

Trailblazer Provider Briefing Session: Questions and Answers Log

Wednesday 2nd July 2025

	Date received	Question	Answer	Input from
1	02.06.2025	Can a current UKSPF provider apply?	There are no restrictions on who can apply and the Open Call Application Guidance gives further detail on who can apply and the expectations from applicants.	
2	02.06.2025	Can a current Connect to Work provider apply?	There are no restrictions on who can apply and the Open Call Application Guidance gives further detail on who can apply and the expectations from applicants.	
3	02.06.2025	Can you apply for more than one Call?	Yes, providers can apply to multiple Calls if they meet the criteria for each one.	
4	02.06.2025	Can providers partner with other organisations?	Yes, providers are encouraged to collaborate if this is deemed the best way to deliver a high-quality service. However, there must be a lead partner responsible for the full application and delivery co-ordination. Contact details of attendees at today's session will be shared to support networking and partnership building.	
5	02.06.2025	Do the projects have to be new / innovative?	We're seeking new and different types of activity - projects should aim to test new ways of working across the North East CA. However, proposals can build on proven approaches, existing knowledge and successful delivery models, whilst stretching and challenging current thinking around provision.	
6	02.06.2025	Is there an accessible application process for neurodiverse individuals?	If you require additional needs, please contact ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk	
7	02.06.2025	Do projects need to be delivered across the whole North East CA region?	Projects can focus on specific local authority areas within the North East CA region where support is most needed. Full regional coverage is not required, but providers should clearly identify the intended delivery areas.	

8	02.06.2025	Is there a minimum number of participants we need to support?	There is no fixed minimum. However, providers are advised to estimate targets based on dividing the total expected outputs for each strand by the number of projects expected to support.	
9	02.06.2025	Regarding the total target of 250 young adults – is this per project?	No, 250 is the total target across all projects.	
10	02.06.2025	When will more information about Priority 1 and Priority 3 be available?	Information will hopefully be shared within the next four weeks.	
11	02.06.2025	Does starting a new business or becoming self-employed count as an outcome?	Yes, this is considered a valid outcome measure.	
12	02.06.2025	How will you ensure that successful applicants work effectively with existing local provision?	There will be a robust monitoring and feedback framework that includes feedback from participants and partners to ensure that projects remain aligned with local priorities and provision	
13	02.06.2025	When will the tender documents be available?	Open Call for Priorities 2.1 and 2.2 will be available by the close of day Monday 2 nd June 2025.	
14	02.06.2025	Is there a minimum age for participants (excluding young people-specific call)?	Yes, the minimum age is 18.	
15	02.06.2025	Can we have an informal conversation before submission?	All questions should be submitted via the Q&A process so responses are visible to all providers. Please send all your questions to ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk	
16	02.06.2025	Is there guidance on the minimum turnover for the applicant organisation?	There is no minimum turnover for applications to the open call priorities. However, we encourage organisations to review the North East CA payment terms and consider whether, in conjunction with the minimum application value, it is feasible to manage the cash flow and/or associated risk. The North East CA acknowledge that the minimum contract value may not be accessible to all organisations. Concurrent to the open call process, the North East CA will be launching a VCSE grant fund designed to offer smaller, inclusive funding opportunities to support our regional efforts to tackle	Finance

			economic inactivity. Further detail will be released in due course.	
17	02.06.2025	In Priority 2.1 (Subsidised Work Placement), who is the subsidy for?	This is primarily for the employer to incentivise work placements with the intent of later becoming permanent. Budgets may also include participant costs (e.g. travel).	
18	02.06.2025	Would remote delivery solutions be considered?	Yes - remote, hybrid and face-to-face delivery solutions will be considered. Providers should consult with participants and adapt their delivery method to suit individual needs and preferences.	
19	02.06.2025	Some of the organisations that are delivering the most innovative and high impact employability work may struggle to mobilise within the timeframe or to take on a project of this size and scale within the timeframe. And also innovation & experimentation takes time. Will there be future pots with a longer lead in time? Or pots that don't have the size of minimum spend on it?	While no guarantees can be made, additional funding may be made available in the region, potentially with different timelines or requirements.	
20	02.06.2025	Will asylum seekers (> 6 months' stay) be eligible?	Please refer to the Open Call Application Guidance - Right to Work.	
21	02.06.2025	This is a call specifically for this financial year. How does this call out link into long term strategic development of this type of work in the region? When will you know what the plan is for this work for subsequent financial years? Without this info, we all risk being in the same position of having to respond with very little notice again next year... that's an impossible way to work for any organisation being "innovative".	This is a financial-year-specific call. Further strategic direction and plans for future years are still being developed. The concern around short notice and sustainability is noted.	
22	02.06.2025	Surely if this starts in July people need to have an existing flow of referrals?	Projects starting in July will need to be ready to mobilise quickly, including having access to potential participants.	
23	02.06.2025	Given that much of the evidence about why people end up not in work makes it clear that causes emerge / take place pre-18 years old. Are there any plans to flex age eligibility for this type of work in the future so we can innovate in more of prevention context - as is being done in health, education etc?	DWP guidance on minimum age for current Trailblazer is 18. A full evaluation will be undertaken and feedback on specific barriers for access will be shared with DWP	

