



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills



Leading learning and skills

LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL

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Tender – South East/Adults

Skills for Jobs

Project Specifications

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Introduction to tender

1.1.1 South East Economy

The South East region makes a major contribution to the UK economy, accounting for 15.6% of total UK Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2005¹ (provisional figures). GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector in the UK.

On a European basis (2004 figures) the South East ranks 16th of the 77 EU's 15 region.²

The South East also compares favourably with other English regions on indicators such as income, with household disposable income 9% above the national average. The South East, East of England and London are the only regions with incomes above the national average³.

In broad terms the South East economy can be categorised as being advanced, high cost, high income, broadly based and service oriented.

The Regional Economic Strategy for the South East recognises that skill levels in the region are overall relatively high in comparison to most other regions of the UK and Europe. The economic composition of the South East, with its high incidence of knowledge intensive industries, has created a large and growing demand for skills across the region. Evidence from employer surveys suggests that significant skills gaps and shortages persist. Regionally, 22% of employers also reported skills gaps within their existing employees, a proportion similar to that found across England as a whole.

1.1.2 Employment and Unemployment

Employment rates for working age people in the region are high – 83.1% for men and 73.3% for women.⁴ The South East economy provides around four million jobs, as well as making a significant contribution to the labour market in London. These jobs are predominantly in the service sector as shown in the chart.

In 2006, unemployment at 4.5% is below the national average (5.5%)⁴. The Job Seekers Allowance claimant count rate (residence based) stood at 1.4% in December 2004 compared to a UK figure of 2.2%⁵. According to the Claimant Count of unemployment the region is experiencing near 'full employment'. However the alternative International Labour Organisation Measure records a higher unemployment rate of 4.3% and indicates that 177,000 residents would be available to work if supported in addressing barriers to work.

The workforce is generally well educated, with nearly 90% of the working age population holding some form of qualification. Some 30% of the economically active hold a qualification at NVQ level 4 and about 50% hold an NVQ level 3 or higher.⁴

Such variations are reflected in claimant count (residence based) levels, which vary within

¹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/gva1206.pdf>

² <http://www.seeda.co.uk/res/docs/RES2006-16-EvidenceBase.pdf>

³ ONS

⁴ Annual Population Survey Jan to Dec 2006

⁵ ONS claimant count with rates and proportions July 2007

the region from 0.6% in Mole Valley and West Oxfordshire, to 3.4% in Hastings. The large population of the region means that low rates can also translate into large numbers.

Overall, the claimant count in the region totals some 70,300: 9.9% of the UK total claimant count. Similar variations can be traced in terms of GVA/head, which in 2001 ranged from £24,000 in Berkshire to £10,000 in East Sussex and £9,100 in Isle of Wight

Worklessness disproportionately affects groups such as the lowest qualified, people with disabilities, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, lone parents, offenders/ex-offenders and older workers. Re-engaging individuals from these groups will help to relieve the labour market constraints experienced across much of the region

1.1.3 Deprivation

This general picture disguises considerable variation within the region. Indices of Deprivation 2004 show that areas of Kent and the South Coast fare particularly poorly, with Hastings, Brighton & Hove, Southampton and Medway all featuring amongst the more deprived districts in England on a range of measures.

1.1.4 Generic Features

We are seeking applications from providers and/or employers, ideally in a collaborative partnership, which can engage individuals and offer them tailored programmes of support to prepare them for employment, find them employment and help them to stay in employment. There are three specifications:

1. Take those furthest from the labour market and encourage them to participate in learning opportunities as a stepping stone to returning to further learning and ultimately to work. There are also elements of research in this specification to assess the impact of certain approaches to learning on employability and employment.
2. To encourage and support employers to recruit three specific target groups that traditionally have difficulty in finding sustainable employment.
3. For those closer to the labour market, there is a sector routeway specification, which builds on the Skills for jobs pilot work, where providers will work closely with employers to provide specific short training courses to equip individuals with the skills required by employers. Providers will work with employers to offer guaranteed interviews and job placements, while supporting the individuals throughout their journey to sustainable employment

1.1.5 Capability to deliver

We expect applicants to be able to demonstrate:

- A track record of delivering the type of activity specified
- Local knowledge of the client group and barriers they face, as well as the local labour market(s)
- Capacity to deliver in local areas
- Staff have the necessary skills to make the delivery successful. (Where resources are not in place applicants must demonstrate how and when they will be secured)
- Effective collaborative working especially with the voluntary/community sector

