Select all that apply)

Both individuals AND businesses	46%
Community groups	41%
Individuals only	32%
Businesses only	17%
Event organisers	12%
Other	20%
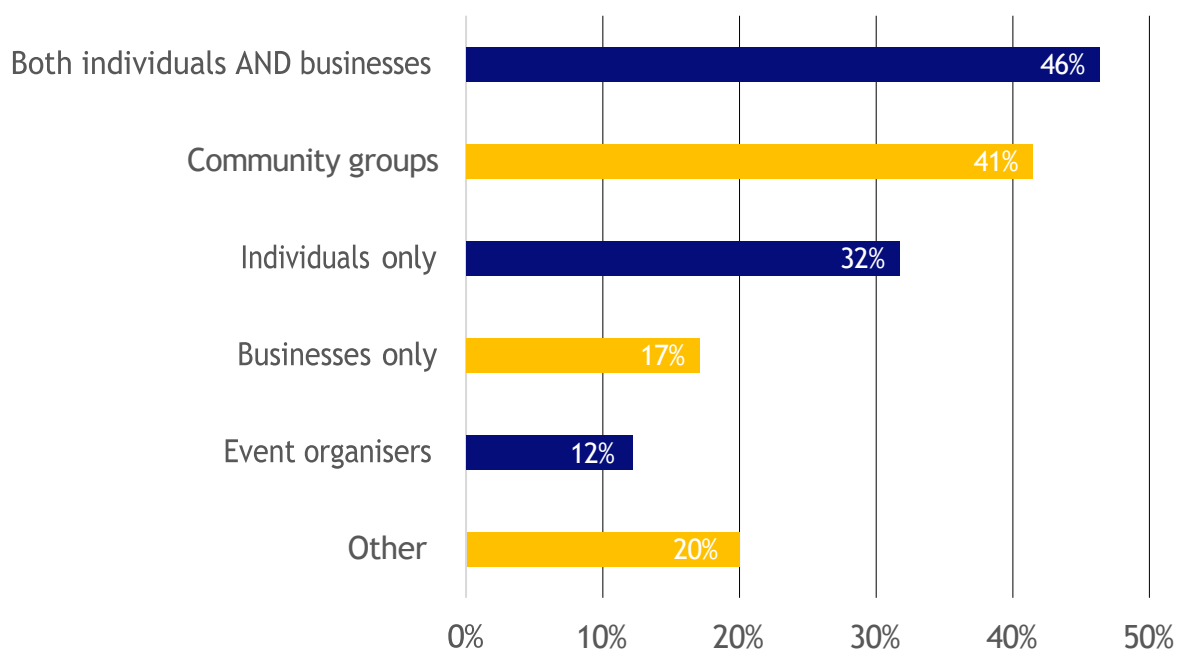
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=41

Please rate the effectiveness of each project delivery method employed (Please only answer for the delivery methods selected in the previous question)
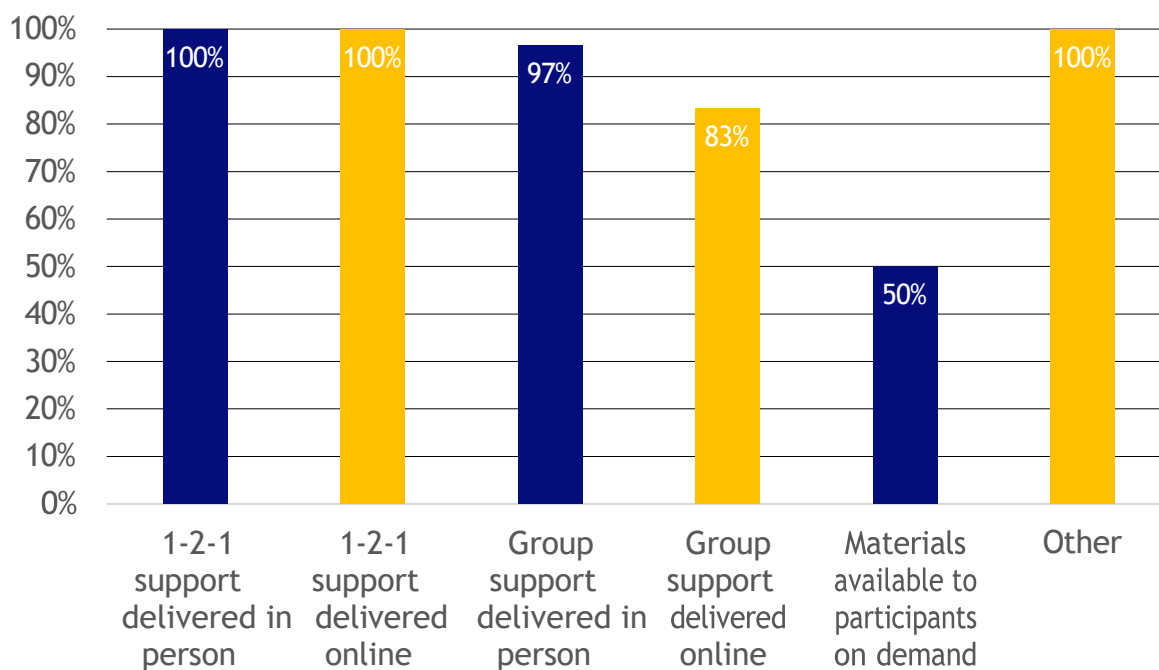
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=39

Has the project been completed?

