

<b>EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – ENGLAND &amp; GIBRALTAR 2007-2013 OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME</b>	
<b>Co-financing Plan 2011-2013</b>	
<b>Region</b>	South East
<b>Objective</b>	Regional Competitiveness & Employment

**Annex 1  
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**Declaration**

I confirm that this Co-Financing Organisation intends to deliver the activities, outcomes and results set out in the plan and has the required match funding as set out in Annex 2.

Signature	
Name	
Official Position	
Date	

**European Social Fund**

**Skills Funding Agency**

**Co-financing Plan for the South East  
For the period 2011 to 2013**

**Draft V1.12: July 2010**



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## 1. Contribution to Delivery of Regional ESF Framework

### 1.1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. On 1st April 2010, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was dissolved and two new agencies were created: the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skills Funding Agency. Responsibility for 16-19 education and training was transferred to the local authorities with support from the YPLA, which holds the overall budget and approves all Local Authority commissioning plans.
- 1.1.2. As part of its remit, the Skills Funding Agency has replaced the Learning and Skills Council as an accountable body for ESF resources. These funds will support both the 14-19 and 19+ age groups and deliver employment and skills outcomes that support the regional and national ESF Programme. The Skills Funding Agency will act as the accountable body on behalf of the YPLA.
- 1.1.3. In line with the Regional ESF Framework, the YPLA national and regional commissioning strategies and BIS policies and investment plans, the Skills Funding Agency's South East Co-Financing Plan for 2011-2013 has been developed by the Skills Funding Agency (the Agency). The Agency has worked with the YPLA and Local Authorities, through the Regional Planning Group, in line with the Shared Service Agreement.
- 1.1.4. The Plan covers ESF co-financed provision identified in the South East ESF Framework which was approved by the Regional Committee in January 2010. The Plan covers allocations for 2011, 2012 and 2013 and will support the employment and skills needs of the target groups living or working in the South East region. The region includes the 19 top tier local authorities:

• Bracknell Forest	• Portsmouth
• Brighton & Hove	• Reading
• Buckinghamshire	• Slough
• East Sussex	• Southampton
• Hampshire	• Surrey
• Isle of Wight	• West Berkshire
• Kent	• West Sussex
• Medway	• Windsor and Maidenhead
• Milton Keynes	• Wokingham
• Oxfordshire	

- 1.1.5. The Plan is informed by Skills Funding Agency (formerly LSC) national priorities published in 'Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives, Annual Statement of Priorities for 2008/09 to 2010/11' and the National Skills Strategy (Skills for Growth) as well as the BIS Skills Investment Strategy (2009). The economic, social and environmental challenges of the South East Region articulated in the Regional Economic Strategy 'A Framework for Sustainable Prosperity 2006-2016' also inform this plan, as well as the South East England Development Agency's (SEEDA) revised Corporate Plan (2009 refresh) and SEEDA's Regional Priorities Statement for Skills (2010/11).
- 1.1.6. The 14-19 element of the Skills Funding Agency Co-Financing Plan reflects regional, sub-regional and local priorities to meet the needs of individuals and contribute to the achievement of Local Area Agreement or Multi Area

Agreement targets for the reduction of worklessness and those young people Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). The funds will be aligned to activities set out in the 16-19 Statement of Priorities and Investment Strategy 2010/2011 and the Young People's Learning Agency South East Regional Commissioning Statement 2010/2011.

- 1.1.7. The Skills Funding Agency Plan has been strategically developed in response to the South East ESF Framework to ensure alignment and integration with regional and local employment and skills priorities and targets consistent with the ESF Operational Programme. ESF will be used to add value to, enhance and fill gaps in mainstream skills and employment services by providing enhanced packages of support and extending eligibility. The Plan reflects the guiding principles and recommendations of the regional Framework and addresses key employment and skills issues identified in the Framework. The Plan targets ESF resources to achieve maximum impact by combining a focus on particular groups, industrial and occupational sectors and specific geographic locations.
- 1.1.8. Activities proposed within the Plan have been developed in consultation with other Co Funding Organisations (CFOs) i.e. Jobcentre Plus and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and aims to complement those set out in their plans, and in conjunction with SEEDA.
- 1.1.9. It is intended that some of the activities described in this plan will form part of the emerging arrangements for a 'single skills purse' as described in the White Paper 'Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment' (2009).

## **1.2. Areas for Delivery**

- 1.2.1 The activities supported in the plan reflect the guiding principles of the region's Framework in order to increase access to and participation in learning and skills levels of those in the workplace. Key principles which ESF supports include:
  - Specific and targeted interventions;
  - Flexible and tailored provision relevant to the needs of the priority groups;
  - Support towards sustainable outcomes and the Skills Escalator through progression into mainstream programmes and employment progression;
  - Additionality by supporting access to mainstream provision;
  - Learning lessons from the previous ESF programme and wider activity; and
  - Support towards leaving a legacy and ensuring the sustainability of the project or individual elements of a project when ESF funding ceases.
- 1.2.2 The plan will contribute to Priority 1 and Priority 2 of the Operational Programme. The specific activities covered by these priorities are summarised below. Further information on indicative activities is provided in Annex E.

## **1.3. ESF Priority 1: Extending employment opportunities**

- 1.3.1 The South East performs strongly according to a number of labour market indicators. Despite this there are significant variations in performance within the region; unemployment has risen sharply; and some areas face deprivation and disadvantage. These geographical variations in performance have been

heightened to some extent by the 2008-9 recession, which has led to an increase in unemployment of over 130% in the past year.

- 1.3.2 Provision for Priority 1 will focus on individuals (both young people and adults) at a disadvantage in accessing the labour market, and particularly those with multiple disadvantages, whether or not they are receiving benefits. Following the recession, there is also a need to support those groups which are furthest from the labour market and those facing barriers to regaining employment.
- 1.3.3 Support will focus on supporting and adding value to existing programmes that deliver short sharp skill interventions. ESF will be used where mainstream budgets cannot meet demand in areas such as initial engagement activities, work readiness programmes and support for the transition into employment and job retention. There will be a focus on recruitment in areas and communities with multiple disadvantages, such as targeting individuals who are under-represented in the labour market being a priority.
- 1.3.4 Across each of the activities which will be supported under Priority 1, the following support will be encouraged:
- Engagement – outreach and mentoring support to help people engage with other ESF and mainstream provision
  - Employability and self employment skills – removing barriers to work; soft skills; confidence building;
  - Literacy, numeracy, ICT and English for Speakers of Other Languages;
  - CV writing, job search support and interview preparation;
  - Sector specific pre-employment training – giving a grounding in the skills needed to enter a specific sector; and
  - Related training which helps people get skills to secure an Apprenticeship or other employment.
- 1.3.5 There will also be support for learner support programmes, which remove financial barriers and encourage people to take part in activities designed to help them to re-engage.

### **Adult provision**

- 1.3.6 Rates of economic activity declined across the South East as a result of the recession, whilst unemployment in the region increased by 1.5 percentage points between 2008 and 2009. Although the rate of unemployment remains comparatively low in relation to other UK regions, the size of the South East region in terms of population means that there is a significant group of people (265,000) in need of employment. There are significant intra regional variations in the claimant count rate across the South East, with the highest rates in coastal locations such as Hastings and Thanet and in urban areas such as Milton Keynes and Reading.
- 1.3.7 Economic inactivity affects certain groups of adults more than others. These include:
- Ethnic minorities typically suffer higher than average economic inactivity and unemployment rates – in the South East around 7% of the 16+ ethnic minority population is unemployed, compared to only 4.5% of the white ethnic group. Levels of BME unemployment are particularly high in Brighton

and Hove, Medway, Portsmouth, Slough, Southampton, Wokingham and Wycombe.

- Older people – there are currently 285,000 people in the South East aged between 50 and state pension age who are classified as workless.
- People with disabilities continue to face barriers to securing employment. In the South East intra-regional variations in economic activity rates amongst people with disabilities range 45% in South Bucks to 93% in Hart.
- Offenders in the community.

1.3.8 The recession has impacted the profile of unemployed people in the South East. Increasing rates of redundancy across all business sectors means that over the past year, the proportion of unemployed who are highly skilled professional workers has risen. Male unemployment rates in the South East have risen faster than those of females during the recession. There has also been an important impact in terms of increasing the levels of 'hidden unemployment' in the South East – people who lose jobs and move straight into economic inactivity rather than registering as unemployed. Once registered as economically inactive, the group moves away from the labour market and therefore away from mainstream employment and skills support.

The main areas to be supported through ESF will be:

#### **Provision to upskill the unemployed**

- 1.3.9 ESF will be used to provide a range of pre-employment activities to support unemployed individuals, including those claiming out of work benefits, into work. New ESF funded activities will focus on supporting and adding value to existing programmes that deliver short sharp skills interventions, work focused training programmes for those who require a more substantial upskilling and the delivery of basic and employability skills in the following ways. ESF Priority 1 funds should be used to support such activity where mainstream budgets cannot meet demand and must help individuals move into or towards realistic labour market opportunities. ESF activities may also provide the skills necessary for participants to explore starting their own business, where this is an appropriate outcome for them.
- First steps in learning for adults with basic skills at pre-Entry and Entry level 1 to include literacy/ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), numeracy, confidence building and other soft skills and address wider barriers to learning. These should be delivered as pre-mainstream provision and lead to helping benefit claimants access other skills provision. This is ESF-specific due to the competing pressures on Adult Learner Responsive provision and is based on the need to ensure that there is sufficient low-level Skills for Life provision available in all parts of the region.
  - ESOL provision below Level 1 where local intelligence suggests that mainstream provision will be insufficient to meet local demand
  - Local labour market sector specific non accredited provision for those leaving basic and employability skills provision or vocational provision to further progress skills and job goals pre-employment.
  - Additional support through information advice and guidance; aligning with the

Next Steps service. Support should be agreed with career advisers.