- Experience of working on an outreach basis with a history of delivering through a multi agency approach
- Strong employer links
- Knowledge of existing initiatives and programmes and networks to support workless people in the South East
- Experience of working with referral agencies, for example, Jobcentre Plus

1.1.6 Geographic areas

Geographic areas referred to within specifications relate to the LSC areas of the South East which are:

- Thames Valley (Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire, Wokingham, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Milton Keynes)
- Hampshire, (Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton) and the Isle of Wight
- Surrey and Sussex (East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton and Hove)
- Kent and Medway

1.1.7 Learner Data

Providers will be required to collect and submit learner data using the Individual Learner Record (ILR). Summary data from the ILR will be collated to provide participation and completion reports to the European Social Fund Division.

1.1.8 Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is focused on providing a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come. This is achieved through considering and balancing the long-term effects of social, economic and environmental issues and impacts. (Securing the Future – UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 2005)

The European Commission wishes there to be a focus on the environmental aspects of sustainability for 2007-13. The LSC will develop strategies to spread good practice from previous ESF programmes and will examine appropriate methods to disseminate environmental practice with providers.

Providers will be required to integrate sustainable development issues as far as possible across all aspects of programme design and delivery and seek to minimise travel and maximises access to provision through innovative delivery methods and the use of ICT.

1.1.9 Evaluation

This provision is subject to inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OfSTED). Providers will be required to complete for LSC monitoring purposes:

- A quarterly equality and diversity report related to the recruitment, participation, completion, achievement and progression of participants of the priority groups
- A bi-annual qualitative report of learner/employer satisfaction

Learning as a stepping stone to employment

Reference: SE/A/S01

Aim

The aim of this ESF funded provision is to support the low skilled, and those who have been out of education and learning for a considerable time, to re-enter education and learning as a stepping stone to employment. The key objectives are:

- To support unemployed parents and returners to re-engage in learning and find employment, with a particular focus on children’s workforce
- To research the impact locally of family learning on adults
- To promote volunteering as a step towards employment.
- To encourage people to become sports coaches in their local community
- To pilot the impact of learning on improved health and wellbeing among disadvantaged groups

The LSC is seeking tenders that will add value to its current mainstream programmes, for example, Family Learning and Family Literacy language and Numeracy provision by introducing jobless parents in vulnerable families to occupational areas of interest in particular child related work.

Research has shown that whole family approaches can benefit children’s learning and achievement but further study is needed to establish its effect on adult family members. This tender also includes a research element to ascertain the impact of family learning on adults.

The provision must offer flexible learning options relevant to the particular needs of the participant and demonstrate innovative approaches to encourage workless parents and adults to re-engage with learning. Where appropriate, provision should also offer sustainable employment opportunities, provide information and advice about these opportunities and support learners with post-employment coaching and mentoring.

Service requirement

The LSC expects to procure the following services. Applicants are expected to tender for all of the core element and one or more of elements 1, 2, 3 or 4.

Core elements

- Brokering IAG interventions at each stage of the learning journey:
- Developing initial engagement activities – tasters, family learning sessions, leisure learning opportunities followed by further learning to improve confidence and self esteem, in conjunction with existing Family Learning provision.
- Ensure Skills for Life is included as appropriate in the programme working primarily in partnership with existing LSC funded programmes such as Family Literacy Language and Numeracy and Employability Skills programmes
- Offering short courses as a progression route to formal qualifications
- Provision of employability and job-ready skills
- Brokerage work to link with Children’s Centres, Extended Schools, Primary Care Trusts, PCTs, local surgeries, clinics and hospitals, MIND and MENCAP groups, other voluntary community organisations
- Where appropriate, commissioning Level 1 and 2 NVQ provision in the community with progression routes to level 2 and 3 in mainstream provision with an emphasis on unitised qualifications
- Providing support for learners as necessary, particularly crèche provision

- Promotion of children's workforce as an employment opportunity
- Brokering links with employers/self employed to provide work experience, particularly in child related activities, including sports coaching
- Brokering opportunities to work as a volunteer
- Organisation of post employment support through mentoring or coaching

Optional element 1

- Promotion of volunteering as a route to employment and offering the LOCOG approved Pre-Volunteer Programme 'Personal Best' which will be available for delivery through the LSC from April 2008
- Where possible establish a guaranteed job interview or placement programme for volunteering

Optional element 2

- Promotion of sports coaching as an employment opportunity and offering an introduction to sports coaching and qualifications as appropriate