- No
- Yes
- Don't know
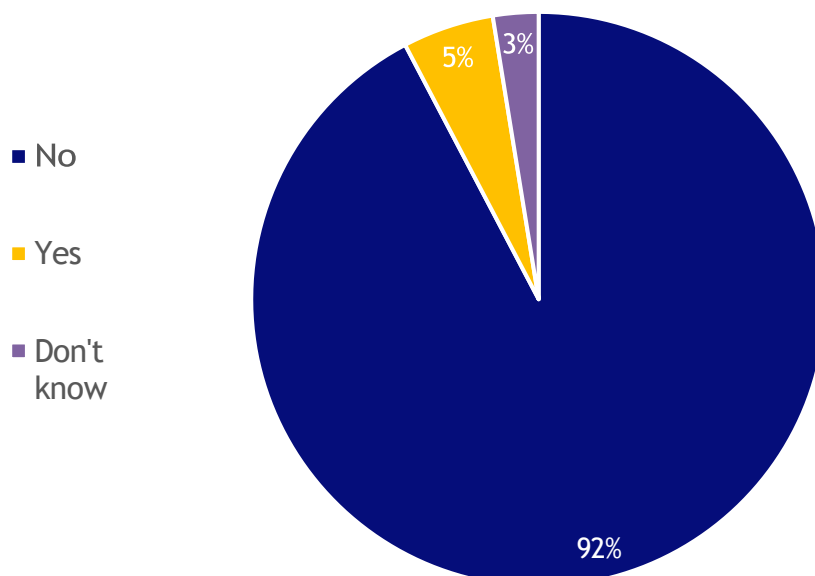
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=39

Overall, how satisfied are you/your organisation that the project met its objectives?
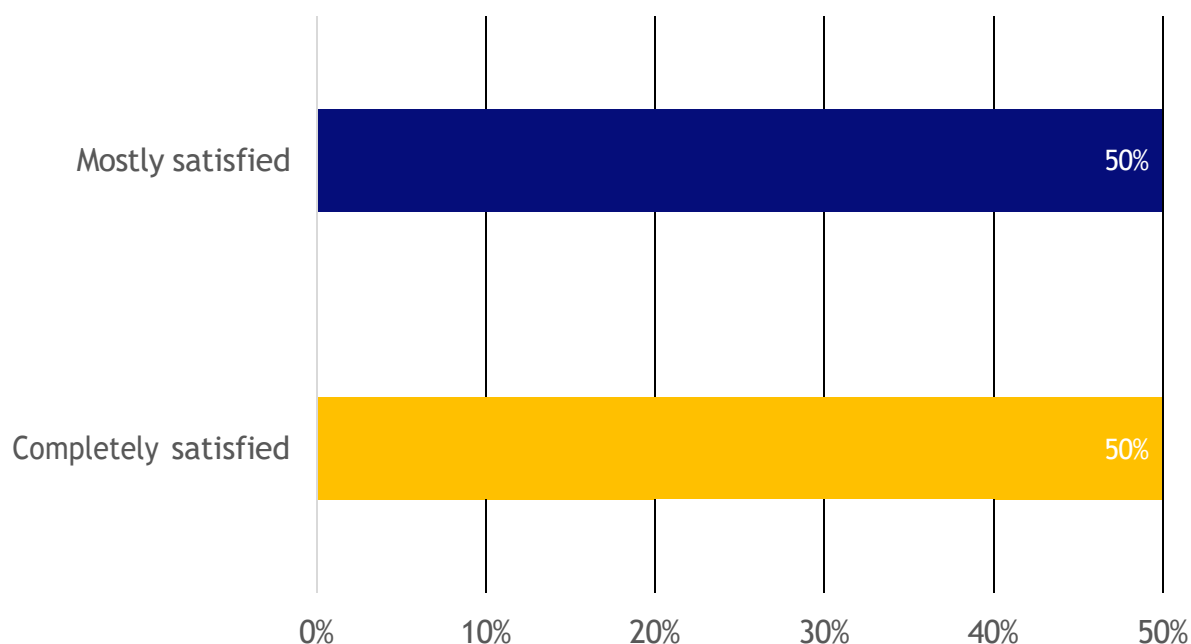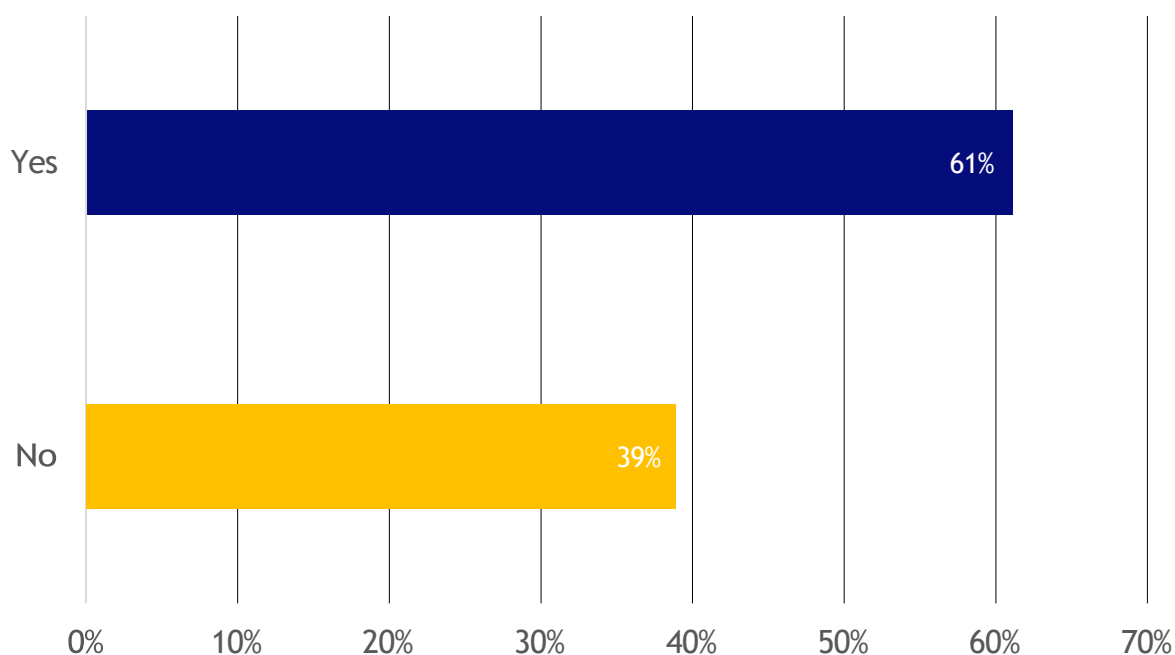