24	04.06.2025	<p>Following the presentation Webinar yesterday we have taken a look through the document on the NE CA website and noticed a difference in criteria.</p> <p>The slides and Open Call Guidance state "there would be up to 3 projects using the £300 000 – £950 000 allocated costs and projects could select areas"</p> <p>However the Youth Employment Specification Document states "min is £500 000 and it is 1-2 projects covering the whole NECA region"</p>	<p>We are seeking up to three projects with a minimum value of £300,000 and a maximum of £950,000.</p> <p>Projects can submit applications for specific areas – however we will commission up to three providers to ensure full coverage of the North East CA region.</p>	
25	04.06.2025	<p>3.4 Basis for Calculation</p> <p>In relation to this question, is the 100 word count applicable per line/item of output/outcome?</p> <p>For each output/outcome, please outline the basis for your calculation.</p> <p>Short Explanation: 100 words</p> <p>It would be hard otherwise to outline our basis for calculation in 100 words total, for all project outputs and outcomes.</p>	<p>We would accept an explanation of a maximum 100 words for outputs and 100 words for outcomes given the no. of specified outputs/outcomes for this Call. A table format would be acceptable.</p>	
26	04.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.5 (Women)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any age restriction? • Are referrals into other funding streams such as UKSPF supported? 	<p>The specification for Call 3 will provide further detail.</p> <p>Publication of Call 3 will be 20th June</p>	
27	04.06.2025	<p>On reading the briefing note I can see on page 3 of the briefing note there is a paragraph that refers to a VCSE Small Grants Programme, with a total value of £950,00. This will fund community projects intended to support those further from the labour market.</p>	<p>We are still developing the Commissioning Process for this element of the Trailblazer Delivery Plan and will release further detail when we have it.</p>	

		<p>I've read the remaining (released) specification and guidance documents and can't see specifically when this fund will go live.</p> <p>Are you able to confirm when the VCSE Small Fund will be released for tender please?</p>		
28	04.06.2025	<p>Apologies to have missed the trailblazer event earlier this week. Might you be able to add me to the mailing for follow on recording and slides, please?</p> <p>At Earlybird, we're increasingly collaborating with local governments using our innovative technology to significantly reduce admin, boost compliance, and free up caseworker time on employment programmes, enabling greater impact and increasing ROI.</p> <p>With Get Britain Working Trailblazer and Connect to Work initiatives underway and as grant agreement deadlines are ongoing, we're keen to collaborate further. We work on a bespoke and low-cost basis to help Local Authorities leverage AI and innovative technology in their employment support programmes. We've developed a simple £10k package for local authorities that includes everything needed to get started - with cost effective upgrade paths for scale and easy setup in only 5 days. Would you be open to a brief 20-minute chat to explore how this could support your delivery? It'd be great to share with you how we're collaborating elsewhere. How is your 17th or 19th PM? Else, we can align a time here.</p>	<p>Yes, we can add to mailing list.</p> <p>Any questions/queries you may have regarding the Open Calls must be submitted to ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk</p>	
29	04.06.2025	<p>Could you please add North East Enterprise Agency Ltd (NEEAL) to any mailing lists regarding North East Economic Inactivity Trailblazer Programme, as a potential Provider. Email address is sue@neeal.co.uk</p>	<p>Yes, we will add you to mailing list.</p> <p>All details for the priority two open call are now published on our website here. This includes the briefing PowerPoint slides and recording.</p>	
30	04.06.2025	Priority 2.4 (Social housing)		