- Enhancements to pre-employment support activities, delivering skills development activities that link to workplace training such as Skills for life, NVQs and Apprenticeships.
- Provision that will complement the Work programme activities that benefit claimants will be required to undertake as part of the claims regime.

### **Programmes for the economically inactive**

- 1.3.10 Unemployed individuals not claiming out-of-work benefits often face multiple barriers to employment and ESF funding can be used to provide the skills support such individuals need alongside other support. ESF can be used to provide a range of pre-employment activities similar to those listed above for the unemployed but without the labour market sector-specific provision. However, ESF can be used to provide first steps into work for those not claiming out-of-work benefits and not ready for employment. This can include actively seeking them out and engaging them on a learning journey, preferably accredited, or starting a businesses, where this is an appropriate outcome.

### **Next Step**

- 1.3.11 Next Step – the integrated adult careers service - commences on 1 August 2010. The service is being provided through three channels: online; telephone; and face to face. The service offer will provide labour market focused careers and skills information and advice to adults aged 19 or over (or 18 and over for Jobcentre Plus clients now, or for those in custody from 1 August 2012).
- 1.3.12 ESF funding should focus support on the work that the service carries out with the following national priority groups:
- low skilled adults (i.e. without a full Level 2 qualification, especially women) who are locked in low paid, low skilled jobs;
  - young adults aged 19-24 without a Level 3 qualification;
  - adults facing redundancy, newly redundant or at a distance from the labour market;
  - Jobcentre Plus clients claiming out of work benefits;
  - people from ethnic minority communities;
  - older people;
  - carers as defined by the Department of Health Guidelines;
  - offenders in custody and in the community under the supervision of probation services and ex-offenders; and
  - people with learning difficulties or disabilities (including those with mental health conditions)

1.3.13 ESF should provide additionality but cannot be used to compete with or displace mainstream funds. The following type of provision will be considered with the above groups:

- identification of personal goals and targets;
- a skills and careers assessment using the skills diagnostic tool as appropriate;
- a common-format skills and careers action plan that is agreed by the customer and focuses on progression and outcomes in the short, medium and longer term;
- Agreement with customers on one or more interventions and/or referrals to learning and skills provision, specialist provision for those affected by the economic downturn, other support to help overcome barriers to entering learning and sustainable work or progression in life; and
- support for learning brokerage, careers progression and/or job search either through own services or through managed referral to other organisations.

#### **Learner support programmes**

1.3.14 ESF can be used to fill gaps in the current mainstream learner support funding, such as the Adult learner Grants (ALG), particularly to ease participants on and off programmes into positive destinations. Use of ESF funding to support learners may be appropriate in cases where mainstream learner support is not available. For example, ALG rules may restrict availability due to the length of programmes, the type of provision/provider or the number of guided learning hours. Where mainstream learner support funding is available, the use of 'top-up' ESF funding for this purpose is inappropriate.

1.3.15 Before starting any programme of study, learners should be made aware that some forms of learner support may affect their benefit entitlements. It is the responsibility of learners to discuss benefit entitlements with a Jobcentre Plus adviser, to ensure they are not adversely affected

#### **Adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

1.3.16 The Skills Funding Agency is establishing its strategy for adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD). The Learning and Skills Act 2000 placed a statutory duty on the LSC to provide the learning and support, including care arrangements, for young people with a learning difficulty assessment up to the age of 25 years. This duty was the key driver for the LSC policy on LLDD.

1.3.17 Following the transfer of the LSC undertakings to the Skills Funding Agency and YPLA, this statutory duty to support those with learning difficulty assessments passes to Local Authorities supported by the YPLA. Learners over the age of 18 without such assessments will continue to receive support from the Skills Funding Agency.

1.3.18 A range of provision exists for adult LLDD but the expectations for these learners and the outcomes from this provision are changing. In order to meet

the needs of these learners, in terms of skills development and employment opportunities and to enhance the provision and outcomes, ESF monies can be used to provide these enhancements and to drive improvements and innovation in provision for these learners. This could include additional employability skills such work experience or internships, job coaching and job mentoring.

### **Community Grants**

- 1.3.19 Community Grants is a small programme, where a co-ordinating body is selected to manage a funding 'pot' that provides cash grants to small community group organisations. These grants aim to reach the hardest-to-reach participants and provide first tier contact work with the long term aim of encouraging people onto mainstream and other ESF funded activities. The programme has a small budget to work with the organisations as well as to potentially enable more of them to become providers in their own right

### **Young people's provision**

- 1.3.20 The South East economy is able to draw upon a pool of highly skilled young labour, but it is important that less active and skilled segments of the labour force are not overlooked. There remain significant proportions of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the region (13,134, 5.7%) and interventions aimed at tackling inactivity and skills shortages have experienced growing participation rates in recent years.
- 1.3.21 Another group of young people facing significant barriers into employment are young offenders. There is a significant group of young offenders in the South East, with around 24,000 offenders supervised in the community and a further 49,000 offenders serving prison sentences within the region each year.

### **NEET or at risk of becoming NEET**

- 1.3.22 Young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET will likely be those who face multiple barriers to their participation and need a different type of offer of post 16 provision to engage them in learning and keep them engaged. Such groups include: those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; care leavers; young people with mental health difficulties; young offenders; teenage parents; and so on.
- 1.3.23 The main focus of using ESF monies for the period 2011-13 will be securing the continued provision of individually tailored packages of education and support, which will enable the engagement of such young people. This could include providing more of existing types of provision or enabling the procurement of an appropriate alternative that meets the needs of the individual learner. As well as increasing participation in education and training, this will lead to closing the attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged young people at Level 2 and 3. This was a high priority for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and will continue to be so for the YPLA.

### **Learner support programmes**

- 1.3.24 ESF can be used to fill gaps in current mainstream learner support funding, such as Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), particularly to ease participants on and off programmes into positive destinations. Use of ESF

funding to support learners may be appropriate in cases where mainstream learner support is not available. For example, EMA rules may restrict availability due to the length of programmes, the type of provision/provider or the number of guided learning hours. Where mainstream learner support funding is available, the use of 'top up' ESF funding for this purpose is inappropriate.

- 1.3.25 Before starting any programme of study, learners should be made aware that some forms of learner support may affect their benefit entitlements. It is the responsibility of learners to discuss benefit entitlements with a Jobcentre Plus advisor, to ensure they are not adversely affected.

#### **1.4 ESF Priority 2: Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce**

- 1.4.1 In comparison to other UK regions, the South East benefits from a relatively skilled workforce. There is however very varied performance towards national skills targets. Although overall rates of people with no qualifications are comparatively low, this group still represents around 450,000 people. The proportions of residents with no qualifications are highest in eastern parts of the region – in coastal areas of Kent and Sussex, areas to the east of London, and in Portsmouth. Conversely, the proportion of people qualified to level 4 or higher tends to be lowest in the coastal areas of north and east Kent, Southampton and Portsmouth, and highest in Surrey, much of the Thames Valley and parts of Hampshire and Sussex. 47% of the region's residents are in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations compared with 43% nationally. Skills gaps remain an important issue for the South East region – partly a reflection of the relatively high skills requirements of employers.
- 1.4.2 Provision in Priority 2 will support the re-skilling and up-skilling of individuals in employment to improve labour mobility and reduce labour and skills constraints experienced in the region's priority sectors. Provision will extend the eligibility of mainstream employment programmes offered - including through apprenticeships by offering enhanced packages of support and will target priority employees who do not have a current or relevant qualification at Level 2 or 3. In this plan period, there is an increased emphasis on higher level skills to support the recovery of the South East economy following the recession.
- 1.4.3 ESF activities are expected to integrate with employer responsive provision, including support for Apprenticeships or adding learner volumes where demand exceeds mainstream Skills Funding Agency budgets.
- 1.4.4 The specific activities which will be supported are described below.

#### **Apprenticeships**

- 1.4.5 The Apprenticeship family delivers a range of programmes, focusing on NVQ delivery with supporting functional skills and technical certificates. These programmes target Level 2 and 3. Where provision has sufficient funding

available, ESF will focus on the following priorities:

- Continued delivery of additional Apprenticeships beyond the numbers that mainstream funding can support – in particular those aged 19-24 not in education employment and training (NEET). The Skills Funding Agency will prioritise additional starts funded through ESF so that a proportion are focused on learners who will undertake a first Level 2 or 3 qualification.
- Support and funding of 'non employed' Apprentices – The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill 2008-09 removed non-employed status Apprenticeships and ESF can be used to support these learners to minimise the impact of the Bill during transition
- Depending on the conclusion of future investment priorities for 2010/11 and beyond, Skills Funding Agency may also have specific delivery priorities for ESF on those who want to do an Apprenticeship and already have a Level 2 or 3 qualification.