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=2

Have all the outcome targets been achieved?
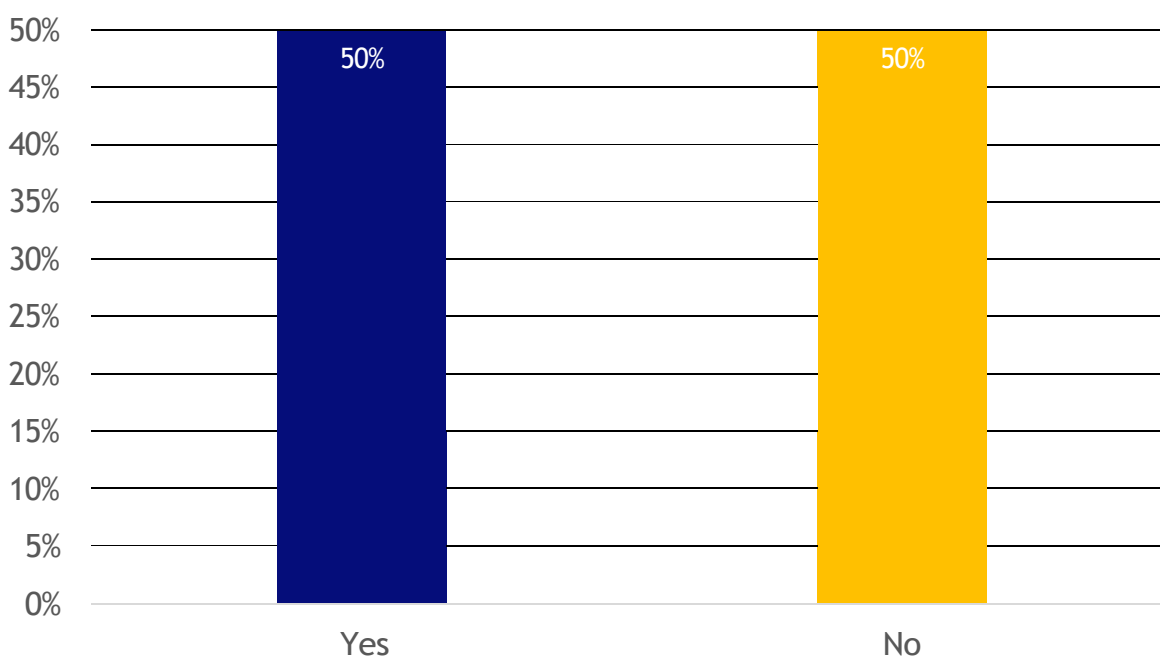
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=2