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the presentation on slide 20 it states that the 2.4 Social Housing tenants strand has a min/max of £200-300k but in the guidance document on page 5 it states the min and max is £200-250k. Can you confirm which is correct amount? 2. For 2.4 Support for Social Housing tenants strand the output is '190 social housing tenants' – can you confirm if this is 190 engaged or 190 into work? 3. For 2.4 Support for social housing tenants there us a specific focus on those over the age of 50. Can you confirm what number/percentage of the 190 social housing tenants need to be over the age of 50 to deliver against this requirement? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To confirm – min £200,000 - max £300,000 2. Please refer to refined specification for requirements on outputs and outcomes expected which was published on 10.6.25 3. Please refer to specification – no specific targets have been set for tenants over 50+, however we are particularly interested in proposals which focus on this age group 	
31	04.06.2025	<p>We are currently reviewing the Inactivity Trailblazer Programme for Neurodiverse and Youth Employment, in the tender response and the pricing document there is reference to Match Funding:</p> <p>Tender response – Match funding – Public Funding, Private Funding, Other</p> <p>Pricing document – Funding sources – Recipients funds capital/revenue, other capital match, other revenue match</p> <p>We were wondering if match funding is essential to the project and if so, is there a minimum you are expecting to see.</p>	Match funding is not a compulsory requirement, however, if possible, we recognise the benefits of match funding which could maximise the impact of this programme.	
32	04.06.2025	I wanted to follow up to see if you are planning to facilitate any networking opportunities among the attendees. Additionally, will you be sharing the email addresses of Monday's attendees to encourage potential partnerships? I recall it was mentioned that emails would be shared, but I wanted to clarify since I have not yet received any communication regarding this.		
33	04.06.2025	I understand from the webinar that there are only going to be one or two projects in the area of supported placements for	To confirm – Min grant is £450,000 and Maximum is £875,000 - total number of participants expected is 200	

		<p>Neuro divergent individuals, which has a minimum funding level of £440k which would mean helping 100 people over a nine month period, is that correct?</p> <p>This is a video of one of the young people who started on one of our current programs</p> <p>https://youtu.be/8ZKXmiKF8ZU?si=R66h3c4zStE-Ztqg</p> <p>We have successfully worked with around 160 people over last 2 years and provided 8 week supported work experience placements consisting of 2-4 days in various real work situations.</p> <p>This has proved to be very beneficial and our outcomes have ranged from full time employment for some people and overcoming anxiety around work for others.</p> <p>Up to now we have been. Funded by using Access to Work and have a regular stream of referrals, mainly from Gateshead DWP.</p> <p>We have also started to form the North East Association of Supported Placements over the past 12 months- something which the funding could help us firm up and market properly.</p> <p>I have ADHD and find the process of the application to be overwhelming and very time consuming to get right.</p> <p>Please could I have a phone chat with a member of the team to discuss the feasibility of us applying for this?</p>	<p>As this is an Open Call we cannot have any discussions with individual projects.</p> <p>Please send all your questions to ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk</p>	
34	04.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.2 (Neurodiverse)</p> <p>1. Does learning disability qualify under neurodiverse conditions?</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. No – participants with diagnosis are eligible</p> <p>3. No – Incentives are not an eligible spend</p>	

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Is the participant criteria strictly for those without a diagnosis? 3. Can incentives be offered to participants to engage, for example a gift voucher? 4. Can employers be based outside of NECA area e.g. Darlington, for example if an opportunity comes up that is a good match for the participant, or if it's easier for them to travel to, as long as the participant is a resident in the NECA geographical area? 5. Can bidders be the lead applicant in a partnership bid and separately bid on their own? 6. Can you confirm the funding amounts - the webinar said a minimum award of £450k, but the spec says minimum £500k and up to 2 projects will be funded? If 2 projects are funded that would take the total amount over the maximum available of £875k. 7. Is there an expectation for match funding? 8. The specification notes a target of 180 employers offering placements, assuming one placement per employer. However, it also states that supported placements can be delivered in small groups, with tailored support such as an on-site support worker. 9. Could you please clarify whether the target of 180 employers refers to 180 <i>individual employers</i>, regardless of how many participants they support? For example, if one employer offers a group placement for 4 participants, is the expectation that this still counts as one employer — and the overall target remains 180 — or would this be expected to count as 4 towards the employer engagement total? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. As per guidance - Employer location: Employers may be based outside the North East, provided their location falls within a reasonable commuting distance for residents 5. Yes, however we would expect full disclosure of all relationships/resources in each bid and the justification for separate bids 6. To clarify, the indicative total funding allocation is £875,000. However, we reserve the right to review and adjust the final funding amounts based on the quality and scope of the submissions received. This means that while the specification outlines a minimum award of £500,000 and the potential to fund up to two projects, the final number of awards and their values may vary to ensure the best outcomes from the competition. 7. Match funding is not compulsory, however we recognise the benefits of match to maximise the impact 8. In terms of counting placements, we are primarily interested in the number of distinct employer engagements and the variety of placement types offered. If 180 employers each offer one placement, that would be counted as 180 placements. However, if placements differ significantly in duration, format, or intensity (e.g. a 3-hour taster session vs. a multi-day immersive experience), we may consider these as different types of experiences, and we encourage applicants to clearly describe these distinctions in their proposals. 9. This helps us build a richer understanding of what works across different models and contexts. We are particularly interested in learning from a diverse mix of placement types, so applicants offering a range of 	
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			formats are encouraged to explain how each contributes to the overall aims of the programme.	
35	05.06.2025	<p>Please can you add me to the mailing list for these. (referring to Powerpoint Slides)</p> <p>Edward Pickering CEO / Chief Officer Telephone: 07384814883 Website: citizensadvicecd.org.uk</p>	Yes – we will add you to mailing list	
36	05.06.2025	Can the Combined Authority please confirm whether they consider these contracts are subject to VAT? If so, will you pay any VAT invoiced by the successful provider over and above the agreed contract price, which can then be reclaimed by yourselves?’	<p>You will be entering into Grant Funding Agreements and therefore you should be recovering actual costs of delivery. There can be no VAT added to these costs.</p> <p>Transactions should be claimed net of VAT. This is because most organisations should be able to recover VAT from HMRC. Therefore, you cannot claim VAT from the North East CA as you would be receiving it twice.</p> <p>If you are unable to recover VAT from HMRC then you need to include an explanation as to why this cannot be recovered as part of the application.</p>	Finance
37	06.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.1 (Young People)</p> <p>In the Priority 2.1 Youth Employment specification it states that this is expected to be for 250 participants. The suggested maximum wage subsidy is £,6000 over six months. If every participant was to have the maximum expected work placement this would exceed the total funds available, without any other costs. (£1,500,00). Even at the minimum of two months / £2,000 each this is still more than half of the overall budget (£500,000) not including the administration costs. Is this correct?</p>	To inform the North East evidence base we are seeking a range of person centred work tasters and placement opportunities for young people to learn from the difference in impact. Not all tasters and placement attract the wage subsidy.	

