CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL NETWORK OF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND TRAINING (NEST) – SCORING AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION
This document provides an overview of the assessment system which is applied in respect of projects or services whose main function is to help improve the employability of the clients it serves; together with detailed guidance on the selection criteria which will be applied to applications.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM
The criteria outlined in this document will be used to assess aspects of all Network of Employment Support and Training (NEST) grant applications submitted for funding from April 2025 – March 2028.

Membership of the Assessment Panel is drawn from the Local Employability Partnership. Each application will be scored independently by members of the scoring panel, with a moderated score being agreed by the full panel.

Once all applications have been scored, the Panel will also take cognisance of the overall fit with the Employability Pipeline in the city and agree recommendations.

The maximum score available for each project is 36 points. Any question not attempted will be given 0 points. There is a quality bar of 50%: applications scoring 17 points or fewer will not be recommended for funding.

The scores outlined below reflect the emphasis placed on specific criteria. Projects will be scored on the basis of the Assessment Panel appraisal of the information provided in the submitted application. These criteria have been selected to reflect the objectives and emphasis of the *NEST 2025-2028 Grant Specification*.

Following the Assessment Panel scoring process, recommended bidders will be selected and recommended in a report to City of Edinburgh Council's Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, who have final approval on any spend.

PROJECT SCORING – PROPOSED PROJECT

1. Description of activities or services you propose to deliver

The description should identify specific target group(s) and propose an appropriate programme to move them towards and/or into work. Client engagement, selection, programme delivery and onward referral should be outlined. Proposed staffing of the project should be outlined. Applicants intending to move participants into work should include employer engagement activity; and actions to support people post job-entry. If training is to be delivered, details should be noted and explained further in question B4. Applicants aiming to move people along the pipeline should indicate progression routes. Referral protocols should be agreed with feeder provision and/or progression destinations as appropriate. Applicants should demonstrate how they've involved potential service users in the design of their programme.

Points:
0: Incoherent account, mismatch of proposed service and target group, lack of relevant detail
2: Limited summary, poor match of services to participant needs, inadequate support for participants, appropriate links not made (e.g. to employers, other service providers)
4: Adequate summary of proposed project or service, client journey covered, some details omitted
6: Full, coherent summary; appropriate services to support participants particularly in stages 1 and 2; client journey clearly articulated; clear referral arrangements

2. A short summary of your project that will be used externally for marketing purposes (JUfJ website, social media etc) if you are selected for funding

The description should be brief summary of the project, which can be used when marketing the project, for example on the Joined Up for Jobs directory or social media channels. Not scored.

3. Number of years applying for

Please indicate the number of years you would to receive funding for this project. The grants programme is three years and most applicants would be expected to apply for three years funding. Not scored.

4. Grant requests per annum

Please indicate the amount of funding you would like for your project per annum. The maximum grant award is £100,000 per annum, per project. Successful applicants will have a 3% inflationary increase added to this amount each year. Taken into consideration as part of value for money, not scored individually.

5. Relevance to priorities

The application should clearly demonstrate that the proposed project or service addresses the priorities in the NEST 2025-2028 Grant Specification. In addition, you should show how

the proposed service fits with Edinburgh's employability pipeline.

Points:
0: Proposed project/service not linked to priorities and pipeline
2: Limited linkage to the priorities or fit with the pipeline
4: Some links to priorities and fit with the pipeline
6: Strong links to priorities and fit with the pipeline

6. Evidence of demand and/or need

This should include reference to sources of information such as unemployment or deprivation statistics. There should be clear evidence that, where appropriate, the most relevant and up to date data has been used and is specific to the client group. In addition, the justification should be consistent with local, regional and national labour market information as appropriate. Your answer should also reflect the extent to which your proposed service enhances rather than duplicates other provision for the client group. The project score will be based on the strength of the data used; the level of demand demonstrated; and complementarity with other service provision.