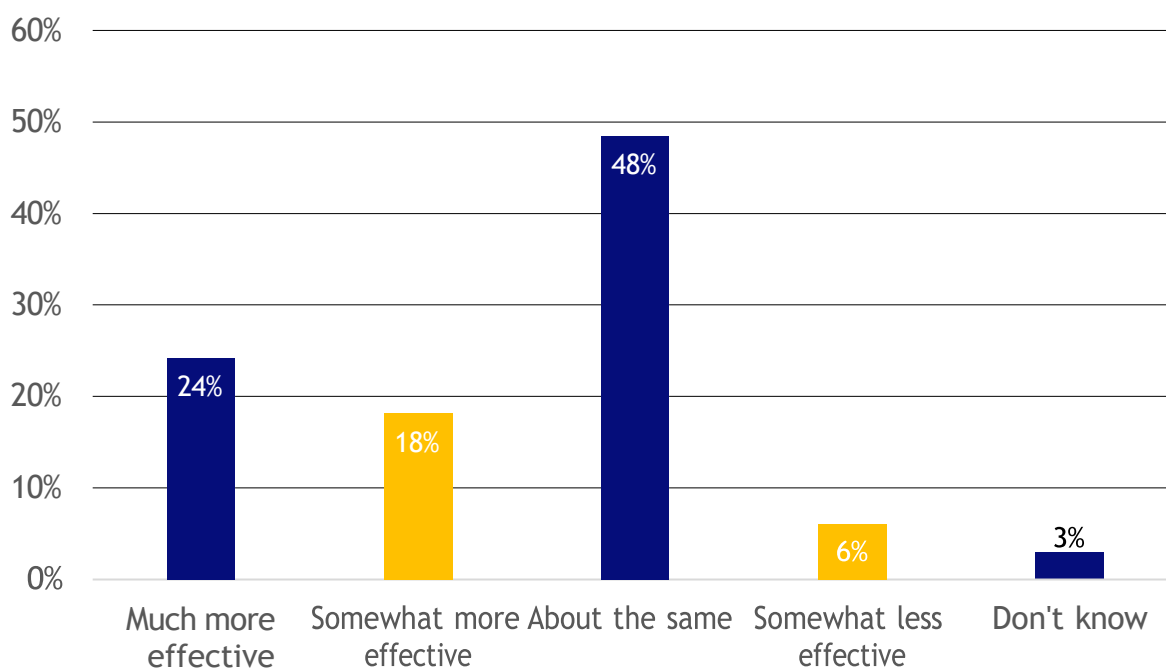
Have any outcome targets been exceeded?
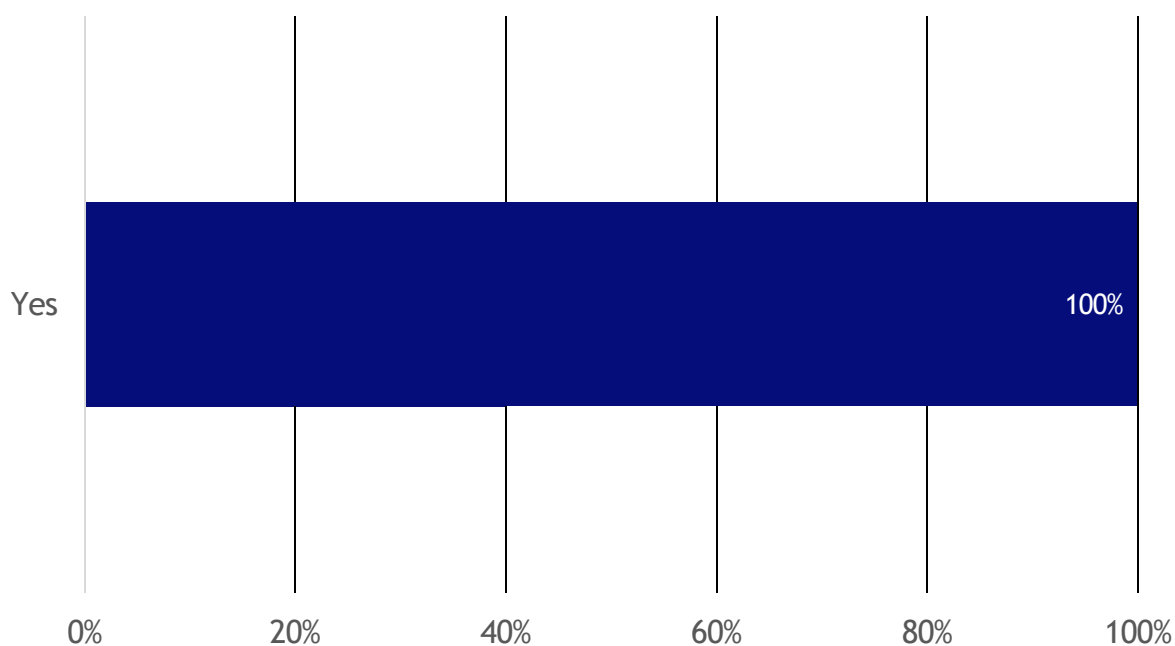
Yes — 100%

How satisfied are you/your organisation that the project will meet its objectives?

