

ESF programme in London receives positive Ofsted inspection

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The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in London has received a glowing inspection report from Ofsted for its European Social Fund (ESF) Programme.

The programme, which had around 600 projects, delivered by 350 providers across London was funded through the European Social Fund with co-financing from the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus. The total financial value of the programme in London from 2000-2006 amounted to £486 million.

Mary Conneely, Regional Director Regeneration London, said:

“We are delighted with the results of the Ofsted inspection report for the Learning and Skills Council’s ESF programme for the London region. The results reflect the outstanding calibre of the projects and the exceptional results already achieved in the programme. ESF in London has given many people from minority and deprived backgrounds the opportunity to gain the skills they need to gain employment and build an independent and brighter future.”

The ESF programme helps to improve education, training and employment among some of the most deprived residents in London who suffer a wide range of barriers to learning and employment. Retention and achievement rates have been excellent and show that the providers have a clear understanding of the needs of the communities in which they work.

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Notes to Editors

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. It has a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Its vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. It works nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of four Structural Funds designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union.

The primary aims of the ESF are:

- To help unemployed and inactive people enter work
- To provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market
- To promote lifelong learning
- To develop the skills of employed people
- To improve women's participation in the labour market

ESF money is awarded to applicant organisations which have successfully bid for funding. Most ESF money in England is distributed to projects through the Learning and Skills Councils, Jobcentre Plus and other organisations (for example, some Regional Development Agencies and local authorities). These organisations are responsible for finding the match funding. This system is known as 'co-financing' and it enables successful applicants to receive 100% funding for their projects.

Total financial value of the 2000-2006 ESF programme in London £486 million

Total financial value of the LSC ESF programme £285 million

Total financial value of JCP ESF programme £59.5 million

Other CFOs and direct projects £141.5 million

The LSC joint-funded 503 organisations and JCP 60.

Ofsted Report

A representative sample of 60 providers from across London was drawn for inspection by Ofsted. They also reviewed 32 inspection reports from providers already inspected. Inspectors spent between one and two days on each inspection visit. They examined a sample of self-assessment reports for those providers in scope but not inspected, and a sample from main stream providers. In addition, inspectors reviewed the regional development plan and other key documentation, and carried out interviews with those responsible for ESF provision in the region.

To view the full report visit:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/pdf/?inspectionNumber=322345&providerCategoryID=2097152&fileName=\\school\57\esfi_57609_20080129.pdf

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