1.4.6 In addition to Apprenticeships, ESF could enhance other forms of skills training including the following:

- Additional targeted investment in key priority and growth sectors as identified in the Regional Skills Priorities Statement to enhance the support available through mainstream work based learning provision up to level 4, including modules and units
- Additional support for leadership and management and activities which increase employers' commitment to skills and training
- Programmes which support Basic Skills at work;
- Support for higher level work based qualifications where demand exists beyond that supportable through other work based learning provision.
- Additional information, advice and guidance, for both individuals and employers with a focus on progression, especially to higher level skills;
- Routes to self employment or small business start up;
- Support for sectors linked to 2012 Games at Levels 2, 3 and 4;
- Developing the appropriate capacity and progression routes with the provider base to deliver regional and national sector priorities.
- Activities which increase training providers' capacity to engage with SME businesses to develop skills.
- Activities to promote the Skills Funding Agency's holistic skills offer to employers.
- Restructuring Company Response programmes; including working with employees facing redundancy.

1.4.7 Provision will complement and extend existing offers through FE colleges, private training providers, and others delivering mainstream work programmes. Most employers receiving support at Level 3 and above will be expected to make a significant and increasing contribution to the overall costs of training.

## 1.5 Key Participant Groups and Geographic Targeting

1.5.1 The Plan reflects the principles of the Regional Framework by combining a focus on particular groups, sectors and specific geographic locations in order to target ESF resources and achieve maximum impact in respect of Priority 1 and Priority 2. These are summarised in the table below.

<b>Key Participant Groups and Targeting</b>	
<b>PARTICIPANT GROUP</b>	<b>GEOGRAPHICAL CONCENTRATIONS</b>
Young People not in education, employment and training Young People at risk of becoming NEET aged 14-19	Impact of recession in South East highlighted particular concentrations in Portsmouth, Southampton and Brighton and Hove unitary authorities, and certain local areas that have comparably high levels of NEET.
People with disabilities including learning disabilities and health conditions	Region wide with some concentrations on eastern and coastal areas such as Eastbourne, Thanet, Worthing and Hastings
Lone parents and carers	Region wide with additional concentrations in areas of multiple deprivation
Older people (50+)	Adur, Crawley, Eastbourne, Thanet and the New Forest have amongst the highest inactivity rates in the region for people aged 50+
Ethnic minorities	Urban areas. There are particularly high levels of BME unemployment in Medway, Portsmouth, Wycombe, Southampton, Wokingham and Brighton and Hove.
Gender	Region wide. The highest levels of male inactivity occur in coastal areas such as Shepway, the New Forest, the Isle of Wight and Worthing. The highest levels of female inactivity occur in Rother, New Forest and the Isle of Wight.
Offenders and ex-offenders	Region wide, in partnership with NOMS.
Workforce	Region wide
Level 2 All priority groups	Level 2 Particular need for Kent, Medway, Southampton, Reading, Slough and Milton Keynes
Level 3 Special focus on older people, ethnic minorities, women and people with disabilities (including learning difficulties)	Level 3 Particular low concentrations in transport and communications, public services, manufacturing and banking and insurance
Level 4 Focus will include women and older workers	Level 4 Sectors with the potential for future growth
Small and medium sized organisations (SMEs)	Region wide – lower propensity to train in some sectors e.g. construction
Key sectors	Key sectors which will be supported through ESF include those identified as priorities in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Regional Skills Priorities Statement</li> </ul>
Key areas	Inter regional growth and development areas such as Milton Keynes South Midlands and the Thames Gateway

## **1.6 Contribution to National and Regional Priorities**

1.6.1 The Plan has been developed to ensure a strong alignment with other national and regional strategies and the key priorities are summarised below

### **Key National Strategies**

1.6.2 There are a number of recent changes to the national policy context which will influence ESF funding during the 2011-2013 period. These are:

- The Leitch Review of Skills, which gives employers a stronger voice on the content and delivery of skills and employment programmes, as well as encouraging them to take greater responsibility for the planning and funding of their training activity.
- The Freud report, an independent review of welfare to work, which recommended that resources should be targeted on those individuals who generally face multiple, complex problems, so that spending can be directed towards these people in a more individualised way.
- The Government White Paper December 2008, which made a number of important policy initiatives, including: People currently claiming Income Support will move to either the Employment and Support Allowance or Jobseeker's Allowance; encouraging lone parents and those with younger children (seven and younger) to engage with the support that is available; testing a Work for Your Benefit scheme.
- An increased emphasis on Apprenticeships places for people aged 19-30 and the opportunity for these to provide routes into Higher Education.
- The White Paper Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment which sets out how DWP and BIS should work together to ensure that individuals have access to the support and training they need and gain skills which help them find sustained work as quickly as possible, so that they stay in work and do not move in and out of the benefits system. Support is also required for employers to ensure that they have a greater say in the type of training provided and get people with the skills needed for their vacancies and emerging jobs.

1.6.3 Regional priorities for the Skills Funding Agency for the South East will be informed by the Skills Investment Strategy and regionally identified priorities. The key priorities are set out below.

### **Skills for Growth – National Skills Strategy 2009 (BIS)**

1.6.4 The goal of the National Skills Strategy is to develop a skills system defined not simply by targets based on achieved qualifications but by 'real world' outcomes. There is an aspiration to create a system that provides a higher level of vocational experience; one that promotes a greater mix of work and study and that encourages skills that are transferable from job to job. There should be broader opportunities for students who wish to progress through Further Education (FE) into Higher Education (HE).

1.6.5 The priorities focus on six key areas:

- Promotion of skills that matter for economic prosperity in modern Britain
- Expansion of Advanced Apprenticeship systems for young adults

- Ensure the system responds to demand from businesses, while ensuring that key sectors for growth and employment sectors are better supported through the skills system
- Go further in ensuring all adults are empowered to equip themselves for future jobs
- Raise recognition among more businesses of the value of investing in workforce skills
- Further improve the quality of provision at Further Education colleges and other training institutes

**Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) South East Commissioning Statement 2010-2011**

1.6.6 The plan will also need to support the South East Young People’s Learning Agency commissioning plan produced in February 2010. This statement identifies the following priorities:

- Develop a curriculum offer that delivers full entitlement for all young people and inspires them to participate in the preparation for the raising of participation age;
- Put in place strategies and plans to reduce the number of young people not in employment, education or training and in employment without training.
- Improve access to local provision for learners with high support needs and for vulnerable groups including learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD).
- Build significant growth in Apprenticeships for young people.
- Raise the attainment of young people, in particular to narrow the attainment gap.

**SEEDA Regional Priorities Statement for Skills 2010/11**

1.6.7 In early 2010 SEEDA produced a Regional Priorities Statement for Skills. This notes that whilst the region starts from a good skills base, skills development at all levels will be essential to achieving productivity gains, creating jobs and global competitiveness as the economy recovers from recession.

1.6.8 The Statement identifies:

- Particular priorities at Level 3 and above e.g. science, technology, engineering and maths skills; built environment; business services; care; retail.
- Employability workforce skills needs in areas of low employment and productivity (especially in coastal areas): reducing NEET hotspots; employability skills particularly for young people; specific management and leadership skills.

1.6.9 The Statement also emphasises the importance of providing relevant skills to areas receiving major skills investment. Six sectors are identified advanced engineering and marine; aerospace and defence; environmental and energy technologies; pharmaceuticals, life sciences and health technologies; ICT and digital media; and financial and professional services.

**SEEDA Regional Economic Strategy**

1.6.10 The plan supports the three objectives from the current Regional Economic Strategy 2006-16 ‘A Framework for Sustainable Prosperity’ by contributing to:

- Smart growth – lifting under-performance

- Sustainable prosperity – supporting quality of life
- Global competitiveness – recognising the role skills play in delivering this.

1.6.11 The ESF programme specifically supports achievement of ‘transformational’ actions identified in the RES that will have the potential to have particular impact:

- Skills escalator
- Ensuring that people at all skill levels are continually equipped to progress in the labour market
- Raising economic activity rates - addressing barriers to employment and increasing incentives to work
- Making the most of 2012 - ensuring that the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will leave a positive and lasting legacy for the South East.

### **European Regional Development Framework (ERDF)**

1.6.12 The South East ERDF Competitiveness programme is a revenue driven business support programme focused on promoting sustainable production and consumption. The programme will fund business support activity around the low carbon and green economy agendas but will not make use of Article 34.2 derogation to fund ESF type activity.

1.6.13 This plan will support regional ERDF Competitiveness programme activity by:

- Promoting resource efficiency – inclusion of leadership and management training in priority sectors and SMEs in Priority 2 activities
- Encouraging sustainable consumption

1.6.14 ESF will be used to fund employment support and skills provision which is linked to the green economy and which will feed the business skills needs developed through the ERDF programme.

1.6.15 Implementation of the plan will take a developmental approach with providers to encourage good practice from previous ESF programmes, including for example, workshops on sustainable development where they are helped to develop environmental policies. Skills Funding Agency’s national ESF Policy Group is currently examining appropriate strategies for pilot and development throughout the period of the plan.

### **1.7 Complementarity with other CFO Provision**

1.7.1 The Skills Funding Agency has developed the plan liaising closely with the YPLA and the South East local authorities on young people’s issues. The Agency has also consulted with CFOs including NOMS and Jobcentre Plus (on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions as the co-financing organisation for workless adults). The collaborative planning of the programme will ensure there will be targeted activity across the region, with low risk of duplication or competing provision and will maximise access to further learning, jobs and sustained employment.

