ONWARDS &UPWARDS

The 'Up for Work' Story

the workspace group

NETWORK personnel

European Union
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Department for Employment and Learning
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UP FOR WORK

This project is part financed by the European Social Fund and the Department for Employment and Learning

‘Up for Work’…

supporting and assisting people who are out of work … but who want to be in work.

Shoulder to the Wheel … The Workspace Way

“ The Workspace Group is immensely proud of having accessed E.S.F. and DEL monies for the ‘Up for Work’ programme. Our organisation and our programme partners have likewise made a substantial financial contribution to this initiative.

We don’t just talk about ‘self-help’… we ‘do it’, and we can do things like this because our group works hard at being commercially successful. When you mix all these elements together you get a very powerful package.”

Brian Murray
Chief Executive, Workspace Group

Getting Down to Business:

‘Up for Work’ … What it is and what it does

‘Up for Work’ supports and assists people who are out of work ... but who want to be in work.

Focused largely (but not exclusively) on the Cookstown and Magherafelt Districts, it targets people who have been through other programmes and initiatives but who have not yet found long-term employment. ‘Up for Work’ started in September 2011 and will run until March 2015.

Because people don’t all have the same, single type of work needs or aspirations and, equally, because there’s no one, single type of work on offer, ‘Up for Work’ delivers a huge choice and variety of supports. Among them are:

The ‘Up for Work’ Template

Up for Work

Qualifications | Business Start Ups | Skills & Training | Tailored Job Search | Subsidised Employment

- **Opportunities to undertake qualifications** … almost always now the non-negotiable key to a job
- **Temporary subsidised employment** … the little extra that will persuade an employer to take someone on
- **Business start-up assistance** … vital in a community where the self-employment ethos/culture is so strong
- **Comprehensive one-to-one support including skills analysis, CV building, application form completion and interview preparation** … more vital steps where a helping hand can make all the difference to people
- **A variety of approaches to IT/ICT** … skills and knowledge here are now a fundamental building block for modern living

Getting to Know Us:

Workspace and Network Personnel … Who We Are, What We Do and Why We Do It!

Network Personnel is part of the Workspace Group which in turn is one of Ireland’s leading social enterprises.

Workspace emerged in the early 1980s as a result of local people coming together to ‘shout stop’ to what appeared to be almost permanent local decline, disadvantage, unemployment, underemployment and limited local opportunities. It was, and still is, about local people coming together to address local problems. The Group has since grown hugely to provide property/workspace and support services for business and, through seven subsidiary companies is also involved in recruitment; training and employment; energy efficiency and insulation; heat recovery; childcare and recreation/leisure.

Working across Ireland and the UK and with an international portfolio, all profits generated are reinvested by Workspace for local community benefit.

Network Personnel itself was put in place in the late 1980s to address the skills and employment needs of local people and local businesses.

Since then it has won and successfully delivered several major training programmes including ACE and Youth Opportunities in the 1980s, New Deal and Worktrack in the 1990s and Go For It, Steps to Work, LEMIS and Up for Work in the 2000s.

With a staff team of 32, it is now a major employer in its own right.

Some of What’s on Offer

Network Personnel’s delivery of ‘Up for Work’ is practical, focused on real needs and opportunities and laced with opportunities to access industry-leading training and qualifications. Among them are:

CSR Card
Emergency First Aid at Work
GOALS Motivational Training
Child Protection Training
Manual Lifting and Handling
Food Safety Award, Level 2
Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
European Computer Driving Licence
SAGE Book-keeping
Text Processing
Level 3 Stone Masonry (Part qualification)
VRQ Horticulture
Level 2 in Fitness Instruction
Essential Skill: Literacy
Essential Skill: Numeracy
Essential Skill: ICT
SIA Licence: CCTV Monitoring
British Horse Society: Horse Care and Management
British Theatre Dance Association: Modern Jazz
V.R.Q. Environmental Conservation
Design, Build and Maintenance of outdoor recreation trails

Participation in ‘**Up for Work**’ is free of charge as its costs are met by the European Social Fund and Department for Employment and Learning and a range of other local organisations including Network Personnel; Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership through the Heritage Lottery Fund; Workspace; Magherafelt District Council through Score Environmental; MindWise; Lissan House Trust via a Biffa Award and Cookstown Enterprise Centre.

Programme Strands …
Programme Partners

‘Up for Work’ celebrates variety. Network Personnel has always recognised the range of wants, needs and aspirations within the local labour market. It was therefore very obvious that those same wants, needs and aspirations would be reflected in the roll-out of ‘Up for Work’.

The **Temporary Work Placement Programme** targets people who have finished the ‘Steps to Work’ programme but who haven’t secured long term employment.

