[**Return to ICT**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1059141/FINAL-GEO-ReturntoICT-EvaluationReport__1_.pdf)

* 1,362 expressions of interest and 517 full applications received
* 85 applicants accepted a place in program and began the training. Of these applicants:
  + - * 44% were women 51% reported having ongoing caring responsibilities
      * 22% reported former caring responsibilities 75% were out of labour market for over a year

**Key Learnings and Recommendations:**

**What is the UK Returners Grant Fund?**

Following the UK’s 2017 Spring Budget, **the UK Government set up programmes across the public and private sector to support people to return to work after a break for caring responsibilities.**

These programs centre on **three (3) key sectors:**

* **Return to ICT –** targeting public sector ICT workforce
* **Return to Social Work -** recruiting previously registered social workers
* **Return to Planning –** focusing on the public sector planning workforce

Include coaching elements

Coaching was popular and highly rated

LESSONS LEARNED –   
UK RETURNERS GRANT FUND

High levels of interest in the program were generated using a range of channels

Use a range of channels when promoting programme, and use data analytics to track interest

Recruitment websites and job boards were effective way to direct people to the application

Advertise the programmes on national recruitment websites and job boards

Programme was able to expand eligibility   
criteria and adapt to COVID-19 challenges

Consider how programmes can be more inclusive   
by responding quickly and flexibly to changing job   
markets

Onboarding was challenging during periods   
of competing priorities, such as the festive   
period in December

Avoid scheduling onboarding periods over festive periods

Some participants had greater expectations than what the programme could help them with

Scope candidates with what they want from the program (e.g. with surveys) and see if this can be implemented

A high proportion of participants who reported trying to return to work had experienced barriers when attempting to do so

Gather data on these barriers so that the programme can proactively offer support

The programme was able to provide an introductory pathway for those looking to   
upskill in a new profession

Run a pathway that offers introductory training to support those who may not have the required skills   
or experience

Participants were able to access additional   
support that was flexible

Offer participants support, such as flexible or   
staggered start dates for training, to balance the programme with other responsibilities

[**Return to Planning**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1059142/FINAL-GEO-ReturntoPlanning-EvaluationReport__1_.pdf)

* 1,615 expressions of interest and 366 full applications received
* 13 applicants accepted a place in program and began the training. Of these applicants:
  + 53% were women 30% reported having ongoing caring responsibilities
  + 15% reported former caring responsibilities 53% were out of labour market for over a year

**Key Learnings and Recommendations:**

Include coaching elements

Offer participants support, such as flexible or   
staggered start dates for training, to balance the programme with other responsibilities

Run a pathway that offers introductory training to support those who may not have the required skills   
or experience

Coaching was popular and highly rated

Participants were able to access additional   
support that was flexible to their needs

Some candidates withdrew due to a change  
in circumstances

The programme was able to provide an introductory pathway for those looking to upskill  
in a new profession

Monitor the reasons for potential withdrawals and support participants with their concerns

Scope candidates with what they want from the program (e.g. with surveys) and see if this can be implemented

Some participants had a range of expectations than what the programme could help them with

Ensure programme eligibility criteria are clear when advertising a return to work programme to reduce to volume of ineligible applications

Despite high levels of interest and applications submitted, the programme was only able to   
identify a small portion of candidates

Programme was able to expand eligibility   
criteria and adapt to COVID-19 challenges

Recruitment websites and job boards were effective way to direct people to the application

High levels of interest in the program were generated using a range of channels

Consider how programmes can be more inclusive   
by responding quickly and flexibly to changing job   
markets

Advertise the programmes on national recruitment websites and job boards

Use a range of channels when promoting programme, and use data analytics to track interest

LESSONS LEARNED –   
UK RETURNERS GRANT FUND

[**Return to Social Work**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1059143/FINAL-GEO-ReturntoSocialWork-EvaluationReport__1_.pdf)

* 1,668 expressions of interest and 773 full applications received
* 199 applicants accepted a place in program and began the training. Of these applicants:
  + - * 75% were women 49% reported having ongoing caring responsibilities
      * 38% reported former caring responsibilities

**Key Learnings and Recommendations:**

Develop a programme that offers participants additional forms of support, such as the provision of out-of-hours support

Access to additional sources of support, such as through peer support networks were considered valuable

Be clear on the IT skills required for the programme from the outset and ensure all participants have the opportunity to receive support to develop digital skills

Some participants faced technological difficulties with virtual training that may have been avoided   
or resolved in a face-to-face training setting

Review the size of training groups to ensure that all participants can fully engage and share insights

Larger group training sizes presented challenges   
for some participants to interact and engage   
in sessions

Consider how participants’ personal commitments may affect training attendance, and explore flexible options such as repeated or recorded sessions

Some participants needed sufficient notice to attend some training sessions to balance training and personal commitments

Develop a programme that includes coaching, and consider whether alumni can attend training sessions

Coaching was popular and highly rated by participants

Consider how the length of time between applying for and starting a programme may affect attrition

Some applicants declined or withdrew from the programme due to a chance in circumstances

Use targeted messaging when promoting the programme to reach eligible participants

Programme was successful in reaching and recruiting returning social workers with ongoing caring responsibilities and those with former

Consider effective ways to capture relevant case studies, and use these when promoting the programme

Video content from those with experience   
of returning was a popular way of   
engaging audiences

Consider multiple marketing channels, including paid adverting, to raise awareness of the programme

Paid advertising was an effective way of   
directing potential applicants to the website

LESSONS LEARNED –   
UK RETURNERS GRANT FUND