1.7.2 The implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan will continue to be a collaborative process between co-financing organisations working jointly through the region’s established CFO Strategic Group reporting directly to the Regional Committee.

- 1.7.3 Development of Skills Funding Agency activities for workless adults will be overseen by the Agency's Regional Skills Services Director in consultation with Jobcentre Plus. The two organisations have worked especially closely through and coming out of the recession to develop a coherent set of provision which is geared to meeting individual and employer needs in the region. The focus of JCP's provision on gaining, retaining and progressing in employment (including self employment) sits alongside the Agency's focus on re and up skilling leading to sustainable employment.
- 1.7.4 It is anticipated that NOMS activities will focus on pre employment support in areas such as mentoring, coaching and confidence building. These activities are likely to form a base for progression to Agency funded skills training and to advice available via the adult careers service, Next Step. There are also likely to be significant links between NOMS and Agency provision around employer related activity and support for target groups (such as those with learning difficulties or disadvantages or low levels of basic skills).
- 1.7.5 The Plan will adopt the principle of Solutions for Business recommended in the Framework. Through the contract management process, the Skills Funding Agency will ensure that ESF providers are linked in to wider business support activity and details of their provision passed to the region's Business Link service.

## 1.8 **ESF Funding**

- 1.8.1 The Plan covers the following ESF funding:

<b>CFO Allocations 2011-2013</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Allocation £</b>
<b>Priority 1</b>	
Skills training for adults	£17,140,293
NEETS	£13,494,834
Community grants	£1,466,830
Total Skills Funding Agency funding (55% of total)	£32,101,957
<i>Total Funding – Priority 1</i>	<i>£58,673,191</i>
<b>Priority 2</b>	
Basic skills	£9,647,359
Level 2	£9,647,359
Level 3	£8,863,146
Level 4	£4,000,000
Total Skills Funding Agency funding (100% of total)	£32,157,864
<i>Total Funding - Priority 2</i>	<i>£32,157,864</i>

- 1.8.2 The following Annexes set out further information on spend and targets:

- Annex A: Targets
- Annex B: ESF and Match Funding Expenditure by Year
- Annex C: Starts and Results Profile

## **2. Funding and Added Value**

### **2.1 The Added Value of ESF**

- 2.1.1 A commissioning strategy for the Skills Funding Agency has been endorsed and this details how ESF should be targeted by the Skills Funding Agency to ensure complementarity and enhance the added value of ESF. Commissioning strategy documents can be shared with the Skills Funding Agency stakeholders.
- 2.1.2 The purpose of the proposed commissioning strategy is to ensure that ESF truly adds value and enhances national strategies.
- 2.1.3 The key issue for the strategic direction of ESF in the 2011-13 programme is that we must ensure that ESF supports the main policy directions for the Skills Funding Agency/YPLA.
- 2.1.4 The commissioning strategy ensures that:
- Sufficient regional flexibility is retained to meet regional skills needs;
  - Appropriate contract lengths are sought for ESF provision (including the use of short contract periods where policy change is expected);
  - ESF can achieve its full programme targets;
  - There is a balance between targeted provision supporting disadvantaged groups and additional volumes of mainstream provision; and
  - Activity, outputs and evaluation from ESF are used to inform mainstream development and approaches.
- 2.1.5 The regional ESF framework ensures that ESF adds most value to regional strategies and funding streams in 2011-2013. This includes areas such as programmes targeted at specific disadvantaged groups; at meeting the needs of SMEs; on upskilling for those facing barriers access skills needed by higher added value or knowledge intensive industries and on taking advantage of opportunities linked with 2012.

### **2.2 Match funding and Priorities**

- 2.2.1 The Skills Funding Agency will use a range of non-formula funded (NFF) provision, negotiated extensions of provision and/or single tendered provision as match funding, provided it is against agreed programmes with a standard unit cost or rate. Additional match may be drawn from other sources, if required.

#### **Match funding used in Priority 1**

- 2.2.2 The Skills Funding Agency will identify appropriate match programmes and utilise them as required, subject to discussion with the Managing Authority.
- 2.2.3 Match would be sourced from a mixture of budgets, which could include the following.
- 14-19 Foundation Learning Curriculum programmes and 16-18 Apprenticeships via the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).
  - Adult Learner Responsive (ALR) formula funded provision, Programmes for the Unemployed and the Next Step integrated adult careers service.

## Match funding used in Priority 2

- 2.2.4 The Skills Funding Agency will identify appropriate match programmes and utilise them as required, subject to discussion with the Managing Authority.
- 2.2.5 For Priority 2, match for ESF can be sourced from Apprenticeship programmes and other work based learning provision.
- 2.2.6 Activities funded by ESF or by the Skills Funding Agency/YPLA funding that is used for match will directly contribute to the priorities and outputs as set out in the ESF Regional Framework. Therefore, both funding methods will contribute to the Co-financing plan targets.

## 2.3 Planned Administrative Costs

- 2.3.1 Administration and management costs will be restricted to a maximum of 5% of the total costs of the Plan. The total management and administration costs for this Plan are based upon an assessment of the staffing requirements for the Plan and previous experience of implementing ESF within a regional structure from January 2011, as described in the CFO status application 2010-2013 and the Skills Funding Agency End to End Business Process for ESF.
- 2.3.2 The Skills Funding Agency will use systems (TS2000) to record staff time against a particular dossier. Costs will be incorporated with the interim claims where expenditure has been incurred.
- 2.3.3 The breakdown of administration costs is shown below. These total 10% of total allocation (5% of total co financing plan) and are spread across the period of the project.

2011	2012	2013	Total
£2,141,994	£2,141,994	£2,141,993	£6,425,981
Regional management and implementation of Co-Financing Plan Management where ESF and match provision is managed in area and/or regional teams Procurement and contract preparation Provider contract management and monitoring Financial control, monitoring and profiling Preparation of interim claims Data collection, analysis and reporting Marketing and publicity Health and safety assessment of providers Financial risk assessment of providers Mid-term evaluation of the impact of ESF - contribution to regional model Support for new providers and Third Sector organisations (quality assurance, preparing for inspection and exit strategies) Annual and Closure Audit Communications – national and regional strategic and operational forums Communications – external partners and stakeholders Project Closure			

Note: some admin costs will be incurred in 2010 and 2014 (up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014)

### **3. Project Selection and Tendering Arrangements**

#### **3.1 Tendering Methods**

3.1.1 The tendering process for both ESF and match may be done through the Open and Competitive Tendering (OCT) process. The Skills Funding Agency and YPLA will also use the standard rates flexibility offered by the European Economic Recovery Plan, without always going through the OCT process. New models of contracting and management will be considered. The focus will be on efficient delivery of high quality and responsive programmes through a mixture of direct and sub contracted delivery.

##### **OCT process**

##### **Stage 1: QPF / ACTOR**

3.1.2 The Skills Funding Agency will use the Qualified Provider Framework (QPF) until the end of 2010

3.1.3 The Skills Funding Agency (formerly the LSC) replaced its pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) with a dynamic system that now allows providers to apply to pre-qualify at any point during the year, according to their business need and at a time convenient to them. As of 31 October 2008, the Skills Funding Agency (formerly the LSC) opened a QPF for providers of education and training services. The QPF is a maintained list of all providers from which the Skills Funding Agency will secure education and training services. This list will incorporate those providers with whom the Skills Funding Agency will negotiate and/or invite to tender. This will reduce provider effort by ensuring they are only invited to tender for appropriate provision based on the data supplied at pre qualification.

3.1.4 Pre-qualifying questions are mainly based on performance management, health and safety, equality and diversity, capacity and resource.

3.1.5 The Skills Funding Agency will use the ACTOR by the end of 2010. ACTOR (Approved Colleges and Training Organisations Register) will replace the QPF by the end of the year 2010. The system is in development and is expected to be available at the end of July 2010.

##### **Stage 2: Submission of Tenders**

3.1.6 All successful organisations are then invited to tender for the provision they initially applied for. This bid (tender), once submitted electronically to the managed web host will be appraised using agreed criteria, using trained evaluators. Following assessment a moderation process will take place.

##### **The standard rates flexibility**

3.1.7 Agreement was reached recently with the European Commission to allow the Skills Funding Agency to use the EC methodology for flat rates for standard scales of unit cost for both match funding and ESF.

3.1.8 This new approach allows the Skills Funding Agency to procure without going through the OCT process. QPF/ACTOR is open to all providers for pre-registration.

3.1.9 OCT would be used if:

- standard rates or funding methodology is not established;
- ACTOR can not supply a conclusive list of providers for tendering (for instance, if too many providers have the same pre-qualification score).

### **Compliance with national legislation**

3.1.10 All procurement processes used by the Skills Funding Agency comply with the Public Contracts Directive (2004/18/EC) implemented in the UK by Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006/5).