Mostly satisfied — 49%
Completely satisfied — 43%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied — 5%
Somewhat dissatisfied — 3%
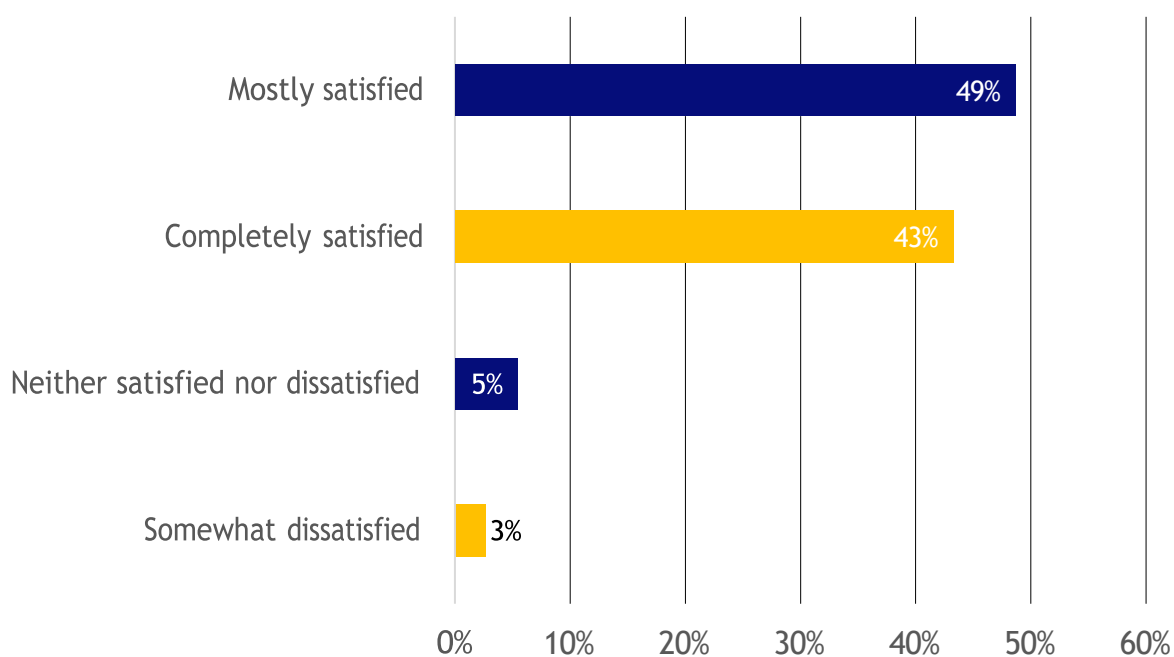
Do you expect all outcome targets to be achieved?
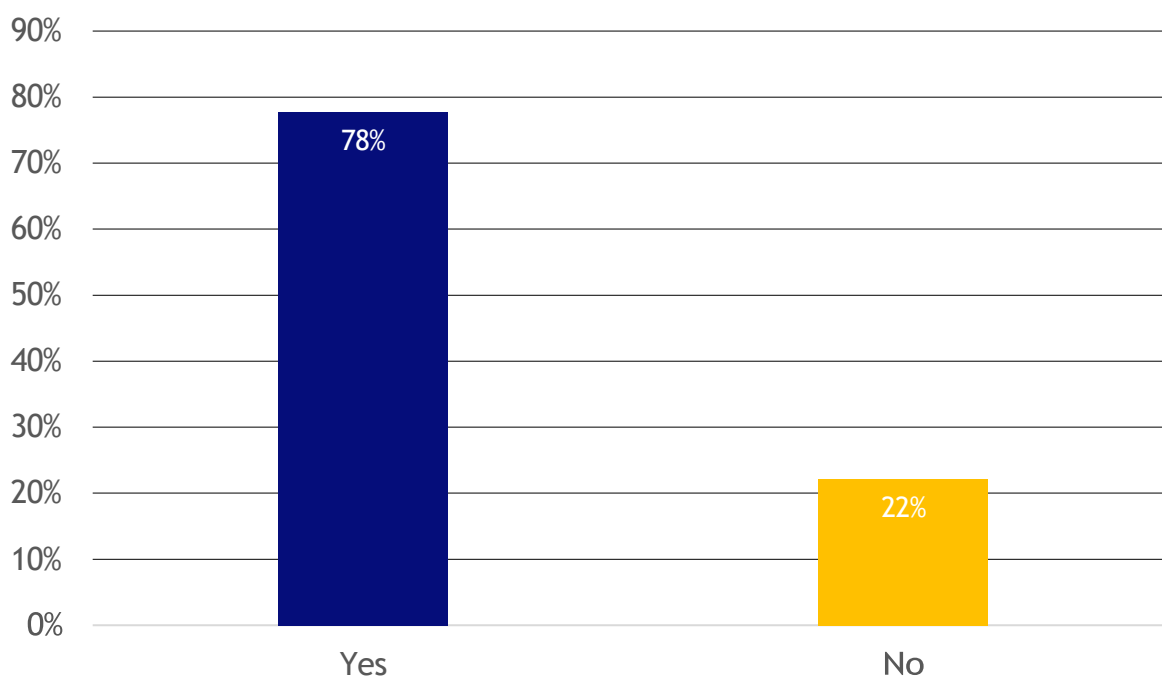
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=36

Do you expect any outcome targets to be exceeded?