		Also, under outputs in the specification it says 250 young people to be recruited on pg 9 and on pg 6 under the summary it says 220. Please can you clarify.		
38	06.06.2025	Priority 2.1 (Young People) The business case document for Youth Employment will not allow me to type in the boxes.	Please ensure the document is saved and that the access mode is set to 'Editing' rather than 'Viewing'.	
39	06.06.2025	Priority 2.1 (Young People) In question 2.3 on the response document for Priority 2.1 there is only room for three objectives – is this limited to three or can more rows be added?	More rows can be added.	
40	09.06.2025	VCSE Small Grants Where can I find details of the VCSE Small Grants?	Procurement exercise will be undertaken to appoint a Grant Manager for this particular element of the trailblazer – further details to be confirmed.	
41	09.06.2025	Priority 2.1 (Young people) In the 'Business Case' provider response forms, it states in section 3.4 Basis for Calculation, "For each output/outcome, please outline the basis for your calculation. Short Explanation: 100 words". Could you clarify is this means 100 words overall, or 100 words for each output/outcome.	We would accept an explanation of a maximum 100 words for outputs and 100 words for outcomes given the no. of specified outputs/outcomes for this Call. A table format would be acceptable.	
42	10.06.2025	The pricing template asks for match funding values. Is there any guidance for this? Are you expecting a minimum intervention rate?	Match funding is not a compulsory requirement, however, if possible, we recognise the benefits of match funding which could maximise the impact of this programme.	
43	10.06.2025	Priority 2.1 (Young people) 1. What is the minimum contract value - £300k or £500k? 2. What is the mobilisation period for this contract? The timelines provide indicate successful applicants enter into contracts and mobilise in <u>August</u> , but it also states that project must be mobilised by the end of <u>July</u> . 3. What is the word limit for the Scored Question 3.1? In the Application Form this is 1200 words, but in the Guidance this is listed at 1250 words. 4. How should bidders complete the Social Value aims table in Scored Question 3.6? The table includes a list of Social Value aims with tick boxes. Are bidders expected to tick all	 1. This minimum contract value is £300,000. Please refer to the Youth Employment Specification document. 2. Contracting is due to start 9 th July 2025 with project delivery starting from 1 st August 2025. 3. Please refer to the Business Case for specific word count for each section 4. Please tick each aim that's relevant 5. This refers to the Finance and Outputs document 6. Yes 7. The correct email address is ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk	