## **3.2 Timetable**

3.2.1 The anticipated timetables for the 2011-2013 ESF programme is illustrated below.

### **Summary of the procurement timetable for - Priority 1 Youth and Community Grants (CG) only**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone dates Priority 1 - Youth and CG (only)</b>
Publish OJEU Notice	18th August 2010
Publish PQQ	18th August 2010
PQQ Closes	17th September 2010
Evaluation of PQQ Completed	1st October 2010
Respondents Notified	4th October 2010
Publish ITT	5th October 2010 *
ITT Closes	9th November 2010
ITT Evaluation completed	3rd December 2010
Respondents Notified	13th December 2010
Standstill period ends	23rd December 2010
Contracts Awarded**	24th December 2010
Delivery Commences**	3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2011

\* Subject to receipt of authorisation to proceed following Treasury Spending Guidance

### **Summary of the procurement timetable - Priority 1 Adult only, and Priority 2**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone dates Priority 1 - Adult (only) Priority 2</b>
Co-Finance plan approved	June 2010
Initiate the development of Invitations to Tender with key stakeholders and agree processes and project timescales:	September 2010
Complete development of ITTs	November 2010
Launch procurement round	January 2011
Application window closes	February 2011
Assessment period contract awards and award period	February 2011
Outcomes announced	March 2011
Contracts completed and agreed	March 2011
Activity commences	April 2011

### **3.3 Support and Advice**

- 3.3.1 The Skills Funding Agency will run briefing events open to all potential applicants. The Skills Funding Agency will be able to respond to questions via an E-portal and this may include compiling a frequently asked questions section. All support and advice offered will align with OCT guidelines.
- 3.3.2 The Skills Funding Agency will seek to ensure that new providers from all sectors can compete openly and effectively.

#### **Feedback Arrangements**

- 3.3.3 The Skills Funding Agency will employ a fully transparent appraisal process with all applicants receiving an overview of the appraisal process. All organisations applying for ESF from the Skills Funding Agency will be notified of successful applications and feedback will be provided on all proposals. Where a proposal is unsuccessful, the applicant will be informed as to the reason. All feedback will be provided via the Skills Funding Agency E-Tendering portal.
- 3.3.4 In the interests of openness and transparency we will publish summary details of successful project applications; these will be posted on our website and that of the Government Office for the South East.

#### **Arrangements for Dealing with Customer Complaints**

- 3.3.5 In the event of a proposal for funding being unsuccessful, should the organisation, after receiving feedback, feel that they have cause for complaint the organisations may invoke the Skills Funding Agency Complaints policy. This policy will be promoted on the Skills Funding Agency's national website: [www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](http://www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk).

## **4. Provider Funding and Monitoring and Management Information**

### **4.1 Contract Costs**

#### **Contracts costs agreed during the OCT process**

- 4.1.1 The rates payable in the contract will either be based around mainstream programme rates or established in advance in the tender specification. The set rates will allow for regional variations in cost weighting and for hard to reach element of potential participants. The national ESF Policy team have defined a set of standard deliverables for the new ESF programme and all payable deliverables are now based on delivery.

#### **Flat rates for standard scales of unit cost**

- 4.1.2 The flat rate approach (formula funding) has been agreed by the EC and ESFD as eligible. Rates will be established in advance, fair, equitable and verifiable. The main funding rates will be published in time for the start of the 2010/11 academic year and available for the first round of contracting.

#### **Advance payments**

4.1.3 In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for the Skills Funding Agency to provide advance payments for small providers or those in the voluntary and community sector and to assist in their cash flow in the early days of the project. Advance payments will always be fully recovered during the lifetime of the project, whether the provider delivers or not.

## **4.2 Payment Arrangements for Providers**

4.2.1 Providers will be paid by the Skills Funding Agency based on agreed monthly payment profile which will form part of the contract between the Skills Funding Agency and providers. Payments will be generated through a Centralised Contract Management (CCM) system, which will feed into the Skills Funding Agency payments system. Payments will be made to the provider via BACS on an agreed date in the month (based on the number of working days elapsed).

4.2.2 The settlement system allows providers to make monthly monitoring returns to the Skills Funding Agency to report on activity carried out in the previous month. The return will be based on both the Individual Learner Record (ILR) returns and returns for non-ILR based delivery via a Delivery Statement. These returns will feed into the CCM system, which will perform automatic reconciliation on a quarterly basis. This reconciliation will make adjustments to subsequent payments based on profile payments made against each activity that the provider has not carried out.

4.2.3 Releases for CCM are scheduled throughout 2010.

### **4.3 Actual costs contracts**

4.3.1 The Skills Funding Agency does not intend to pay providers on an actual costs basis. All contracting will be based on contract costs and will be awarded through open and competitive tendering or through the negotiated process. The Skills Funding Agency will pay providers by other eligible methods if required in exceptional circumstances, subject to discussion with the Managing Agent.

### **4.4 Arrangements for Monitoring ESF Providers**

4.4.1 Contracts are assigned to an account manager and a senior account director at inception stage. Financial profiles in contracts are inextricably linked to delivery and therefore, monitoring of financial performance will be centred on appropriate and suitably evidenced delivery.

4.4.2 Contractors will return learner data electronically to the Skills Funding Agency with a monthly or quarterly report of all deliverables within the contracts combined. The required evidence to support these deliverables is identified within the contract. The evidence is held by the provider and will be retained in line with ESF requirements.

4.4.3 Performance monitoring of individual projects is undertaken in accordance with the frequency detailed in the contract. The monitoring process includes a pre-determined and reviewed schedule of provider visits and evidence checks by Skills Funding Agency staff.

4.4.4 Contracts are monitored against:

- the objectives of the contract;
- the timely and accurate return of records and reports to the Skills Funding Agency;
- delivery of the agreed outcomes, outputs and milestones (as documented in the contract);
- the evidence of delivery (utilising a predetermined sample size);
- beneficiary eligibility (as documented in the contract); and
- where possible, learner records will be automatically monitored electronically using the ILR Dbase and the ensuing financial variance addressed.

4.4.5 There are agreed variances for under-performance of ESF contracts. Where performance variances are greater than this, a business case is required to be authorised at Director level. If, for some reason, this cannot be performed through CCM, alternative methods must be found.

4.4.6 Where indicated, underperforming contracts will have payments halted and/or claw backs enacted. Re-profiling will occur based on actual delivery to date and a newly agreed future delivery profile.

4.4.7 The Skills Funding Agency will keep an overview on expenditure and outputs to ensure that co-financed activity is performing within acceptable parameters and in line with the funding profiles submitted to GO.

## **4.5 Project Delivery and Outcomes**

- 4.5.1 The nationally driven procurement process, alongside the use of the CCM system, ensures the consistent use of a range of robust outcomes – the contract schedules will be completed using this information and an agreed profile against each outcome will be agreed.
- 4.5.2 The contract/provider will be risk assessed to determine the frequency of monitoring needed. For example, a new provider delivering new provision would be classed as higher risk to start with, whilst a known provider with a good track record of delivery would be classed as lower risk.
- 4.5.3 The account manager will look at the performance data submitted by the provider on a regular basis (in line with risk rating) and will identify any under- or over-performance in the delivery of the expected outcomes. Obvious causes of performance variance, such as data issues, will be investigated and eliminated in the first instance.
- 4.5.4 Project and performance variance will be discussed with the provider. Frequency of monitoring will be adjusted as part of the process, if appropriate. Payments will be reconciled/adjusted as necessary and, if warranted, payments will be placed on hold whilst the performance issues are addressed.

## **4.6 Quality Standards**

- 4.6.1 All Skills Funding Agency providers are required to comply with rigorous quality standards, including minimum performance levels set out in our Planning for Success framework (December 2005), which covers planning and quality. Providers are also subjected to inspection through the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). This ensures that local communities have access to relevant and high quality learning opportunities; that individuals of all ages and backgrounds acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to realise their potential, improve their life chances, and contribute to economic growth; and that employers are able to recruit and develop the skilled and qualified workforce they need for business success. Inspection will continue to focus on the Common Inspection Framework and will contribute to the new Quality Assurance System. We are intent on excellent provision for the benefit of employers and learners alike as a route to excellence.
- 4.6.2 The Skills Funding Agency will focus on investing in high-quality provision. The Framework for Excellence and the minimum levels of performance policy will be used to drive quality improvement in the sector.
- 4.6.3 The account manager will assess success rates from minimum levels of performance report and assess outcomes with previous reports. The account manager will also check learner health and safety assessment and liaise with the regional Health and Safety team to ensure actions are completed, and retrieve provider Self Assessment Reviews (SARs), Quality Improvement Plans and Provider Development Plans.
- 4.6.4 When Ofsted recommendation reports highlight areas of development, the

Provider's Self Assessment Report will be listing the actions needed to address the issues. These will be reviewed with the Account Manager. Where possible, the Skills Funding Agency will provide funding towards support mechanisms (consultancy type of support). If the reports included the judgement of inadequate for 'effectiveness of provision,' the Skills Funding Agency will issue a Notice for Improvement with actions to undertake and will reserve the right to take the provision away from the provider where there has been failure to deliver the actions set.

### **Financial performance**

- 4.6.5 Financial profiles in contracts are inextricably linked to delivery; therefore, monitoring of financial performance is centred on appropriate and suitably evidenced delivery. Learner records will be automatically monitored electronically using the ILR database and the ensuing financial variance addressed.
- 4.6.6 The Strategic Finance team will complete a Cash Flow Report, providing a view of planned and actual payments made on a monthly basis.
- 4.6.7 For each provider, the Financial Summary Report shows a summary of their current approved allocations, their status, version number and the total value for the period selected.