Source: Kada Survey Analysis, n=36

Has your organisation delivered similar projects in the past?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

87%

5%
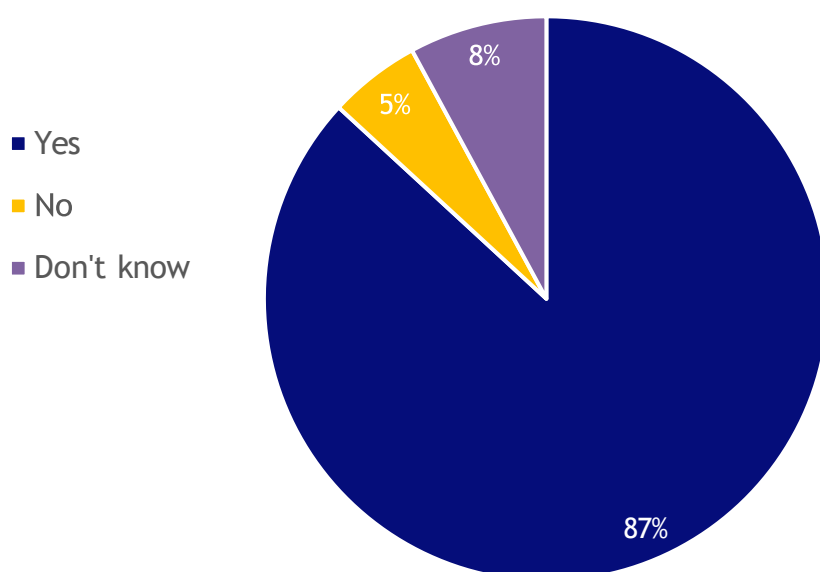
8%

How would you rate the effectiveness of this project compared to other similar projects you've delivered?

24% — Much more effective

18% — Somewhat more effective

48% — About the same

6% — Somewhat less effective

3% — Don't know

Did your organisation recruit staff specifically to support the delivery of this project?
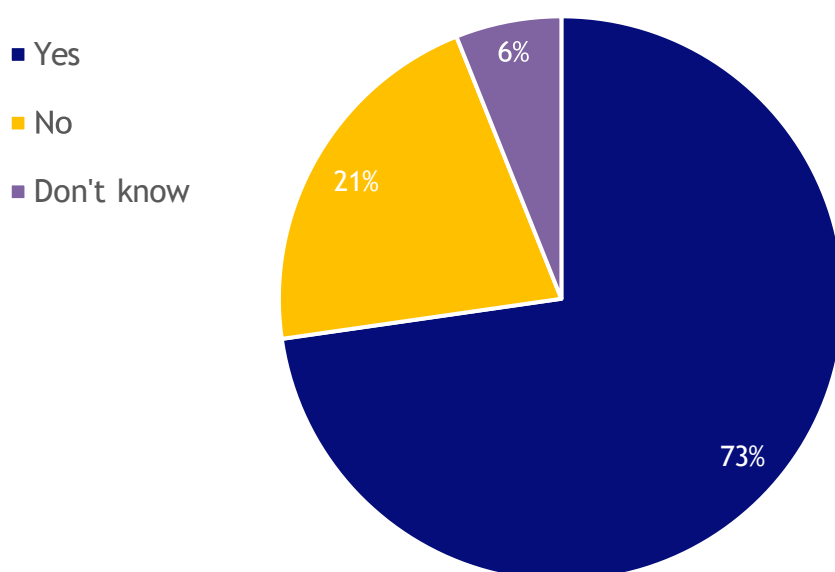
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=33

