

## Measure 1 - Train to Gain

### FINAL

#### What are people entitled to?

We are introducing additional training support for private sector SMEs employing up to 250 people<sup>1</sup> to support SMEs to increase their productivity in challenging economic circumstances.

Starting from January 2009, all level 2 programmes that lead to full qualifications will be fully-funded, for all learners, i.e. all first level 2s and repeats, will be free to the employer and employee.

At level 3, again for full qualifications, first level 3 and repeat level 3 will be fully-funded for all employees aged 19-25. First level 3 and repeat level 3 will be co-funded by Government for all employees over the age of 25. In applying these rules, we will keep the system light-touch and non-bureaucratic.

For the first time funding will be allowed for stand-alone accredited training modules, and part-qualifications or “thin” qualifications, in business-critical areas to raise productivity.<sup>1</sup> These areas include

- business improvement techniques,
- business systems/processes,
- teamworking/communications,
- customer service,
- new product design,
- finance and credit,
- cashflow and profit management, and
- risk management.

But the units must have been accredited onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

Funding for the eligible units (including repeats) will follow the same rules as for full qualifications above, ie full funding at level 2; full funding for level 3 for 19-25 year olds; part-funding for level 3 for the over 25s.

The employer / employee will not have to commit to a programme of learning that will lead to the acquisition of a full qualification to access these units. Unaccredited training will not be eligible.

The leadership and management programme has been extended so that more SME staff can benefit from it immediately. In the summer we announced the extension of the programme to employers with 10 employees. We are now extending this to employers with 5 or more employees to start from November 2009. As now, employers will make a matching contribution.

#### Who is entitled?

Private sector SMEs only (i.e. with up to 250 employees). For these purposes, all publicly funded organisations - i.e. Government Departments, Agencies, NDPBs, the Health Service and Local Government organisations - will be classed as being in the public sector - and so will not be eligible for this extended offer through Train to Gain. See also eligibility below.

#### Why?

SMEs may currently be less inclined to train but it's important that businesses are in a strong position to grow and for when the economy recovers. We have relaxed the Train to Gain funding rules to allow more flexibility for SMEs to get the training they need to increase productivity. We are also working to improve access so that more SMEs access the training that they need to improve their business.

#### How?

Train to Gain Brokers will provide key support through skills diagnostics and audits to ensure that SMEs access high quality training that increases their productivity. Train to Gain and Business Link brokers are being asked to focus their efforts on engaging eligible SMEs.

A summary of entitlement will be available on the Business Link site at [www.businesslink.gov.uk/trainingoffer](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/trainingoffer). Enquiries should be directed to Train to Gain on telephone number 0800 015 55 45.

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## **Eligibility**

### **Training Not Eligible**

- Unaccredited training will not be eligible.
- Where there is a statutory requirement in place for employers to ensure that their employees receive certain training, e.g. Health and Safety, they will not be able to access public funding for that training.

### **Further Detail**

#### **Flexibility on 'firstness'**

Eligible employers will be able to access training through Train to Gain for their employees, regardless of whether those employees already hold a first qualification at that level.

That is to say, there will be no requirement or expectation placed on providers for all or a proportion of the training programmes delivered to be 'first' qualifications at that level for the employees concerned.

#### **Flexibility in relation to 'fullness'**

Eligible employers will be able to access units from the QCF in a list of business critical areas that will include business improvement techniques, business systems/processes, teamworking/communications, customer service, new product design, finance and credit, cashflow and profit management, and risk management.

The employer / employee will not have to commit to a programme of learning that will lead to the acquisition of a full qualification to access these units.

Unaccredited training will not be eligible.

As now, where there is a statutory requirement in place for employers to ensure that their employees receive certain training, e.g. Health and Safety, they will not be able to access public funding for that training.

Working with UKCES, will look at how deliver more training at sites closer to business premises, making it easier for employees to get training - more details will be provided over the next few weeks.

More detail on eligible units will follow shortly.

### **Call to Action**

Business Link Advisers and Gateway Teams to point customers to Train to Gain and particularly focus on working with SMEs.