Optional element 3

Research into impact of family learning interventions and subsequent employment on-

- The individual
- The family
- The community
- The employer

Optional element 4

- A pilot programme to track the impact of learning on health and well-being with a view to the individual's return to employment

Activity should be linked to the following national initiatives as appropriate:

Family Learning network

http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/familylearningnetwork/news/springboard_family_learning_curriculum_pack.asp

Extended schools

<http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/Family/Adding-Value.pdf>

Big lottery funded projects

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/qa_family_learning?regioncode=-uk&&dynamic=prog&id=89072#04

Resources available from

<http://www.familylearning.org.uk/>

- the research project being funded under the Building Blocks element of the Chances 4 Change Big Lottery Wellbeing bid, recently awarded to SE Coast NHS

<http://www.southeastcoast.nhs.uk/news/BigLotteryFundgranttoaddresshealthinequalities.asp>

- South East Mental Health and Employability Statement of Priorities and Action Plan

- ESF Laying the Foundations project
<http://www.niace.org.uk/Regions/SouthEast/Default.htm>, NIACE Regional Development Officer

Target groups & priority

Participants must be low skilled workless adults aged 19 years and

Either

- those with parenting responsibilities

Or

- Returners to the workplace

Or

- Individuals at risk of mental health problems

Or

- On incapacity benefit and being prescribed learning by their GP as part of the treatment to a medical condition which is preventing them from working and fulfilling their potential in life.

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC wishes provision in each of the areas of:

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Kent and Medway

Surrey

Sussex

Thames Valley

Outputs

2,500 participants to be recruited and engaged.

Specific targets are:

550 (22%) participants with a disability or health condition

300 (12%) participants who are lone parents

450 (18%) participants who are aged 50 and over

275 (11%) participants from an ethnic minority

1275 (51%) participants who are female

Results

550 (22%) of participants will be in work on leaving ESF activity

650 (26%) will be in work 6 months after leaving ESF activity

1125 (45%) will be engaged in job search activity or further learning

Other outcomes

- A quarterly equality and diversity report related to the recruitment, participation, completion, achievement and progression of the priority beneficiary.
- Bi-annual qualitative evaluation report of beneficiary/employer satisfaction

Research reports – where appropriate

- Action based research into impact of interventions and subsequent employment on-
 - The individual
 - The family
 - The community
 - The employer

- Report on the findings of a pilot to assess the impact of learning on well-being and health and the its subsequent effect on the ability of individuals to move towards employment

Funding available

Overall budget: £3,800,000

It is anticipated that the average unit cost per learner will be £1500.

Areas	Allocations
Hampshire & the Isle of Wight	£836,000
Sussex	£760,000
Surrey	£418,000
Kent & Medway	£798,000
Thames Valley	£988,000

Start and end dates

Earliest start date: 1st May 2008

End date: 31st December 2010

Contracting details

The LSC wishes to procure a number of contracts to cover the South East region to provide coverage of each of the elements listed. Providers should clearly state which elements of the service they wish to tender for, which target groups they are aiming for and in which geographic areas.

Encouraging employers to recruit the hardest to help	Reference: SE/A/S02
<p>Aim</p> <p>The purpose of this ESF funded provision is to encourage employers to increase recruitment opportunities for offenders, older workers and people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including the development of sheltered employment opportunities and other options such as volunteering, to promote sustainable employment and social inclusion. The provision should complement existing training activity by targeting employers and helping to overcome employer reluctance to employ people from these target groups.</p> <p>The provision should focus on brokerage between employers and individuals and support for individuals both in additional preparation for work and whilst in work. It could include job guarantee programmes. It should also feature opportunities for continued support in work and progression to continuation of learning at work.</p> <p>The process should be learner centered in its approach throughout and seek to build on the views of participants through evaluation and consultation. Wherever possible the projects should explore how they can work with other agencies and partners.</p> <p>For many of the target groups e.g. people with learning difficulties, the programme should focus on practical support (e.g. brokerage & job coaching) to help them to build on the skills they have already acquired on previous learning programmes.</p> <p>The LSC is seeking tenders that will add value to its current mainstream provision offered by colleges and work-based learning providers and the voluntary/community provider base, and tenders that seek to work in collaboration with partners. In addition to collaborative working at an operational level, projects should be set within the context of local and regional strategic frameworks and developments, including Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and developments specific to offenders, older workers and people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These strategic links will be fundamental to building the sustainability of the projects.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p>The LSC expects to procure a brokerage programme/s based upon current research findings and models of brokerage, both nationally and in the SE, to ensure that individuals in the target groups are appropriately matched to opportunities which will enhance their employability skills and offer them support in gaining and maintaining employment. The service must refer to, and not duplicate, existing provision and support. The programme could include</p> <p>For the individual:</p> <p>Specialist information and advice and significant guidance to each individual, using a person centred approach and building on existing person centred plans, to develop an informed understanding of individual needs and exploring their aspirations in terms of employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial assessment of employability skills, ▪ Identify the Skills for Life and ICT needs of participants and work with existing providers to address needs. ▪ Development of individual learning and career plans. ▪ Comprehensive supporting clear information on full range of progression routes ▪ Support to resolve any personal issues and barriers to employment ▪ Support from mentors/brokers/job coaches/buddying arrangements, as appropriate, 	