### **Audit**

- 4.6.8 Provider Financial Assurance (PFA) teams include ESF in their annual work plans. The teams endeavour to audit each contract at least once during the life of the contract. PFA will contact the relevant contract/relationship staff before the audit commences to obtain contract details, and will keep these staff members informed throughout the audit.
- 4.6.9 The audit approach places significance on the assessment of risk and the key controls providers are expected to establish for administering contracts. Emphasis is given to advising providers on how their controls can be improved and the sharing of good practice identified by PFA from previous ESF audits. Where control weaknesses are identified, recommendations for improvement will be based on diagnostic work that identifies the reasons for errors occurring. This consultative approach should lead to a reduction in recurring errors and greater added value from the audit process.
- 4.6.10 The assurance approaches are tailored to reflect the differences in actual costs and beneficiary contracts. Audit opinions are given on providers' use of funds and internal controls. The assurance report, including details of any funds at risk relating to the contract, will be discussed with the contracting and relationship staff involved.

### **Cross-Cutting Themes**

#### **5.1 Equality and diversity**

- 5.1.1 Action to promote equality and diversity is an integral part of the Skills Funding Agency business objectives. A world-class workforce can only be created if we remove barriers, eliminate discrimination, address disadvantage and raise the aspirations of both present and potential learners.

- 5.1.2 The Skills Funding Agency Single Equality Scheme shows how this is put into practice. By incorporating individual schemes for race, disability and gender equality into one overarching scheme, the Skills Funding Agency is creating a coherent framework for promoting equality and diversity within the organisation and across the learning and skills sector. Its objectives are aligned with the Skills Funding Agency national priorities so that it will operate strategically, in the mainstream of our work and also that there is alignment with regional needs and priorities.
- 5.1.3 In addition to the above Skills Funding Agency national position, the Plan supports the Cross Cutting Theme 'Equality and Diversity' identified in the South East Regional Economic Strategy 2006-2016 'A Framework for Sustainable Prosperity'. The Programme contributes specifically to the following key actions:
- Skills - ensure that all young people and adults of all ages in the region have access to effective vocational and work-based learning opportunities and that funding through the Skills Funding Agency reaches those most in need including economically inactive people who want to work.
  - Employment – work with employers to provide vocational training and support a range of learning styles to allow employees at all levels to progress within their occupations
  - Sustainable Prosperity - reduce the proportions of young people not in education, employment or training.
- 5.1.4 The Plan supports the Equal Opportunities Cross Cutting theme described in the region's ESF Framework and will integrate equal opportunities in all aspects of programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The activities proposed in the Plan which specifically address equal opportunities issues include:
- Addressing high levels of economic inactivity amongst people with disabilities including people with learning difficulties
  - Addressing the significant number of economically inactive older people excluded from the labour market
  - Improving qualification levels of older people, in particular in relation to basic skills and Level 2
  - Improving the skills and qualifications of people at work to sustain their current and future employment
  - Helping disadvantaged ethnic minority groups gain access to employment.
- 5.1.5 Skills Funding Agency contractors will be required to maintain their duty to promote equal opportunities and projects will have to take account of the needs of people with disabilities and ensure all activity and information is accessible to all groups. Equal Opportunities issues are included in the Skills Funding Agency monthly contract monitoring process and form a key part of the provider's self assessment process.
- 5.1.6 The Plan will contribute to the outputs and results targets related to:
- Participants with disabilities and health conditions
  - Lone Parents
  - Young People in the NEET and at risk group
  - Participants aged 50 and over
  - Participants from ethnic minorities

- Female Participants
- People without basic skills and a relevant qualification at Levels 2 and 3

5.1.7 The Equal Opportunities policy will be updated annually.

## **5.2 Supporting Rural Communities**

5.2.1 The SEEDA Regional Economic Strategy notes that more than 80% of the South East's land mass is rural with nearly two million people living in small rural towns, villages, and the countryside. Around 100,000 businesses operate in rural areas, the majority in manufacturing, services, the visitor economy or leisure. It is important for rural communities to remain places where people both live and work. They provide services and offer opportunities to improve the work-life balance and to create more sustainable travel patterns including through home or remote working.

The provision of skills is important in a rural context for a number of reasons including:

- Populations in rural areas are ageing more rapidly making re-skilling and responding to replacement demand as people retire more significant than for the regional average
- Appropriate skills provision to create new market opportunities for local products and local assets.
- Deprivation and economic exclusion are found in small pockets in most rural communities; in isolation they impact on relatively few people (and therefore are often omitted from policy) but when combined over larger geographic areas they represent significant numbers.
- Some specific skills associated with rural areas (particularly at Level 3 plus) are in increasingly short supply, such as landscape maintenance.
- As part of building equal opportunities into implementation and following the policy of 'rural proofing', the plan should indicate what actions will be taken to alleviate the difficulties faced by people in rural communities in accessing provision (for regions which have rural communities).
- Data will be analysed to ensure that providers are targeting people in rural communities. This will be monitored and discussed at review meetings with providers. Actions will be undertaken if needed.

## **5.3 Sustainable development**

5.3.1 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).

5.3.2 The European Commission has expressed concern that projects in the last ESF programme addressed mainly the social aspects of sustainable development. Therefore, there is a renewed focus on the environmental aspects of sustainability for 2007-13.

5.3.3 The Skills Funding Agency approach is to encourage specific environmentally focused projects where these clearly link to regional skills priorities (e.g.

renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management etc) and at the same time begin mainstreaming the environmental aspects of sustainable development through working with providers.

- 5.3.4 The Skills Funding Agency will build in sustainable development to tendering, procurement and contracting processes in 2010/11.
- 5.3.5 The Plan will promote recommendations of the South East Framework and integrate sustainable development issues as far as possible across all aspects of programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Specifically the Plan will seek to develop provision that:
- Minimises travel and maximises access to provision through innovative delivery methods and the use of ICT.
  - Identifies skills needs in key sectors driving economic growth in the region which are likely to have a positive impact on the environment.
- 5.3.6 In 2005, the Skills Funding Agency (formerly the LSC) published a strategy for sustainable development 'From Here to Sustainability'. It confirmed a commitment to sustainable development in four key areas: positioning the sector; buildings and estates; curriculum; and community. The overall vision was that over the next ten years, the learning and skills sector would proactively commit and contribute to sustainable development through its management of resources, the learning opportunities it delivers and its engagement with employers and communities.
- 5.3.7 In March 2010, a review was carried out to reflect changes which have occurred since 2005. This sets out a number of recommendations under headings which include:
- Link sustainable development with core mission
  - Show leadership
  - Be a catalyst for change
  - Communicate your approach
  - Build capacity
  - Be target driven
  - Actively engage with your stakeholders
  - Focus on curriculum
- 5.3.8 ESF projects should support the objectives set out in the 2005 strategy document and 2010 refresh of the strategy.
- 5.3.9 It is important to note that funding used as match should have the same approach to sustainable development as ESF projects.
- 5.3.10 The Sustainable Development policy will be reviewed annually.

## **Annex A: Targets**

<b>Region</b>	South East
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<b>Skills Funding Agency</b>
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### **Output and results targets**

#### **Priority 1**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Quantification</b>
<b><i>Outputs</i></b>	
1.1 Total number of participants	<b>25,500</b>
1..2 Number and % of participants who are unemployed (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>12,495</b> <b>49%</b>
1.3 Number and % of participants who are inactive (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>5,100</b> <b>20%</b>
1.4 Number and % of participants age 14 to 19 who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>6,885</b> <b>27%</b>
1.5 % of participants with disabilities or health conditions	<b>22%</b>
1.6 % of participants who are lone parents	<b>12%</b>
1.7 % of participants aged 50 or over	<b>18%</b>
1.8 % of participants from ethnic minorities	<b>11%</b>
1.9 % of female participants	<b>51%</b>
<b><i>Results</i></b>	
1.10 Number and % of adult participants in work on leaving (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>3,519</b> <b>20%</b>
1.11 Number and % of adult participants in work six months after leaving (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>3,871</b> <b>22%</b>
1.12 Number and % of adult economically inactive participants engaged in jobsearch activity or further learning (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>2,040</b> <b>40%</b>
1.13 Number and % of 14 to 19 year old NEETS or at risk in education, employment or training on leaving (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>2,961</b> <b>43%</b>
Regional Target(s)	

## **Priority 2**

<b>Target</b>	<b>Quantification</b>
<b>Outputs</b>	
2.1 Total number of participants	<b>28,000</b>
2.2 Number and % of participants with basic skills needs (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>11,480</b> <b>41%</b>
2.3 Number and % of participants without level 2 qualifications (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>10,360</b> <b>37%</b>
2.4 Number and % of participants without level 3 qualifications (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>4,480</b> <b>16%</b>
2.5 % of participants with disabilities or health conditions	<b>15%</b>
2.6 % of participants aged 50 or over	<b>20%</b>
2.7 % of participants from ethnic minorities	<b>9%</b>
2.8 % of female participants	<b>50%</b>
<b>Results</b>	
2.9 Number and percentage of participants gaining basic skills (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>5,166</b> <b>45%</b>
2.10 Number and % of participants gaining level 2 qualifications (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>4,455</b> <b>43%</b>
2.11 Number and % of participants gaining level 3 qualifications (a) Number (b) Percentage	<b>1,971</b> <b>44%</b>
Regional Target(s)	

Note: target figures (results) include all qualifications approved as Operational Programme qualifications.