It places those people with local companies for 26 weeks, pays their wages for 16 hours per week and gives them the opportunity to obtain further relevant qualifications. The work experience and qualifications obtained leaves participants significantly better placed in the jobmarket.

Programme match-funded by Network Personnel

How People Have Turned **‘Up for Work’** to Their Advantage

A long daily commute and a change in his family circumstances led to Darren Clements wanting to change his career path.

Realising that he would have to retrain and get relevant work experience if he were to branch out into a new area he had been thinking about, Darren joined Network Personnel’s Steps to Work Programme and secured an eight-week work placement with **SMART Property Marketing** as an Energy Assessor.

This ‘taster’ confirmed what he had thought about his career change so Darren then stepped into the Up for Work Programme. This enabled him to stay with Smart Property Marketing for a further 26 weeks on a paid employment contract and supported him in obtaining the Energy Assessor Qualification.

Darren Clements: SMART Property Marketing

Network Personnel and Workspace are in, of and for their local communities.

This understanding of local nuances led to the creation of the ‘two-birds with-one-stone’ Environmental Programme. The Programme’s motivation is simple – to marry two things, (a) the need to foster and re-energise traditional local heritage skills with (b) the pool of labour created by the construction collapse.

The reality that those former construction workers all hankered after outside work simply added to the Programme’s vigour. Working in partnership, the Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership, Lissan House Trust and Network Personnel created a work based programme which provided participants with training and work experience opportunities whilst at the same time delivering the objectives of local heritage regeneration projects, such as at Lissan House.

Skills training delivered in partnership has included: - design and build of outdoor recreation trails; horticulture; stone masonry and competency in machine/plant use.

In Their own Words … What it Means to Others

“The Work of the ‘Up for Work’ team and the high quality of the training they are receiving is of immense value not only to the participants but also to Lissan House.

This will open up the estate through the creation of inspiring river walks and through access to our 100 year-old turbine house and traditional ice house. One key result will be year-round increases in our visitor numbers. The experience the teams are getting has already helped several members find long term employment.”

Tony McMinn
Chairman Lissan House Trust

The MindWise element of the programme is tailored to the specific needs of people experiencing or recovering from mental health issues.

MindWise, a leading mental health charity, were already based in Magherafelt where they had been doing furniture restoration. Getting involved in ‘Up for Work’ gave them the opening to diversify into horticulture and to offer directed training in confidence-building and job search skills.

Programme match-funded by MindWise

Hopefully everyone that takes part in the future will benefit as much as I have. I believe it is an excellent programme and helped to change my life

Dean Shannon

Dean Shannon, MindWise participant with Barry McCabe, MindWise horticulture tutor

A culture of self-employment and entrepreneurialism runs right through the wider Mid-Ulster area. It was therefore clear that 'Up for Work' required a robust but tailored Self-Employment Programme.

The programme which emerged has a particular focus on people who have finished 'test trading' as part of their participation in 'Steps to Work' but who still need support to help them move off benefits and on into fully-fledged self-employment.

The Programme delivers a number of practical supports to people, from market research through business planning and financial management and on into operational areas such as on-line marketing (eg how to trade on eBay). And it's delivering some eye-catching results. This aspect of the programme is match funded by Workspace and Cookstown Enterprise Centre.

How People Have Turned **'Up for Work'** to their Advantage

David had previously worked at a local Golf Club shop and participated on Up for Work's Self-Employment stream. He has recently opened The Golfer's Closet in Magherafelt, selling a range of branded golfing clothes. Through the Programme, David developed a business plan with his mentor that enabled him to secure funding to start his own business.

David Wilson: **The Golfer's Closet**

Niall Higgins worked in a specialised joinery company but lost his job when the firm went out of business. Finding it difficult to get work in his own area of expertise he decided to set up his own business.

Limetree Joinery is now a flourishing company, taking on a wide range of work including making bars and providing specialised shop frontages.

The recent construction industry collapse and the harsh daily realities of sporadic building-site work led 24 year-old Joseph Duffin to re-appraise his career options.

A keen sportsman, Joseph self-financed his way to an accredited Gym and Fitness qualification but then found himself with no experience in his new work area.

A simple word-of-mouth recommendation brought him to Network Personnel where he rapidly secured a placement as a gym instructor in Cookstown Leisure Centre. 'Up for Work' helped Joseph undertake further qualifications and as a Council Leisure Centre employee he is now established and very fulfilled in his new career.

Joseph Duffin: **Fitness Instructor**

Like many Mid-Ulster men, Kevin Donnelly worked in construction. Beyond work and family, outdoor pursuits were his passion. Then came the recession of the late 2000s and Kevin's work disappeared.