for learners to achieve their employment goals

- Support for learners by collaborative approaches to the development of sheltered employment opportunities where appropriate
- Brokerage across partnerships and with employers.

In addition, for offenders only:

- For offenders in custody, the tenderer needs to ensure that a strong relationship with a core intermediary (or mentor) starts whilst the offender is in custody, with an objective of securing employment within two weeks of release from custody, and that the offender continues to receive ongoing and sustained support once they leave custody and go into employment. This support does not have to be provided by the same intermediary, but the pathway and 'through the gate' support should be as smooth and comprehensive for the participant as possible. Participants should have access to post-recruitment support. Support should also include:
 - Identification of individuals who may benefit from the support
 - Pre-programme guidance on what support is available pre- and post-release and what is expected of the offender
 - Coaching on expected work behaviours
 - Training on how to disclose their offences
 - Financial support for work equipment, clothing, travel costs etc in the first month of release or employment for those participants for whom this is a barrier to employment

Post-recruitment support for all learners

Continuing support in employment and/or referral to other programmes that will enable the individual to gain and sustain employment as appropriate

For the employer

Package of support to include:

- Awareness raising and promotion of the benefits of recruiting these target groups
- Brokerage to match employer vacancies to suitable candidates from within the target groups
- coaching and mentoring training for an individual's manager and/or an appropriate colleague
- access to specific advice on legal and/or HR issues relevant to employing the target group
- training in understanding risk assessment and how to risk assess their own work environment
- For offenders only, employers' rights and responsibilities under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Acts regarding basic and enhanced disclosure.

Target groups & priority

On the day before they start the ESF programme, participants must be

- unemployed or inactive
- and either
- an offender or an ex-offender(aged 19 years and over)
- or
- have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or be recovering from mental illness, accidents and critical illness such as stroke and heart attack (aged 19 years or over)
- or
- over 50 years

An offender is defined as a person who is:

- *serving a custodial sentence*
- *held in custody on remand*
- *completing a post –custodial element of a sentence on Licence in the community, whether or not under Probation supervision*
- *serving a sentence in the community, whether or not the skills and employment activity is a specified activity requirement.*

An ex-offender is someone who has completed their sentence, even if the nature of the original offence means there is a permanent liability to recall.

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC wishes provision in each of the areas of:

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Kent and Medway

Surrey

Sussex

Thames Valley

Outputs

1500 participants to be recruited and engaged.

Specific participation targets are at least:

450 (30%) adults aged 50 and over

450 (30%) offenders or ex-offenders

450 (30%) adults with LLDD

Results

22% of participants will be in work on leaving ESF activity

26% will be in work 6 months after leaving ESF activity

45% will be engaged in job search activity or further learning

Other outcomes

- Number of individuals who are still in employment 4 weeks after start of employment
- Number of individuals achieving their learning aims in the programme
- A quarterly equality and diversity report related to the recruitment, participation, completion, achievement and progression of the priority beneficiary.
- Bi-annual qualitative evaluation report of beneficiary/employer satisfaction
- Number of relevant agencies engaged in the programme
- Success of multi-agency partnership(s) engaged in meeting the project's objectives
- Number of employers engaged in the programme.

Funding available

Overall budget: £3,000,000.

It is anticipated that the average unit cost per learner will be £2000.

Areas	Allocations
Hampshire & the Isle of Wight	£660,000
Sussex	£600,000
Surrey	£330,000
Kent & Medway	£630,000
Thames Valley	£780,000

Start and end dates

Earliest start date: 1st May 2008

End date: 31st December 2010

Contracting details

The LSC wishes to procure a number of contracts to cover the South East region. This may result in separate contracts for each target group across the South East. It may also result in geographically based contracts where the provider will deliver to one or more of the three target groups in a local area. Providers should clearly state which target groups they wish to tender for and in which geographic area/s.