		<p>aims relevant to their proposal? There is currently no guidance on how to complete this section.</p> <p>5. The Open Call Guidance document states bidders must complete the 'Project budget and outputs using the template provided'. There is no document with this title as part of the application pack. Does this refer to the 'Financial Tables' excel sheet?</p> <p>6. Can bidders submit a separate Mobilisation Plan or Gantt Chart for Question 4.3 without it counting toward the 1250 word limit?</p> <p>7. Please note the Open Call Guidance states clarifications should be made to ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk. This email address is undeliverable. Please could the Authority confirm clarifications, and applications, should be sent to ei.trailblazer@northeast-ca.gov.uk.</p>		
44	10.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.6 (Support for employers)</p> <p>Can multiple projects working with the same participant or enterprise each claim outcomes independently, or must outcomes be attributed to only one project per participant or enterprise?</p>	Eligibility criteria is set for each strand of activity. Participants must be eligible and if eligible for multiple programmes we expect to see distinct outcomes for each strand of activity with no duplications across projects. We would also expect projects to work closely together to ensure the right outcomes for the participant which could include cross referrals.	
45	10.06.2025	How can I make an application for Call 2?	Please follow the guidance for applications and submit Business Case Template, Finance and Outputs Template supported by a set of audited accounts	
46	10.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.1 (Young people)</p> <p>1. Is the minimum £300,000 and the maximum £900,000? (the summary documentation says £500,000)</p> <p>2. Can we go for a target geography? e.g. Newcastle</p>	<p>1. The minimum is £300,000 and the maximum is £950,000. Please refer to the Youth Employment Specification document.</p> <p>2. Yes, please refer to Question 7.</p>	
47	10.06.2025	<p>VCSE Small Grants</p> <p>Can you confirm when VCSE Small Grants will be released?</p>	Please refer to Question 40.	
48	11.06.2025	Our sessional workers are freelance, so does the funding allow for this type of freelance / consultancy way of working? This was accepted when we worked with CLLD funding in the past.	Costs should be included within granular finance template for any resources used and reflected in the business case.	

49	11.06.2025	Priority 2.5 (Women) and Priority 2.6 (Support for employers) It states the need for lead organisation to keep the 9th, 10 th and 11 th July in the diaries as potential in-person interviews for clarifications. The close of the open call for 2.5 and 2.6 is the 14 th July, so are there any different dates that lead bidders for these priorities should hold?	Interviews for Priority 2.5 (Women) and Priority 2.6 (Support for employers) will be around 31 st July 2025.	
50	11.06.2025	Priority 2.4 (Social Housing) We are an existing NECA-funded Adult Skills Fund provider. Is this eligible public funding for match funding purposes?	Match funding is not a compulsory requirement, however, if possible, we recognise the benefits of match funding which could maximise the impact of this programme.	
51		Priority 2.3 (Primary Care) Do Employment Specialists need to be a Work Coach role, or could this take a wellbeing approach? As the barriers faced by those in primary care are likely a health condition meaning they have had to give up work, rather than a skill deficit, would someone who is able to provide the wellbeing support and skills needed to get closer to the labour market such as confidence, resilience, reducing isolation etc be appropriate, alongside support to improve existing health conditions?	Under the Economically Inactive Trailblazer Programme, the Employment Specialist role can take a wellbeing-focused approach rather than follow a traditional Work Coach model. This aligns with the programme's test-and-learn model, which encourages innovative, person-centred support that addresses health-related barriers and helps participants build confidence, resilience, and social connection on their journey toward employment.	
52	11.06.2025	Priority 2.5 (Women) 1. Given that the Trailblazer programme is currently limited to those aged 18 and over, what consideration has been given to the legacy impact on 16-18-year-olds who have already dropped out of education and may now fall off the radar? 2. UKSPF has had a significantly positive impact on this age group, which risks being lost if not addressed. Would North East CA consider reviewing the eligibility criteria to include 16-18-year-olds, or could you clarify the rationale behind their exclusion?	Please refer to Question 23.	
53	12.06.2025	Priority 2.1 (Young people)		

		<p>How many young people are expected to be supported - 220 or 250?</p> <p>Under outputs in the specification it says 250 young people to be recruited on pg 9 and on pg 6 under the summary it says 220.</p>	250 young people.	
54	12.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.1 (Young people)</p> <p>If the work placements are subsidised is this subsidy to support the individual e.g. a wage via the employer or to subsidise the employer for facilitating the work placement? If it's the former, does this impact the individuals' benefits?</p>	Please see Question 17.	
55	12.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.1 (Young people)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a specific number of placements expected? 2. What happens if a young person drops out of a placement? Is the remainder of the subsidy still available for another placement up to 26th March 3. Can the subsidy be used for extra costs like travel or PPE? 4. Who pays the employers – North East CA or the provider? If North East CA, would this be the same terms as the reimbursement of claims to providers? 5. Can providers pay young people directly and claim it back? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes. The programme aims to support 220 young people in total. While not every participant must have a placement, the majority are expected to engage in work-based placement activity. 2. Given the test-and-learn nature of the programme and the delivery window up to 26 March 2026, it is reasonable that unused subsidy could be reassigned to support another eligible young person, provided it remains within the project's approved funding and delivery timeframe. 3. The subsidy is payable to the employer and does not include additional participant costs for travel or PPE – however these can costs can be included under other eligible costs and should be detailed with the Finance and Output document 3. Providers will manage employer relationships and disburse subsidies and the claim reimbursement under the agreed terms of the provision. 4. The subsidy support is payable to employers and not to the participants. 	
56	12.06.2025	Priority 2.4 (Social housing tenants)		

