

An introductory guide to using *Licence to Skill* for employability

Licence to Skill is designed to help organisations (planning, funding and delivery) to work together more effectively in finding solutions that **tackle low skills and worklessness and support employability and inclusion**.

This introductory guide to Licence to Skill will be particularly useful for **those new to the approach** and for **discussions between partners**. It focuses on pathways to sustained employment but the approach can also be used for programmes to promote social inclusion. The Licence to Skill Toolkit ¹ - a full set of guidance and Licence to Skill Templates for employability and inclusion – is downloadable at: www.jhconsulting.org.uk/licencetoskill.asp.

The **benefits of Licence to Skill** are that it:

- Focuses planning and delivery by **segmenting** different groups of people and employers/sectors.
- Encourages delivery partners to work together to develop **integrated employment and skills solutions**.
- Makes sure that people and employers get the **right kinds of programmes and support**.
- Means that **resources and investment** can be used more efficiently and effectively.

Licence to Skill is founded on the **principles** that:

- People (in work and not in work) have different types and levels of **needs** (skills and other) and **goals**.
- **Employers** have different types of business needs and goals.
- To be effective, programmes need to be **tailored** to suit these differing needs and goals.
- Existing programmes should be **reshaped and further developed** where necessary to tailor them so that they meet the needs of people and employers.
- The combination of services that many people need to help them move out of exclusion and into sustainable work will usually need to be delivered by a **range of different organisations (the ‘supply chain’)** working together.

The Licence to Skill Toolkit for employability provides:

- A systematic way of designing, delivering and reviewing programmes
- A common basis for different organisations to agree:
 - What **combinations** of services and support are most effective in helping different groups of people to become more employable?
 - What are the most effective routes for different groups of people to move into **sustainable** work?
 - How do these routes address the needs of the economy and **employers**?
 - What **kinds of organisations and staff** need to work together to deliver these routes?
 - How should these routes be **funded** and which agencies need to be involved?

There is also an evaluation framework to help review the effectiveness of employability programmes.

The **blank Templates** in the Toolkit are the ‘working documents’ for Licence to Skill. They ask questions designed to clarify, firstly, what group of people or employers is the programme being designed and delivered for, and what are their key characteristics and needs? The **checklist at Annex A** will help partners identify groups of people which programmes may be designed for.

¹ There are four documents that make up the main Toolkit:

- Part 1: Background and Guidance for Providers
- Part 2: Guidance for Funders & Planners
- Part 3: Blank employability and inclusion templates
- Part 4: Reference materials

Having identified a group to focus on, an essential next step is to identify the main goal of that group of people (eg: being a volunteer, getting a job, filling vacancies at entry level, workforce development). A broad **hierarchy of possible goals is shown at Annex B.**

The Template is divided into 4 sections (see below) and enables organisations to consider:

1. How is the programme specifically tailored to suit the characteristics of the group and address their needs and goals?
2. How will each stage on the route to inclusion/employment be brokered so that people and employers achieve their goals?
3. What will be the range of expected outcomes – for people, employers and funding agencies?
4. Which range of organisations is best suited to delivering the programme elements and how will they work together to provide a seamless service?
5. How should/can the programme be financed? eg: public agency (which one?), person, employer or combination of these

The templates also ask who the 'routeway broker' will be at each stage of a programme/service, particularly at key transition points. '**Routeway brokers**' include professionals drawn from a wide range of backgrounds (e.g. school, guidance service, social services, probation, voluntary sector organisations) who act as mentors and advocates. A routeway broker will help an individual identify the pathway they need to follow and stick with them until they have reached their goal. An individual may have more than one routeway broker helping them towards their goal.