Has your organisation identified any skills gaps among staff as a result of delivering the project?
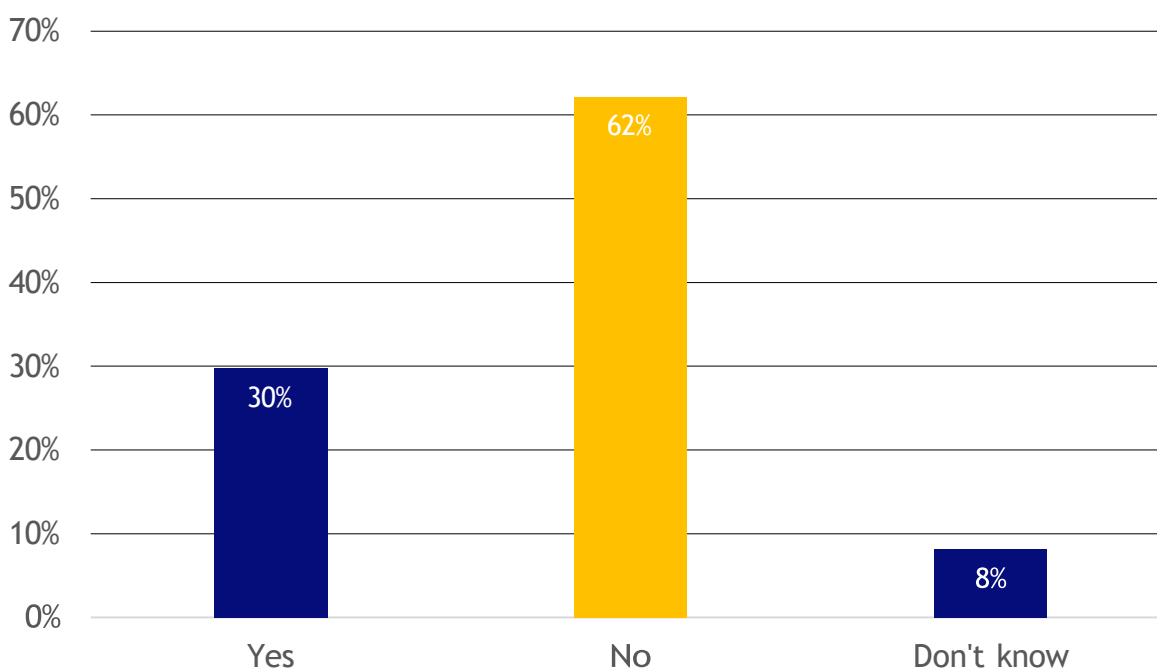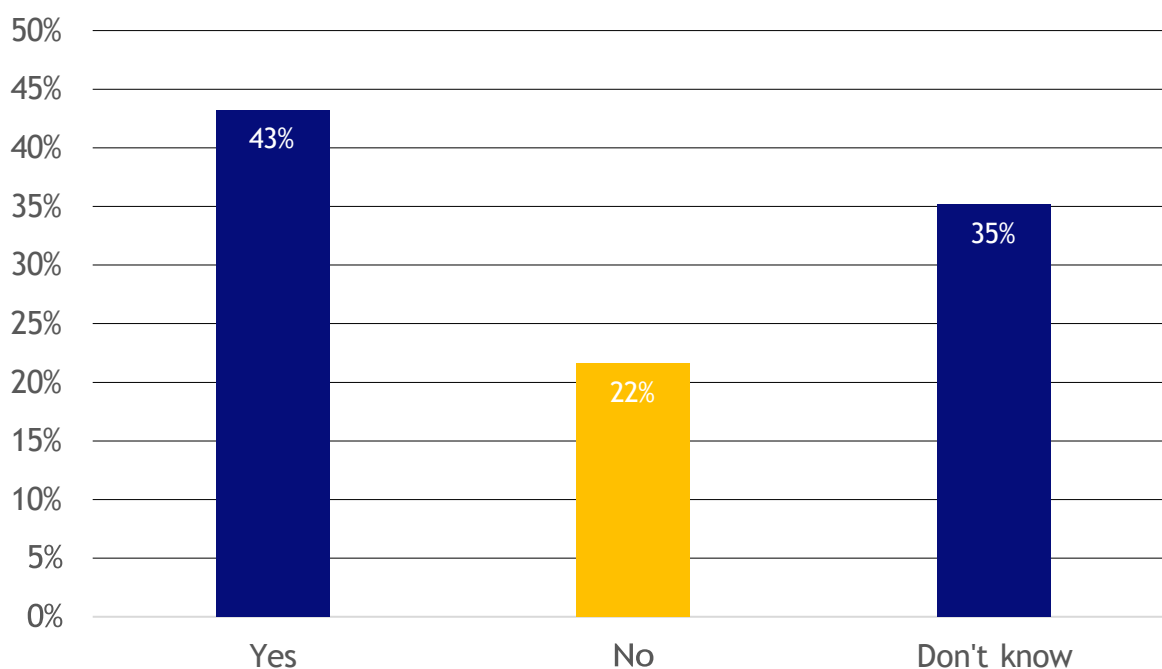