A visit to Network Personnel led him into the 'Up for Work' programme and work placements with Emergency Medical Supplies in Magherafelt and Moneymore's award-winning 'The Jungle'. Network Personnel funded Kevin through two internationally-accredited outdoor pursuits-related training courses.

Bringing his 'construction work ethic' with him, the newly-skilled Kevin was rapidly offered a full-time permanent Manager post at 'The Jungle' once his 'Up for Work' placement there was completed. Kevin is now in his dream job. 'The Jungle' continues to grow and develop as a business. The Mid-Ulster economy is that bit stronger and it all began with a visit to Network Personnel.

Kevin Donnelly: **The Jungle**

In a world where IT/ICT reaches into every part of daily living and daily work, Network Personnel rolls out a series of hands-on, practical and user-friendly IT/ICT-Related Courses.

Delivered in our own modern premises in Cookstown and Magherafelt the areas covered are highly-popular and include Sage, ECDL and Essential Skills in ICT.

Programme match funded by Network Personnel

The ‘Sperrins Gateway’ Landscape Partnership is a Heritage Lottery-funded scheme which identifies and delivers projects which will help retain the character, beauty, spirituality and tranquillity of the local landscape and its communities.

The **Up for Work Heritage Skills Programme** was created to energise the work of the Partnership whilst equally adding to the local skills base and thereby improving people’s employability.

Programme participants are trained in traditional, ‘at risk’ skills such as stone masonry and hedge-laying, complemented by more ‘modern’ but related skills such as horticulture and trail creation.

Among the results are several restored pieces of the local traditional built fabric plus the securing locally of a number of important traditional skills and crafts.

Programme match funded by Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership through the Heritage Lottery Fund

In Their own Words … What it Means to Others

“The fact that we have been able to match our Heritage Lottery Funds with ESF monies (via the ‘Up for Work’ programme) is mutually beneficial. The people involved in the temporary employment aspect of the programme are learning valuable conservation skills, including stone masonry, iron working and hedge laying. These skills are then honed and put to great use doing valuable restoration work across our local Sperrins area.”

Graham Mawhinney
Chairman Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership

The Community Environmental Programme is another example of how Up for Work brings together job creation, training/ skills development and the production of positive outcomes for the wider community.

A team of participants with a supervisor tackle a range of outdoor community projects, for example the redevelopment of the ‘Plantin’ park in Draperstown, the restoration of old cemeteries in Desertmartin and Derrylin, tidy ups for various sports clubs and painting and decorating for playgroups.

The training inputs are all fully accredited and include CSR, Emergency First Aid, Manual Handling, Essential Skills and the VRQ’s in Horticulture.

Programme is delivered through a partnership between Magherafelt District Council and Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership.

Network Personnel and Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership developed a horticulture programme to address local training needs and as a way of reconnecting local people with the landscape. The programme offers previously unemployed people work opportunities where they can gain experience, new or sharpened skills and accredited qualifications which will leave them more ‘marketable’ in the world of work.

In this programme a full time tutor utilising a purpose built polytunnel will deliver a range of training from short/ taster courses to the formal accredited VRQ in worked based and practical horticulture and VRQ Environmental Conservation.

The programme intends to develop a particular niche by building an expertise in local native plant species.

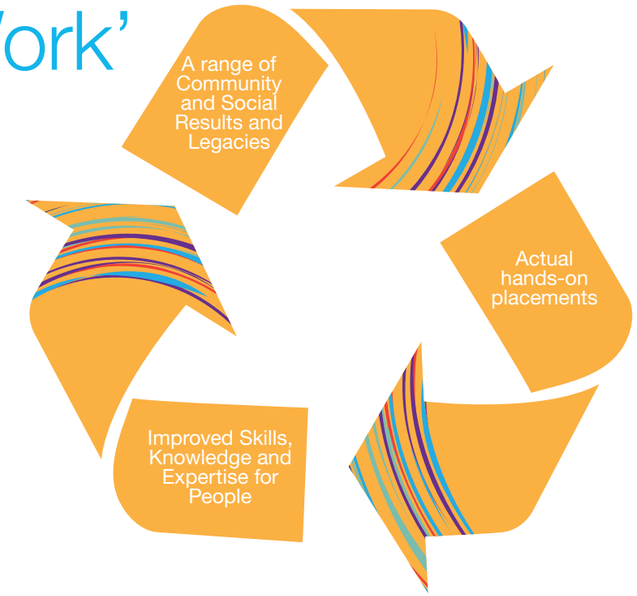
This will address the Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership ‘Connecting communities to their landscape’ agenda and leave people well equipped to take up employment in the environmental sector

This programme is match funded by Network Personnel and Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership through the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The 'Up for Work' Deliverables:

'Up for Work' is not an end in itself. It's a very powerful means to a number of important ends.