## Annex B ESF and Match Funding Expenditure by Year

<b>Region</b>	South East
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### CFO and Plan Details

<b>Skills Funding Agency</b>
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### Financial allocation

<b>Priority 1</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>ESF (£)</b>	<b>Public Match (£)</b>	<b>ESF + Match (£)</b>
<b>2011</b>	£10,700,652	£10,700,652	£21,401,305
<b>2012</b>	£10,700,652	£10,700,652	£21,401,305
<b>2013</b>	£10,700,652	£10,700,652	£21,401,305
<b>Total</b>	£32,101,957	£32,101,957	£64,203,914

<b>Priority 2</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>ESF (£)</b>	<b>Public Match (£)</b>	<b>ESF + Match (£)</b>
<b>2011</b>	£10,719,288	£10,719,288	£21,438,576
<b>2012</b>	£10,719,288	£10,719,288	£21,438,576
<b>2013</b>	£10,719,288	£10,719,288	£21,438,576
<b>Total</b>	£32,157,864	£32,157,864	£64,315,728

Note: some costs will be incurred in 2010 and 2014

**Annex C Starts and Results Profiles**

**ESF and Match combined**

**Priority 1**

Quarter Ending	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
<b>Starts Cumulative</b>	255	1785	4080	6885	9690	12495
<b>Number of <u>adult</u> participants in work on leaving Cumulative</b>		70	280	630	980	1365
<b>Number 14 to 19 year old NEETS/at risk in education, employment or training on leaving Cumulative</b>		60	240	540	840	1170

Quarter Ending	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
<b>Starts Cumulative</b>	15300	18105	20910	23715	25245	25500
<b>Number of <u>adult</u> participants in work on leaving Cumulative</b>	1750	2170	2590	2975	3325	3500
<b>Number 14 to 19 year old NEETS/at risk in education, employment or training on leaving Cumulative</b>	1500	1860	2220	2550	2850	3000

**Priority 2**

<b>Quarter Ending</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>Q5</b>	<b>Q6</b>
<b>Starts Cumulative</b>	280	1960	4480	7560	10640	13720
<b>Basic skills Cumulative</b>		103	360	771	1285	1799
<b>Level 2 skills Cumulative</b>		90	315	675	1125	1575
<b>Level 3 skills Cumulative</b>		20	100	200	350	500

<b>Quarter Ending</b>	<b>Q7</b>	<b>Q8</b>	<b>Q9</b>	<b>Q10</b>	<b>Q11</b>	<b>Q12</b>
<b>Starts Cumulative</b>	16800	19800	22960	26040	27720	28000
<b>Basic skills Cumulative</b>	2364	2930	3495	4061	4626	5140
<b>Level 2 skills Cumulative</b>	2070	2565	3060	3655	4050	4500
<b>Level 3 skills Cumulative</b>	700	900	1150	1400	1700	2000

## **Annex D Tendering and Contracting Milestones**

Indicative milestones for tendering and contracting

### **Summary of the procurement timetable for - Priority 1 Youth and Community Grants (CG) only**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone dates Priority 1 – Youth and CG (only)</b>
Publish OJEU Notice	18th August 2010
Publish PQQ	18th August 2010
PQQ Closes	17th September 2010
Evaluation of PQQ Completed	1st October 2010
Respondents Notified	4th October 2010
Publish ITT	5th October 2010 *
ITT Closes	9th November 2010
ITT Evaluation completed	3rd December 2010
Respondents Notified	13th December 2010
Standstill period ends	23rd December 2010
Contracts Awarded**	24th December 2010
Delivery Commences**	3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2011

\* Subject to receipt of authorisation to proceed following Treasury Spending Guidance

### **Summary of the procurement timetable for - Priority 1 Adult (only) and Priority 2**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Milestone Priority 1 <u>Adult</u> (only) Priority 2</b>
Co-Finance plan approved	June 2010
Initiate the development of Invitations to Tender with key stakeholders and agree processes and project timescales: Apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NAS</li> </ul> Adult Skills including programmes for the Unemployed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAAs and other sub-regional economic development partnerships</li> <li>• Other CFOs – Jobcentre Plus and NOMS</li> </ul> Adult skills for the employed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEEDA and sub regional economic development partnerships</li> <li>• Sector Skills Councils</li> <li>• Business Link</li> </ul>	September 2010
Complete development of ITTs	November 2010
Launch procurement round	January 2011
Application window closes	February 2011
Assessment period contract awards and award period	February 2011
Outcomes announced	March 2011
Contracts completed and agreed	March 2011
Activity commences	April 2011

## **Annex E Indicative Activities**

### **Priority 1: Indicative Activities: Adults**

#### **Skills for Jobs – Sector Based Pathways into Jobs**

These activities will form the core of the offer for those unemployed and economically inactive. They cover a range of provision designed to support the Skills Funding Agency's core business of delivering skills needed by individuals for the future and to contribute to adult skills strategies by supporting progression to the Level 2 and Basic Skills targets.

Learners will be adults aged 19+ not in employment, and for whom low or outdated skills prevent them from securing sustained employment or under threat/notice of redundancy. Within this broad category, groups facing specific barriers and experiencing significant disadvantages would be prioritised, reflecting local and sub-regional needs. Programmes will:

- Provide tailored, individual support for adults, especially those low skilled and yet to achieve Level 2 (aged 19+) who are not working and who would benefit from skills interventions, with skills focused training and support to help them to secure sustained employment.
- Link to work based training and Apprenticeships enabling businesses to employ individuals already on the path to gaining recognised qualifications and to provide access to further learning and support in work, especially to achieve a Level 2.
- Ensure progression from Foundation Learning, enabling adults to continue on their established pathways.
- Support those who are redundant with skills training (including upskilling or retraining) to enable them to return to the labour market

The programme will be developed in conjunction with Sector Skills Councils and Jobcentre Plus to provide sector routeways with progression paths which continue after employment has been secured.

Delivery is likely to include: engagement, advice and guidance, assessment and screening, embedded skills for life and vocational skills, on an individualised basis, to equip them with the necessary skills to return to work. It will also deliver vocational skills as agreed with employers and the provision of guaranteed interviews, work placements or work trials. Sectors are likely to include: retail, hospitality, leisure and tourism, security, facilities management, health and social care, engineering, construction, transport and logistics, land and others where there is a proven demand. Post employment support will be offered with a focus on progression into learning at work through Apprenticeships or other work based provision. Some programmes will include the provision of high quality advice and guidance, supported by relevant information and intelligence.

ESF activities will also provides opportunities for participants to explore starting their own businesses and to develop the skills needed to manage a small businesses, where this is an appropriate outcome for them.

Participant groups will include unemployed and economically inactive people, the homeless, offenders aged 18 and over and older learners aged 50 and over.

Delivery areas: urban and rural unemployment areas across the South East

## **Personal Best**

Personal Best is a Level 1 pre-employment programme in event volunteering, which, through engagement, training and volunteering, will act as a “stepping stone” to new volunteering and work opportunities. Ultimately, the goal of the programme is to give people new skills and employment opportunities and raise self esteem and self confidence, and aims to engage workless and socially excluded people in learning and the labour market.

## **Next Step**

The Next Step Service commences on 1 August 2010. The service will be provided through three channels: online, telephone, and face to face. The service offer will provide labour market focused careers and skills information and advice to adults aged 19 or over (or 18 and over for Jobcentre Plus clients or those in custody from 1 August 2012).

ESF funding will focus support on the work that the Next Step Service carries out with national priority groups and will enhance the information and advice that is available. Priority groups will include: low skilled adults (i.e. without a full Level 2 qualification, especially women) who are locked in low paid, low skilled jobs; young adults aged 19-24 without a Level 3 qualification; adults facing redundancy, newly redundant or at a distance from the labour market; Jobcentre Plus customers in receipt of out of work benefits; people from ethnic minority communities; older people; carers as defined by the Department of Health Guidelines; offenders in custody and in the community under the supervision of probation services and ex-offenders; and people with learning difficulties or disabilities (including those with mental health conditions). Given the importance of labour market intelligence, ESF may be used to develop materials which provide information and intelligence to those giving information, advice and guidance to adults and young people.

Participant groups: adults aged 19 or over (or 18 and over for Jobcentre Plus clients or those in custody from 1 August 2012). Also older learners aged 50 and over.

Delivery areas: South East

## **Adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

A range of provision exists for adult LLDD but the expectations for these learners and the outcomes from this provision are changing. In order to meet the needs of these learners, in terms of skills development and employment opportunities and to enhance the provision and outcomes, ESF monies can be used to provide these enhancements and to drive improvements and innovation in provision for these learners, especially for non stated LLDD learners. This could include additional employability skills such work experience or internships, job coaching and job mentoring.

## **Community Grants**

Community Grants is a small programme, where a co-ordinating body is selected to manage a funding ‘pot’ that provides cash grants to small community group organisations. These grants aim to reach the hardest-to-reach participants and provide first tier contact work with the long term aim of encouraging people onto mainstream and other ESF funded activities. The programme has a small budget to work with the organisations as well as to potentially enable more of them to become providers in their own right.

## **Priority 1: Indicative Activities: Young People to age 19**

### **Context and focus of the ESF 2011-13 programme for young people to age 19**

The period 2011-13 leads up to the point of raising the participation age to 17 in 2013 (and to age 18 in 2015). A significant focus of ESF in this period will be on young people who are, or at risk of becoming, Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).

