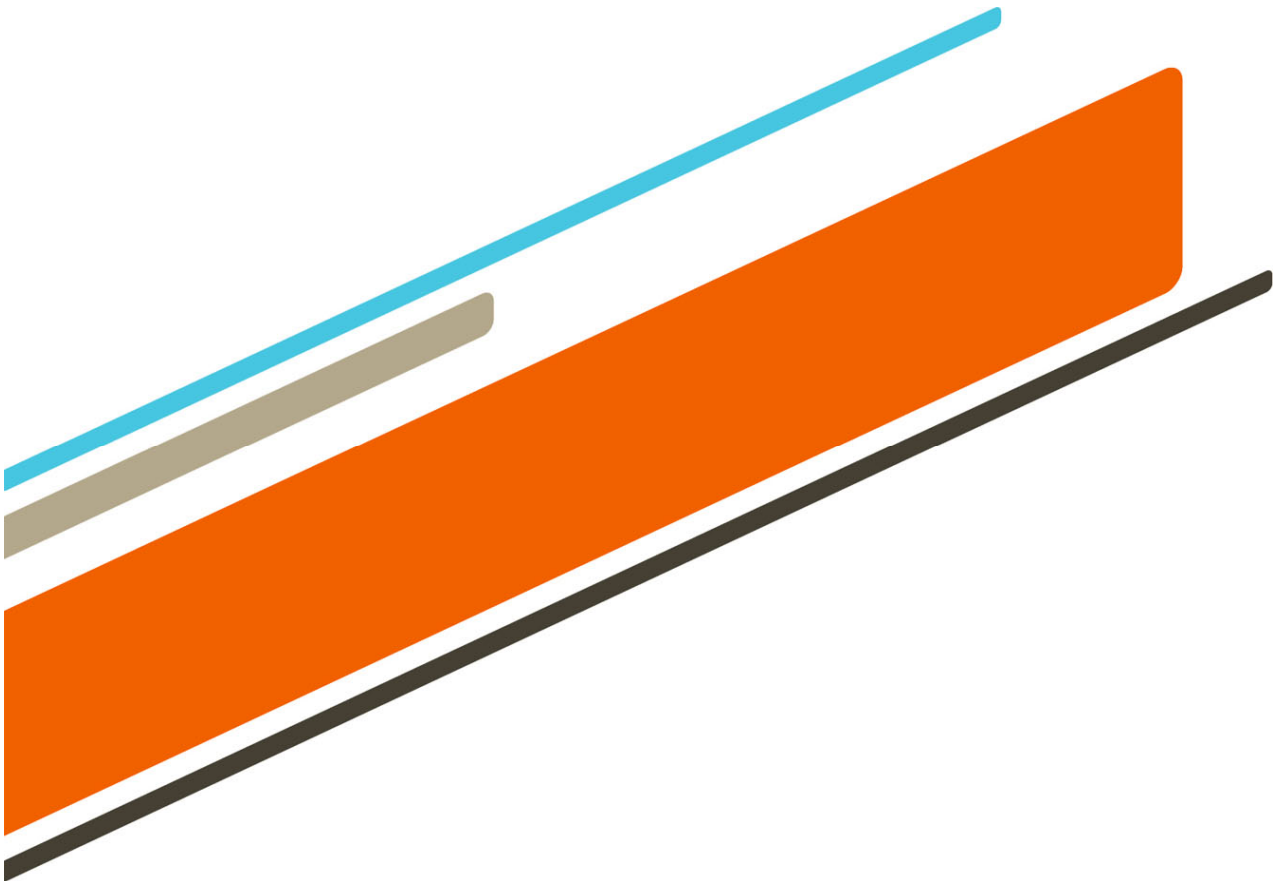


**LONDON OPERATIONAL
GUIDE TO ACCESSING THE
REGIONAL RESPONSE FUND**
2007/08





This document is of interest to Skills Brokers and providers.

The document outlines the London Region's approach to the distribution of the regional Response Fund for Train to Gain.

This document should be read in conjunction with Requirements for Funding Train to Gain 2007/08 and Guidance on Regional Response Provision 2007/08. Further information can be found on the following Train to Gain websites.

www.lsc.gov.uk/Providers/funding-policy/Traintogain

www.Traintogain.gov.uk

www.egtp.co.uk (London only)



Introduction

1. The majority of the discrete and contestable Train to Gain provision budget has been designated to purchase specified volumes of training and qualifications at Regional and Local level. This is known as 'commissioned provision'. Open and competitive procurement exercises were carried out in spring 2006 and summer 2007 to identify suitable learning providers and to contract for specified training and qualifications.
2. The London region has retained a proportion of the Train to Gain provision budget to buy provision that meets needs/gaps identified by employers, providers and Skills Brokers. This funding is referred to as 'Regional Response' or 'Type C' funding.
3. Regional Response funds are designed to meet employer-generated demand and reflect regional skills priorities. Any application therefore needs to demonstrate clear links with identified employers and the requirements of their workforce. Given the limit to the resources available through Regional Response, we may need to prioritise some employer needs over others. In this case we will consider applications in the context of the region's sectoral priorities.
4. This Guidance addresses how Regional Response (Type C) funding will be contracted whilst ensuring quality, flexibility and value for money.