It leads out-of-work people into real, fulfilling jobs and it improves people's skills and their sense of well-being. In doing all this it steadily and steadfastly builds stronger and happier communities.



Looking to Tomorrow

'Up for Work' is important to us and to our people. But it won't go on forever. Neither will any of our other current programmes.

What will go on however will be the need to stimulate the creation of local jobs and to make sure our people are confident, willing and able to fill those jobs.

It is therefore vital that new, innovative and fit-for-purpose programmes and supports are continuously rolled out.

Network Personnel wants to be part of that. It remains our ambition to leave people better than we find them in terms of their capacity to take on enjoyable, fulfilling and rewarding work.

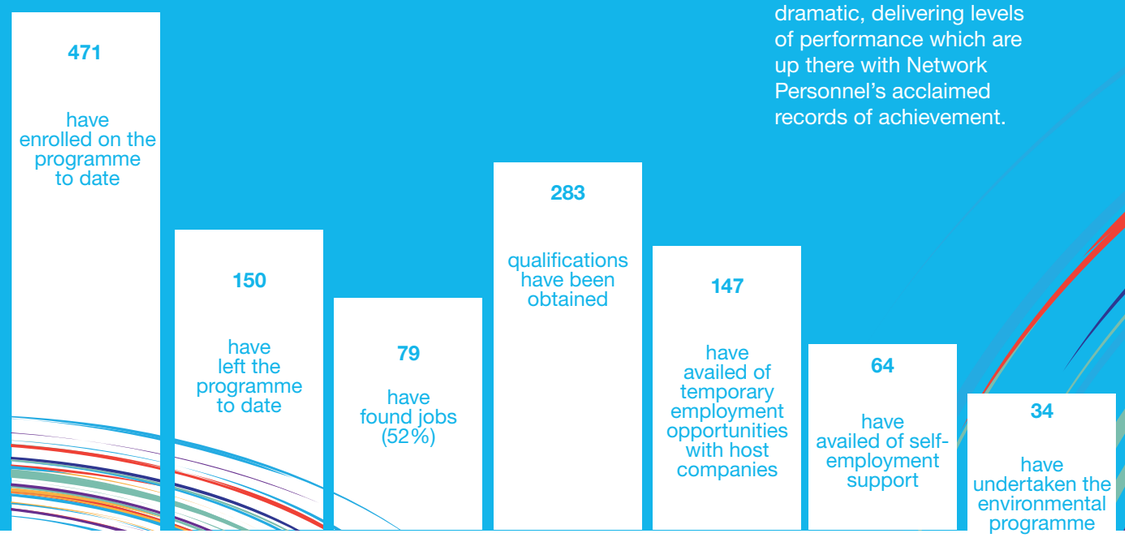
We believe firmly in the importance of work and in how it develops confident, healthy and content individuals and communities.

We will therefore continue to monitor trends, to identify what our local and regional work needs are and to devise and deliver good, effective responses. In that lies a successful tomorrow.

It's All about Results: From Little Acorns …

'Up for Work' is a means to an end. The end is quite simple … to leave people either in or better placed to be in work.

So far its success has been dramatic, delivering levels of performance which are up there with Network Personnel's acclaimed records of achievement.



Like to Know More?

We're proud of our place, our communities and our firms – Network Personnel and Workspace.

We're also proud of our programme, 'Up for Work'.

We'd be delighted to talk to you about any of these opportunities if you're interested, contact the 'Up for Work' team at Network Personnel, Rainey Street, Magherafelt

T: 028 796 31032
E: info@networkpersonnel.org.uk
www.facebook.com/networkpersonnel

The Workspace Group is based in Draperstown at the centre of a growing wider Mid-Ulster community of up to 100,000 people.

The local area is largely upland rural, with farming, construction, manufacturing and public sector jobs underpinning the local economies. Many local people have to travel elsewhere for work.

Local wages tend to be at least 10% below the NI average. There is however, a very strong local entrepreneurial spirit and a robust community-based ethos of self-help. The Workspace Group simply responds to local difficulties by building on local strengths.

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Funding Partners

heritage lottery fund
LOTTERY FUNDED

SPERRINS GATEWAY
LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

COOKSTOWN
enterprise centre

Mind Wise
A NEW VISION

NETWORK
personnel

the workspace group

LISSAN HOUSE & DEMESNE

MAGHERAFELT

Biffa Award

SCORE

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