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=37

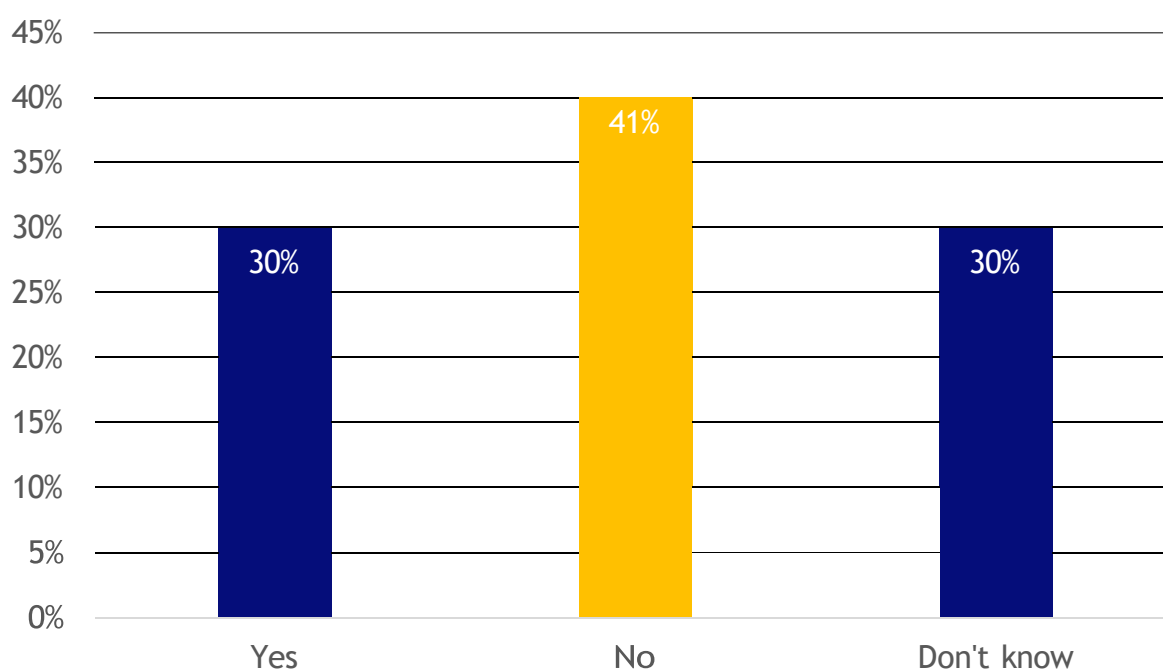## Has your organisation taken steps to address these skills gaps?
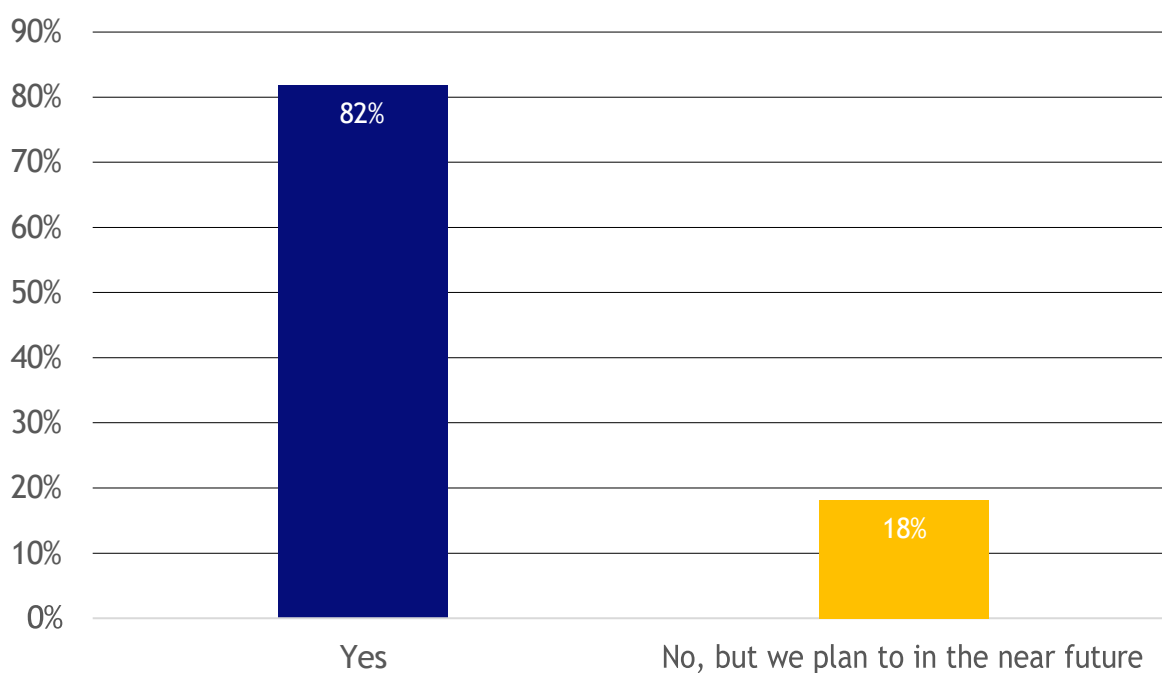
Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=11

Has your organisation been able to accelerate other projects or programmes as a result of delivering this project?

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=37

Has your organisation experienced any other internal impacts as a result of delivering this project?

Source: North of Tyne UKSPF Project Lead Survey Analysis, n=37