

Press release: Projects set to help women back to work

- Seven projects land funding to help support women and those with caring responsibilities back into employment
- Initiatives to help veterans, victims of domestic abuse and homeless women
- Funding part of the government's £5m commitment to help people with care responsibilities back into work

The funding is the latest to be awarded as part of the government's drive to support disadvantaged women in the UK, and comes ahead of the launch of a new strategy which will set out how women of all ages should be supported to achieve their potential.

Working with more than 100 employers, the seven projects have been allocated nearly £500,000, which will go towards providing refresher courses, training and qualifications to women from all backgrounds who have taken time away from work for caring responsibilities.

Minister for Women & Equalities, Penny Mordaunt, said:

"It is completely unacceptable that the careers of talented women are held back because they take time out of their jobs to care for a loved one.

"Businesses cannot afford to overlook the potential of these talented women. That's why we are investing in returners to work – giving them the opportunity to refresh and grow their skills. By acting on this issue we can grow the economy and achieve true equality in our workplaces."

The successful bids include a project that will give women the tools to progress in the security industry, another that will seek to help victims of domestic abuse and an initiative to help female partners of the Armed Forces and veterans return to work.

Pioneering research by Eige found that reducing gender gaps in labour market participation, STEM qualifications and wages, could increase the size of the UK economy by around £55 billion by 2030.

This funding is part of the government's £5 million commitment to boost projects supporting women with caring responsibilities across the country back into the job market.

Notes to Editor:

Winning organisations:

Mpower People CIC: £96,505

Mpower People CIC have a track record of supporting disadvantaged people into

work, specifically those with mental or physical health issues, victims of domestic abuse, ex-offenders and people in challenging economic circumstances. Their programme will support women from various disadvantaged backgrounds, back into employment across the Liverpool City Region.

Liverpool City Council: £87,500

Liverpool City Council will develop a specialised women's returner programme supporting victims of domestic violence, ex-offenders and those with limited English language skills. Partnering with existing refugee programmes, women's probation and local domestic abuse services, the programme offers accredited (ESOL) training, soft-skilled training and personal development that leads to paid employment.

Shpresa Programme: £78,000

Shpresa will develop a BAME women returners' programme, based in two locations. Their target group are migrant women with significant employment history, but due to cultural reasons are the main carers. These barriers, along with limited English skills create further issues for returning to employment.

Adviza: £71,042

Adviza Partnership will launch a sector-focused returner programme (security industry), designed to support BAME women into a male dominated sector. Participating returners will receive accredited qualifications and direct entry into security work that reduces cultural barriers often associated with this sector.

Westminster City Council: £60,000

Westminster City Council will develop a returner programme to support BAME women into the hospitality sector, focusing on some of the most deprived communities in Greater London.

Beam: £50,000

Beam will empower women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure employment by providing award-winning support and training through online fundraising. This is an innovative approach that is unique in the market.

RFEA – The Forces Employment Charity: £48,000

The RFEA programme will support the female partners of serving Armed Forces, and women veterans back into employment. The pressures of service life cause isolation for many Armed Forces' partners, which create complexities around building a career for themselves, as they by default, become the main caregiver of children and relatives.

The programme aims to reduce the disadvantages of this returner group and for the veterans of the future by enabling spouses of serving personnel to return to the workforce and build a career for themselves.