Sector Routeways to Employment

Reference: SE/A/S03

Aim

To develop sector specific routeways for workless adults to progress into employment. Tenders are requested to develop and implement an integrated recruitment and training package for employers.

The provision must offer

1. Partnered initial employer engagement;
2. Learner engagement via community and outreach
3. Establishment of a recruitment sector gateway;
4. Delivery of a short employment related course;
5. Work trials;
6. A job interview guarantee as a minimum for those completing the whole routeway.
7. Post employment support and training for those hired.

Service requirement

These are the types of activities we would expect to see:

- Information, advice and guidance, including skills diagnostic and assessment services
- Signposting/referral to specialist provision
- Job search skills
- Short employment related course linked to Sector Skills Council recommendations
- Customised ESOL relevant to specific sector and occupational areas
- Work trials or Work placements
- Guaranteed interviews or employment opportunities
- Post recruitment bespoke training to meet needs of employer e.g. embedded 'soft' employment skills and support
- Post employment mentoring and coaching
- Strategies to promote progression into employment where there is further support through Train to Gain

These are examples of activities, but applicants may propose additional innovative activity which relates to the aims of this specification which will achieve the outputs and results specified.

Short employment related course

This part of the model will need to take account of employer preference. It will generally comprise a minimum offer of 2 week tailored training programme followed by further training, work trials and/or work experience. Employers can either run their own in-house courses using SSC materials if appropriate; or choose external provision from local LSC funded short term training; or design tailored provision.

Work Trials

Providers are expected to arrange work experience/trial as part of the pre-employment training period.

Post employment support and training

Individuals should be supported for up to six months once in employment and progression to further training to NVQ2 level under Train to Gain and should be encouraged. Individuals may also access existing Apprenticeship programmes.

Sectors

Nine Sector Skills Councils have been involved in the development of short sector route way training models; these are Asset Skills, Construction Skills, Go Skills, People 1st, Skillfast UK, and SkillsActive, Skills for Health, Skillsmart Retail, and Skills for Security. It is anticipated that providers will use these models and others as they emerge.

Note: The sector routeway programme will be open to any sector where there is evidence of vacancies and employer demand for skilled staff. It is anticipated that key sectors will include: security, construction, retail, catering and hospitality, tourism and leisure, health and social care; financial services, business administration. But other sectors can be included where there is evidence of employer demand.

Target groups & priority

In theory all workless adults will be eligible to participate.

LSC is particularly keen to see tenders that contain innovative and best practice models of multi-agency intervention for key participant groups including:

- ex-offenders
- those with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities
- those from ethnic minority communities
- those with registered disabilities
- carers
- single parents
- those on incapacity benefits
- those aged 50 and over

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC wishes provision in each of the areas of:

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Kent and Medway

Surrey

Sussex

Thames Valley

Outputs

2160 participants to be recruited and engaged.

Within this target group, participation of the following groups should be prioritised:

1296 (60%) unemployed

864 (40%) economically inactive

475 (22%) with disability or health condition

259 (12%) lone parents
 389 (18%) aged 50 and over
 237 (11%) from an ethnic minority
 1102 (51%) women

Results

33% of participants will be in work on leaving ESF activity
 40% will be in work 6 months after leaving ESF activity
 27% will be engaged in job search activity or further learning

Other outcomes

- Number of employers engaged in the programme
- Record of the occupations and sectors where participants have found employment after leaving the programme
- Number of individuals who are still in employment 6 months after the start of employment
- A quarterly equality and diversity report related to the recruitment, participation, completion, achievement and progression of the priority beneficiary.
- Bi-annual qualitative evaluation report of beneficiary/employer satisfaction

Funding available

Overall budget £3,200,000. The average unit price is £1500 per learner

Areas	Allocations
Hampshire & the Isle of Wight	£704,000
Sussex	£640,000
Surrey & Sussex	£352,000
Kent & Medway	£672,000
Thames Valley	£832,000

Start and end dates

Earliest start date: 1st May 2008
 End date: 31st December 2010

Contracting details

The LSC expects to issue more than one contract to cover the geographic areas stated above and a variety of sectors listed. Providers should clearly state which geographic areas and which sectors they wish to tender for.