Initial elements

- **Marketing, promotion and outreach** – to people, employers and other linked organisations (referral etc.)
- **Initial screening and assessment** - assessing skills needs and identifying other needs (health, housing etc.)
- **Information, advice & guidance** – initially and at key transition points, focusing on the goal (employment/inclusion)
- **Individual plan** – identifying the steps to the goal for each person and/or employer

Programme elements

- **Skills content and level** – tailored to reflect the needs and goals of the target group and employer
- **Length/frequency and number of hours** – including training and services that continue after job entry
- **Location and timing** – to provide the best access and take up for people and employers
- **Other support, access and cultural requirements** – taking into account the whole person

Outcome/Output Elements

- **Progression and achievement** – as appropriate to the individual plan and programme elements
- **Qualifications** – that meet the needs of people and employers
- **Employment, volunteering and other identified goals** – as appropriate to the individual plan
- **Business improvement** – for programmes/services that are directly focused on employment as the main goal
- **Community Improvement** – for programmes/services that are focused primarily on inclusion goals

Provider, staff and data elements

- **Provider expertise and skills, including collaboration** – across the range of organisations involved in delivery
- **Staff qualifications and skills** – appropriate to the group of people/employers being targeted
- **Data and tracking requirements** – to enable progression, outcomes and outputs to be measured

Taking an initial overview

Using the full Licence to Skill Template effectively requires a significant investment of time and focused thought. **A quick overview can be achieved by using the matrix set out below** (which is also available in word format for electronic use). This can be particularly useful for promoting discussion between different departments in an organisation or between a number of partner organisations with the aim of creating an integrated skills and employment approach.

To use the matrix:

- **First**, choose a **group of individuals** who want to get jobs (see Annex A).
- **Secondly**, decide what their **main goal** is likely to be (see Annex B).
- **Thirdly**, think of an **occupation or occupations** which might provide suitable opportunities for people in your chosen group. These might be opportunities for employment with a particular group or groups of employers; for self-employment; for volunteering; or for supported employment.

Then, under each **relevant** element, identify:

- Department(s)/organisation(s) that you think would deliver the element – in some cases your own department/organisation.
- The agency and funding stream which would fund it.
- Whether or not the service or provision needs reshaping in order to provide a fully integrated skills and employment approach? If the answer is yes to this question, identify what you think needs to change.

For each of the elements, this should include identifying who takes the routeway broker role, how it is funded and whether/how it also needs reshaping or further development.

Matrix for achieving an initial overview

System element (linked to the Licence to Skill Employability Template elements)		Which department(s)/ organisation(s) deliver this element? Who takes the routeway broker role?	Which agency (and budget) funds this element?	How does this element need reshaping/ developing?
Initial Elements	Marketing, promotion and outreach for individuals and for employers			
	Information, Advice and Guidance (learning and job related) for individuals			
	Skills diagnostics and assessment services for individuals (and screening for other needs)			
	Business support for employers to diagnose skills and vacancies needs			
Programme content (before job entry)	Development of skills and employment plan			
	Access/foundation learning for entry level or below learners, including SfL			

System element (linked to the Licence to Skill Employability Template elements)		Which department(s)/ organisation(s) deliver this element? Who takes the routeway broker role?	Which agency (and budget) funds this element?	How does this element need reshaping/ developing?
Programme content (before job entry) cont.	Vocational skills training			
	Employability skills training, including 'soft skills'			
	Pre-employment support for individuals e.g. CV writing, job applications, mock interviews, preparation for self-employment etc.			
	Co-ordinating support for individuals as a bridge between employment and training			
	Work placements/work trials			
	Flexible and responsive recruitment services and solutions for employers			
Programme content (post job entry)	Training and assessment services delivered on employers' premises (including through Train to Gain)			
	Post recruitment bespoke training to meet the needs of employers			
	Skills coaching/workplace mentoring/support for people in self-employment			
	On-going business and skills development support for managers			

The **diagram overleaf shows some of the relationships involved in delivering integrated skills and employment pathways** to help different departments/organisations identify what role they should be playing and where there may be gaps or weaknesses in the current system. Within this it is important to focus on access routes (for individuals and employers); how the individual and business support systems link up; and the need for post-employment support for both individuals and managers.

It is also important to consider the potential for linkages between government supported programmes e.g. by identifying employment opportunities through the business support system, including Business Link advisers and Train to Gain brokers; through "train/recruit/train" approaches offering post-employment training through Train to Gain; etc.

INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SYSTEM