Young people who are NEET may face multiple barriers to their participation and need a different type of offer of post 16 provision to engage them in learning and keep them engaged. Such groups include: those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; care leavers; young people with mental health difficulties; young people bordering on or within the criminal justice system and teenage parents. Young people who are NEET should not be type-cast as educationally weak; poor prior enjoyment of education may act as a dis-incentive to subsequent engagement, even with a record of qualification success.

The main focus for the period 2011-13 will therefore be to secure provision of individually tailored packages of education and support, which will enable the engagement of young people NEET into education and training. As well as increasing participation in education and training, this will lead to narrowing the attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged young people at both qualification Levels 2 and 3 by age 19. Although not exclusive, activities to be deployed for the next three years will include:

- Roll-on roll-off engagement programmes to include mentoring, personal development, vocational experience, sporting and creative activities and taster sessions leading to progression into mainstream provision.
- Additional support to 14-18 year olds at risk of becoming NEET to progress from full time education to continued learning or employment with training.
- Projects to improve access to and retention within mainstream vocational learning provision and family learning programmes through employment of vocational/educational support workers to work with target groups.
- Provision of work-related summer programmes of activities that assist young people with transition into post-16 provision, focusing on those who have been highlighted by Connexions or schools as potential NEET.
- Supporting vulnerable young people into employment with training through support packages linked to mainstream programmes. These will assist with transitions and ongoing learning within employment, including employment brokerage, mentoring and support for young people, as well as additional support for employers who are prepared to engage the hardest to reach.
- Additional support to better meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties through improved skills development and employment opportunities, and driving improvements and innovation in provision. This could include additional employability skills such as work experience, internships, job coaching and job mentoring.
- Projects working with young people as they enter back into the community after a period of incarceration, focusing on mentoring, training and employment within a multi-agency approach.

As with the current programme, geographical targeting on areas with high proportions of young people NEET will be a priority, including Portsmouth, Southampton and Brighton and Hove unitary authorities, and including local areas that have comparably high levels of NEET. This will be in conjunction with activity targeting particular groups vulnerable to becoming NEET across the region.

## **Learner support**

Some young people may face financial obstacles to participation. ESF may be used to fill gaps in current mainstream learner support funding, such as Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), particularly to ease participants on and off programmes into positive destinations. Use of ESF funding to support learners may be appropriate in cases where mainstream learner support is not available. For example, EMA rules may restrict availability due to the length of programmes, the type of provision/provider or the number of guided learning hours. Where mainstream learner support funding is available, the use of 'top up' ESF funding for this purpose is inappropriate. Proposals may therefore include provision for a proportion of funding to be used to address learner support gaps.

Before starting any programme of study, learners should be made aware that some forms of learner support may affect their benefit entitlements. It is the responsibility of learners to discuss benefit entitlements with a Jobcentre Plus advisor, to ensure they are not adversely affected.

## **Priority 2: Indicative activities for developing a skilled and adaptable workforce**

ESF will be used to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce, supporting progression through re-skilling and up-skilling, improving productivity, reducing skills gaps and shortages faced by SMEs, promoting sustainable employment, social inclusion and equality.

To support the achievement of the regional economic objectives, ESF will be used both to supplement and complement mainstream provision, increasing the numbers of people qualified to Levels 2, 3 and 4 and providing upskilling and reskilling opportunities, particularly for those working in the South East priority sectors, in line with the Regional Skills Priorities Statement

The programme will also increase the capacity to deliver basic skills training

### **Tackling basic skills at work**

ESF funding for basic skills will be focused on addressing the needs of the following groups:

- Addressing entry level basic skills issues in the workforce as identified by employers. This will include literacy and numeracy and ICT skills, including those ICT skills required to take advantage of e.g. on-line recruitment opportunities
- Older people with basic skills needs and no other qualifications as a first step on the “skills escalator”
- Self employed people
- Those not taking up the Level 2 offer
- Those working in the third sector, including volunteers
- Increasing capacity to deliver skills for life in the workplace through Level 3 and 4 qualifications for new and existing tutors as well as CPD programmes for literacy and numeracy

Delivery is needed across the SE but with particular focus on those areas and sectors where the working population has lower than average levels of qualifications. This includes the coastal fringe of Kent and Sussex, plus Portsmouth and Slough. Sectorally, the focus will include individuals working in the retail, hospitality, built environment, transport and communications and land based sectors. The programme will also include additional support on programmes such as mentoring and links to wider packages of support.

### **Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce through Apprenticeships**

ESF will be used to provide a regional ESF Apprenticeship Offer to employers to increase the number of people in work undertaking skills development and training through Apprenticeships at Levels 2, 3 and 4.

The ESF Apprenticeship Offer will provide employer incentives to increase the number of Apprenticeship job opportunities for people entering work from unemployment. It will also increase the number of Apprenticeship places for employees at Level 3 in priority sectors and geographic areas where mainstream budgets are unable to meet employer demand. Apprenticeships at Level 4 will also be offered where frameworks exist and which meet the priority needs of the region.

The SE ESF Apprenticeship Offer supports regional priorities by increasing the proportion of the working age population receiving job-related training. A report by the Institute of Employment Studies<sup>1</sup> cites that levels of work based training have decreased over the past five years. While the proportion of South East employers reporting skills gaps has shown improvement, skills gaps remain an important issue, partly a reflection of the relatively high skills requirements of employers in the region.

This SE ESF Apprenticeship Programme will contribute to the achievement of the regional economic objectives of 'Smart Growth – lifting underperformance', with a particular emphasis on increasing the number of people in the workforce aged 19 – 30 prepared for and participating in Advanced Apprenticeships and increasing the opportunities for them to progress into higher education. ESF will be used to support the expansion of the Apprenticeship system to build a new technician class and the development of stronger pathways into higher education for Apprentices as set out in the Skills for Growth policy.

### **Improve access to and training at Level 2**

ESF funding will be used to provide further provision where there is evidence that demand exceeds the volume that mainstream funding can support, and where there is a justifiable and/or identifiable need for additional activities.

The focus of this element of the programme will be to support employees in regional growth areas and areas with lower than average attainment at Level 2 as identified in the regional economic strategy and the ESF revised South East Framework. It will also focus on employees with disabilities (including learning disabilities) older people (50+), people from ethnic minorities, women and part time employees in sectors where historically there have been low levels of training. The programme will also:

1. Provide transition support and aftercare to those newly in work and training (e.g. mentoring support)
2. Deliver re-skilling and up-skilling for those in jobs where skills gaps exist, including continuous professional development and multi-skilling employees via unitised training
3. Provide enhanced packages of support, bringing together mainstream funding with ESF to improve productivity

### **Support for Sectors linked to the 2012 Games at Levels 2, 3 and 4**

This element of the programme will fund provision to address relevant skills needs at Level 2, 3 and 4 associated with the 2012 Games and its legacy. It will focus on employees in the sports, travel, tourism and hospitality, culture and health and fitness sectors, upskilling and re-skilling employees to improve productivity and their employers' ability to respond to new business opportunities. It will also focus on employees in SMEs with disabilities (including learning disabilities), older people (50+), people from ethnic minorities, women and part time employees.

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The Impact of the Recession on the Labour Market in the South East (2009), LSC accessed at [http://www.seeda.co.uk/documentbank/impactofRecessionlabourSE\\_report.pdf](http://www.seeda.co.uk/documentbank/impactofRecessionlabourSE_report.pdf)

## **Increase progression to and achievement of Level 3 and above**

ESF funding will be used to provide further provision where there is evidence that demand exceeds the volume that mainstream funding can support.

The focus of this element of the programme will be to support employees in regional growth areas and areas with lower than average attainment at Level 3 as identified in the regional economic strategy, the ESF revised South East Framework and the Regional Skills Priorities Statement. It will also focus on employees with disabilities (including learning disabilities), older people (50+), people from ethnic minorities, women and part time employees in sectors where historically there have been low levels of training. The programme will also:

1. Provide transition support and aftercare to those newly in work and training (e.g. mentoring support)
2. Provide re-skilling and up-skilling those in jobs where skills gaps exist, including continuous professional development and multi-skilling employees via unitised training
3. Provide enhanced packages of support, bringing together mainstream funding with ESF to improve productivity

## **Building a technician class for the future**

It is expected that most of the activity under this priority will be to address skills needs at Levels 3 and 4, where market failure exists for an identifiable need. Funding will be used to:

- Re-skill and up-skill those in jobs where skills gaps exist, including continuous professional development and multi-skilling employees via unitised training, particularly to meet emerging skills needs
- Provide enhanced packages of training support to start ups and SMEs to improve productivity and business performance.
- Provide training and/or CPD for tutors and trainers to enable them to deliver the relevant qualifications, units and CPD to address the needs of key sectors and in particular low carbon and environmental technologies.
- Provide a range of opportunities at Level 4 in regional and national priority areas, including at Foundation Degree level.

Providers delivering within this part of the programme will be expected to form partnerships with HE providers who offer Level 4 and above in the relevant sectors. The aim will be to ensure progression is available for employees in the relevant disciplines and that these progression routes form a clear offer to employers and employees which is communicated to them at the start of their training.

## **Improving employment and skills information and advice for employers**

ESF will be used to help explain the public employment and skills offer to employers in the region in a way that enables them to access the support they need more easily. This will drive up higher participation and investment in employment and skills initiatives and will improve progression routes for both new and existing employees. It will be firmly positioned within the context of overall workforce development and on meeting employer's skills needs, especially for higher level skills.