Points:
0: No evidence offered
2: Little evidence of demand or need
4: Some evidence of demand or need
6: Strong evidence of demand or need

7. Value for money

The score given will reflect the value for money of the project by comparing key quantified outputs and impacts against overall project cost. Details of added value such as partnership or colocation may be used as an indicator of value for money, as could the ratio between client-focused costs and overheads. A coherent justification for cost per client/outcome should be given in the answer.

Points:
0: Poor value for money
1: Reasonable value for money
2: Good value for money compared with other project applications/existing provision
3: Very good to excellent value for money

8. Monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance

The application should give evidence of effective monitoring and evaluation systems used by staff to measure the quality and effectiveness of the intervention. These might include:

- Use of monitoring information (including Helix) to improve procedures, policies etc.
- Service user involvement
- Evidence of independent verification of outcomes

- Accessing a range of information sources for evaluation purposes
- Elements of external scrutiny
- Identification and implementation of good practice

Points:

0: No evidence of adequate monitoring and evaluation systems

1: Little evidence of adequate monitoring and evaluation systems

2: Some evidence of monitoring and evaluation systems above the minimum required and feedback sought from service users; identification of good practice

3: Strong evidence that monitoring and evaluation proposals are rigorous, use a variety of information sources and include an element of external scrutiny. Good practice is identified and used to continuously improve service delivery. Service user feedback should be embedded in the evaluation system

9. Partnership working

The project should demonstrate genuine, realistic and appropriate partnership working with relevant agencies and service users in the design and delivery of the service. Factors could include:

- Proper local consultation in assessing demand for project and delivery of the priorities in the Local Improvement Plan
- Practical partnership between agencies in the delivery of the project
- Input from partners and service users to project design and delivery
- Employer engagement where relevant
- Leverage of additional resources from other partners (which may be in kind).

Points:

0: No evidence of partnership working

1: Limited evidence of partnership working

2: Some evidence of involvement of appropriate partners and/or community

3: Strong evidence of genuine involvement of appropriate partners, and/or local community, and/or communities of interest, and/or employers

10. Evidence for success / track record

Where applicants have run previous projects, or this project or a similar project has run elsewhere, the score will reflect these results and the likelihood of replicability of results during the next funding period in terms of delivery, outcomes and spend. Projects should also outline their experience/success of working with the client group in this answer.

Points:

0: No evidence

1: Limited relevant evidence of success

2: Some record of success and reasonable likelihood of results being duplicated.

3: Strong record of success and high likelihood of results being duplicated

11. Location/environment

The score should reflect the extent to which the project demonstrates a positive approach to location and environment for clients to be supported. The project should demonstrate that it is accessible by adequate and appropriate public transport services or pedestrian means. Factors could include:

- Suitable opening hours
- Hybrid working (use of online support)
- Premises suited to the needs of the client group
- Safe and accessible location
- Privacy, if relevant
- Good public transport links
- Specific transport provided
- Colocation of services
- Delivery other than in person
- Postcodes of areas of delivery if using outreach

Points:

0: No or poor consideration of these issues

1: Limited accessibility/little consideration of location/environment

2: Good consideration of location/environment

3: Excellent accessibility and strong rationale for location/environment

PROJECT SCORING - TARGETS

This relates to the fit with objectives of the specification, and to the targets and impacts offered by the proposed service for the delivery period. The score will reflect the degree to which the project outputs and results are relevant, realistic, achievable and sustainable. Your answer should give the rationale for your targets and or progressions, showing how these are relevant to the target group(s). Training outputs should be commensurate with the stage of the strategic skills pipeline the project is being delivered. The number of individuals achieving each outcome/output should be given in the tables and not all outputs/outcomes are required, only those you see as relevant to the service you are delivering. You will find the definitions of outcomes in the CCP Grant Management Guide 2024 – it is essential that you adhere to these.

Points:

0: Relevant outputs/outcomes/impacts not clearly identified

1: Minimal identification of relevant outputs, outcomes and/or impacts

2: Some clear, measurable and realistic targets for outputs, outcomes and/or impacts

3: Clear, detailed, measurable and realistic, but challenging targets for outputs, outcomes and/or impacts