General Principles

5. All applications for Regional Response Funds will be considered in relation to the following principles
 - a. Clear evidence of employer-led demand, especially from 'hard to reach' employers
 - b. Involvement of the Skills Brokerage Service in the process
 - c. Existing provision via Type A and B funding streams.
 - d. The training provision required is not currently contracted. i.e. gaps in provision will take particular priority.
 - e. LSC contracting limits
 - f. Standard new provider issues around quality, flexibility, capacity and financial capability
 - g. Volume of learners applied for. The LSC should reserve the right to decline applications from providers with applications



under £50k for the L2 and L3 jumpers, this equates to 24 – 30 learners from one or many employers. Similarly the LSC reserves the right to decline applications from providers with applications under £10K for the L3 Women’s only pilot. However, exceptional circumstances may apply, such as niche providers working with under represented groups.

6. Train to Gain is a new way of working with employers that uses a new, independent and impartial Skills Brokerage Service to diagnose business and training needs and sources training and wider business development activities to meet these needs.
7. The Brokerage Service, therefore, will play a pivotal role in the Regional Response Fund processes both in managing the expectations of employers (with regard to what can be contracted and timescales) and in sourcing provision. Skills Brokers should also promote the use of Commissioned Provision (Types A and B Funding) where this is available.
8. The broker’s role in this process is to verify the training provision that has been applied for through the Expression of Interest and whether it meets agreed criteria. Emphasis for the brokers is to establish if the demand is genuine and meets employer, learner and qualification eligibility.
9. The broker will establish whether the provision is eligible and verify this with the employer. Once verified the broker will inform both the LSC and the applying provider by email. The provider will then apply direct to the LSC via the link in the brokers approval email.
10. There are two broad scenarios where a need for Regional Response Funds may arise.
 - where specific qualifications required by a specific employer are not available through the contracted TtG network (see Annex 1 for process flowchart); or
 - where significant gaps in provision are identified, in particular qualifications. For example creative and cultural or land based qualifications.
 - There are three broad categories of provider which can be considered to deliver Regional Response Provision

Group 1 Providers who have an existing funding agreement with the LSC, but NOT for Train to Gain in the London Region.



- Group 2 Providers who do not have any existing funding agreement with the LSC
- Group 3 Providers who are consortium partners and have a contract through a 'lead' provider to delivery Train to Gain

The London region expects the majority of applications to be from providers in Groups 1 or 2.

Provider Contracting & Time scales:

Regional Response Applications will be considered in line with the London Regions planning cycle. Please see the table below which details the relevant application windows.


Period	EOI/Application Opens	EOI received no later than	Applications received no later than	Contract Award Date
Quarter 1	01.08.2007	16.10.2007	01.11.2007	01.12.2007
Quarter 2	01.11.2007	18.01.2008	01.02.2008	14.03.2007
Quarter 3	01.02.2008	18.04.2008	01.05.2008	13.06.2008
Quarter 4	01.05.2008	18.07.2008	01.08.2008	12.09.2008

NB: all EOI's/Applications to be received by 12.00pm

Special cases may be made for awarding contracts to providers bidding in for the L3 women's only pilot. For those providers the LSC reserves the right to award outside of the official contract award date specified above.

Application Process

11. The LSC requires an Expression of Interest to be completed for all applications. This enables an initial sift of requests and will reduce subsequent work for both the applicant and the



LSC. EoIs will be responded to within two working days from the date of electronic submission.



12. Providers should submit their application electronically via the link supplied by the Brokerage Organisation notifying

acceptance of the EOI. The application form entitled *Application to Deliver Regional Response Training (for providers who do not hold a train to gain contract)* will be supplied by the Brokerage Organisation in the same email.

13. Providers who failed some part or all of the tendering process for Train to Gain funding in Spring 2006 or Summer 2007 are eligible to apply to the RRF. Consideration will be made of the reasons why the tender was unsuccessful and the potential impact on the quality of provision and value for money when assessing the application.
14. In general, it is anticipated that where quality of provision is a prime concern in rejecting an application, a provider would need at least six months to make improvements to reach the quality requirements of Train to Gain.



REGIONAL RESPONSE FUND – PROCESS OF APPLICATION