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Target group - What number/percentage of the 250 social housing tenants must be over 50? 2. Target group - What number/percentage of the 250 social housing tenants must be 'hidden'? 3. Eligible participants - Is having a health condition mandatory for all participants? 4. Outcomes and outputs - In section 5 there are two different terms used for the target group - Social Housing tenants and EI Social housing tenants - should these all be EI Social Housing tenants? 5. Outcomes and outputs - <i>50% of employers reporting improved confidence in recruiting economically inactive over 50's</i> - Will this only be in relation to those over 50 who have moved into work and the impact that has had on those employers recruiting them? 6. Outcomes and outputs - <i>30 social housing tenants accessing permanent employment</i> - What is the definition for 'permanent' employment? What is the definition of 'employment' e.g. is there a minimum number of hours to qualify as employment? 7. Outcomes and outputs - <i>20 social housing tenants are progressing into further education or training</i> - Can you clarify the definition of 'progressing' e.g. timescales? What is the definition of training e.g. type and level? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please refer to Question 30. 2. Please refer to Question 30. 3. Yes. 4. EI Social Housing Tenants. 5. 50% of all participants. 6. A permanent contract can be defined as a contract with no fixed end date and a minimum requirement of 16 hours per week to be worked by employees. Contracts providing no guarantee of work (e.g. zero-hour contracts, agency arrangements) are not defined as permanent. Projects are required to collect adequate evidence to demonstrate participant's progression into permanent employment. This could include, but is not necessarily limited to, details of positions/employees and participant self-declaration forms. 7. In the context of Priority 2.1 of the Economically Inactive Trailblazer Programme, "progressing into further education or training" typically means that a participant has formally enrolled in or started a recognised course or programme that enhances their skills, qualifications, or employability. <p>Progression in this scenario is generally evidenced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A confirmed start or registration on a course (not just an expression of interest) • The course beginning within the project delivery window (i.e. before 31 March 2026) • The training being relevant to employment or personal development goals 	
57	13.06.2025	Priority 2.1 (Young people)		

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can the lead partner enter into partnering agreements where costs are treated as a procured good/service instead of on a cost incurred basis? For example, could we 'subcontract' a partner organisation for a set fee to deliver x, y, z outputs/outcomes without having to evidence their direct costs such as staff payslips/invoices etc? 2. Is there guidance on how much the subsidy pot needs to be? Can some placements be undertaken without subsidy especially where these may be informal e.g. short work tasters/workplace site visits etc? 3. Do Employer subsidies have to be used for wages? Is it a stipulation that the subsidies are used by the employer to pay the participant? If so, are employers expected to follow full recruitment processes for referred participants e.g. induction, right to work processes, induction onto payroll etc? 4. Asylum seekers – I see asylum seekers are eligible as per guidance but will asylum seekers be eligible for work placements (see question number 1) as by definition, asylum seekers won't have the right to work in the UK. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, this is possible. The specification allows flexibility in delivery models, and subcontracting delivery partners on a fixed-fee basis for defined outputs/outcomes is a recognised approach. However, this would be treated as procurement, not grant funding, and must comply with public procurement rules. The lead partner would need to ensure value for money, clear deliverables, and robust monitoring, 2. A wage subsidy of up to £6,000 per participant for a 6-month full-time placement (pro-rata for shorter/part-time roles). However, the guidance also encourages testing a range of placement types, including non-subsidised options like short tasters, site visits, and volunteering. So yes, some placements can be unpaid, especially where they are informal or exploratory in nature. 3. Yes, the subsidy is intended to support wage costs for young people in placements. Employers receiving the subsidy are expected to treat participants as employees, which includes following standard recruitment processes: right to work checks, payroll registration, and appropriate induction. This ensures compliance and safeguards both the participant and the employer. 4. While asylum seekers may be eligible for non-work-based support under the programme, they cannot undertake paid work placements unless they have been granted the right to work in the UK. This is a legal restriction. However, they may still benefit from non-paid activities such as site visits, volunteering, or personal development support, provided these do not breach immigration conditions. 	PAT
58	13.06.2025	<p>Could I be added to attend the next meeting and to be put on any mailing list which shows attendees for each call to support with partnerships.</p> <p>Sharon.Campbell@ngi.org.uk</p>	<p>There are no upcoming events. Please keep an eye on North East CA social media channels for any updates.</p>	

59	14.06.2025	Am I correct in stating that you only need up to three projects to undertake the Trailblazer opportunity; Can you also register me to receive future information. silxteen@aol.com	There is a maximum number of projects we can support for each strand. Please refer to the Open Call Guidance for more information.	
60	16.06.2025	1. Is there an application form I need to send? 2. Are the outputs are listed against the Primary Care workstream for total number of outputs or for each project?	1. You will have to complete the relevant Business Case in full. You will also need to submit the Finance Table and latest set of accounts. Please refer to the relevant Specification document and Open Call Guidance for more information. 2. It is the total number expected, not individual.	
61	16.06.2025	We expressed interest and were happy to share email for collaborative opportunities, could we please be added to the list. michelle@upliftassociates.co.uk	Yes, we will add you to mailing list.	
62	16.06.2025	We are seeking clarification regarding the VAT position of the grant. A question in the Q&A log asked: <i>"Can the Combined Authority please confirm whether they consider these contracts are subject to VAT? If so, will you pay any VAT invoiced by the successful provider over and above the agreed contract price, which can then be reclaimed by yourselves?"</i> The response stated: <i>"You will be entering into Grant Funding Agreements and therefore you should be recovering actual costs of delivery. There can be no VAT added to these costs. Transactions should be claimed net of VAT. This is because most organisations should be able to recover VAT from HMRC. Therefore, you cannot claim VAT from the North East CA as you would be receiving it twice. If you are unable to recover VAT from HMRC then you need to include an explanation as to why this cannot be recovered as part of the application."</i>	You will need to set out in your business case the reasons that they are unable to recover VAT and this can be aligned to the HMRC guidelines. The explanation and position should be provided by the applicant's head of finance or equivalent. If you are unable to recover VAT from HMRC then VAT can be included in budgeted costs. This can only be for costs where you will pay VAT - for example procured supplies/services.	PAT

		<p>We are VAT registered and normally recover VAT in full. However, since we are not permitted to charge the North East CA VAT for services delivered under Priority 2.3, we believe this activity constitutes a non-business activity for VAT purposes. In line with HMRC guidance (VAT Notice 700, Section 4.6), input VAT relating to non-business activities is not recoverable, even by VAT-registered organisations.</p> <p>We would be grateful if you could clarify why you consider this not to be the case, and under what basis input VAT would be recoverable in these circumstances.</p>		
63	17.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.1 (Young people)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In annex 1 there is an outcome/output for ‘number of people reached’ but this does not show in the dropdown selection for either outputs or outcomes on the finance tables spreadsheet. 2. For the primary project interventions can you confirm that these are only E33 / E34 – should there be others included here? 3. The outputs / outcomes listed in the youth employment specification are different to those listed in the finance tables spreadsheet and annex 1 of the open call guidance. E.g. The youth employment document states 170 socially excluded access support – where does this fit in annex 1? 4. Do we need to give numbers against every output / outcome in the dropdown selection on the finance tables spreadsheet? 5. Do we have to cover all outcomes / outputs listed in the open call guidance document – annex 1? 6. On the finance tables spreadsheet ‘funding source’ tab – what do we select from the NTCA funding source? What is the difference between the two options. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of residents reached is in A14 of Outputs tab. 2. All outputs and outcomes are listed in the Specification document. 3. Please only fill the relevant outputs and outcomes listed in the specification doc. 4. Please only fill the relevant outputs and outcomes listed in the specification doc. 5. Please only fill the relevant outputs and outcomes listed in the specification doc. 6. Type in “North East CA Economic Inactivity Trailblazer” manually 	

64	17.06.2025	If the CA recognised strengths/collaboration opportunities across a number of proposals would the CA seek to or suggest a merge of projects to maximise the innovation/cohesion across those projects?	We would encourage partnerships to be formed at application stage and details included within the Business Case. However, the CA would seek to maximise the benefits of collaboration wherever possible and may enter into discussions with prospective providers following evaluation and review of all submissions	
65	18.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there an expectation for external evaluators to be involved in the evaluation and learning of the projects? 2. Please can you provide a definition of 'hidden' in relation to the priority groups? 3. There is no reference to volunteering in the outcomes and outputs. Would you consider this to be a positive outcome and if so, can it be added to one of the existing outcomes? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We're in the process in developing our evaluation process and there would be an expectation for projects to be involved. 2. "Hidden" typically refers to individuals or communities who are underserved, underrepresented, or overlooked - often because they are difficult to identify, engage, or support through conventional systems. 3. We recognise the benefits of volunteering as it serves as a stepping stone toward employment, training or improved employability, the outcomes are about change or impact and whilst volunteering contributes it isn't always the destination. Volunteering can be counted as making progress towards or into the labour market. 	
66	18.06.2025	<p>Which documents are required for the submission of the above priority? According to the Open Call guidance, the following are required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed application form • Project budget and outputs using the provided template • Supporting documents: most recent set of audited financial accounts <p>Could you confirm whether the application form required is the Business Case Word document that we have been able to download?</p>	<p>Applications must include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed Business Case for the relevant strand of activity • Finance and Outputs Spreadsheet • Audited Audits 	

67	18.06.2025	<p>How should partner organisations submit their statement of good standing? Can these be attached as appendices alongside their audited financial statements?</p> <p>Must the proposal completion date be the same as the financial completion date (31/3/26) or could the proposal completion date be later? For example, if someone is part-way through a work placement but hasn't completed it by 31/3/26</p>	<p>We only require the lead organisation completing the Business Case to submit the statement of good standing – details of partners should be included within the Business Case.</p> <p>All activity and spend must be completed by 31.3.26.</p>	
68	18.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.1 (Young people)</p> <p>What is the definition of “economically inactive”. It is written differently in different places in the documents - do young people have to be inactive due to ill health?</p>	Evidence suggests young people with learning difficulties and disabilities or are experiencing poor mental as more likely to be economically inactive - this a key priority area for the Trailblazer and priority should be given to this participant group.	
69	18.06.2025	Can pre-filmed virtual work experience be classed as an opportunity if this is alongside a 'live' session with an employer representative or a member of organisation staff working with the young people in question?	Please demonstrate within your Business Case how this would be effective in supporting the person to achieve a positive outcome.	
70	18.06.2025	I only have access to a browser version of Word - is it possible to submit the document in any other format?	Yes – will we accept an alternative format.	
71	19.06.2025	Are young people who are in receipt of JSA/UC for work related benefits eligible for the Trailblazer - i.e. those accessing support from job centres?	Please refer to Section 4 of the Youth Employment Specification.	
72	20.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.5 – Women</p> <p>I am reaching out as in the documentation for ‘women’ the maximum amount of funding has now been changed from 200k to 175k. In the launch call and documented slides the maximum was 200k.</p>	Following a review the minimum grant request was lowered to £100,000, and the maximum request is £175,000.	
73	24.06.2025	What are your recommendations in application for a fairly new, small organisation, though established after years of experience and having taken a break in delivering. Have an innovative delivery model, applying with a well established	As per guidance partnerships applications are welcome, provided that there is a clearly defined lead organisation. A key aim of the trailblazer is to test and learn and trail new approaches.	

		<p>partner organisation for a strong referral route and deliverable outcomes.</p> <p>How would it look to the funders, what is the best way to present?</p>		
74	24.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.3 (Primary Care) and Priority 2.5 (Women)</p> <p>Would the Authority consider proposals that include a digital wraparound support model, designed to complement existing or confirmed local pilots? This model could offer economies of scale, rapid mobilisation, and flexibility to integrate with multiple delivery sites across the region.</p> <p>Please confirm whether such digital enhancements would be deemed eligible and strategically aligned with the trailblazer's ambitions</p>	<p>A key aim of the Trailblazer is to test and learn and trail new approaches for the benefit of our residents who are economically inactive. Benefits of your proposed model of digital wrap-around support need to be articulated within your business case submission.</p>	
75	24.06.2025	<p>Could the Authority please confirm the acuity of need expected within the cohorts identified for the Trailblazer Priority pilots — particularly for Priorities 2.3 (Primary Care) and 2.5 (Women)?</p> <p>Understanding the likely complexity, intensity, and frequency of support required will help us shape an appropriate delivery model and workforce profile.</p>	<p>We recognise that individuals within the Trailblazer Priority cohorts will present with a wide spectrum of needs, shaped by their personal circumstances, health conditions and lived experiences. As such we expect that the acuity, complexity and the frequency of support required will vary significantly from person to person. Our proposed delivery model is grounded in personalised support enabling tailored interventions that respond to each individual's situation.</p>	
76	25.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.5 (Women)</p> <p>We are hopefully applying for the Call three (women's support). As a small social enterprise we can deliver good outcomes for the project, but we don't have the reserves to claim back quarterly on this project.</p>	<p>In exceptional circumstances, alternate payment methods will be agreed with successful applicants. This will be in cases where quarterly payments in arrears will put undue financial pressure on the delivery organisation. The application should clearly state, either in the Business Case or with an email accompanying application submission, where alternative payment processes will be required and North East CA will work with organisations to come to a reasonable solution.</p>	

		The guidance advised to email to ask to discuss an alternative method that would work for a smaller organisation like ours.	Please note, applications will not be negatively impacted if an alternative approach is requested.	
77	25.06.2025	Could you please confirm whether the attached Scheme of Work format including text would be accepted as a diagram under these guidelines, or if it would be considered part of the word count?	Please include as a diagram within the business case, it won't be included as part of the word count.	
78	30.06.2025	<p>Priority 2.6 Employers</p> <p>I can see in the specification that you are looking for up to 5 projects, could you confirm if you are looking for a minimum and maximum project value?</p>	<p>Minimum is £100,000 and maximum is £300,000.</p> <p>Please refer to the Employers Specification here for more details.</p>	