



Leading learning and skills

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL

ESF OBJECTIVE 3 CO-FINANCING 2004 –2008

BIDDING PROSPECTUS

5.1 Improving the Participation of Women in the Labour Market – North East Region

May 2007

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1. INTRODUCTION

This prospectus outlines the application process to be used for all Objective 3 co-financing applications submitted to the Learning and Skills Council.

Included within the prospectus are details of the activities to be supported by co-financing within the North East Region: resources available; timetable for bids; application form; project selection criteria and details of the selection process.

The prospectus has been designed to help applicants structure their funding proposals to deliver activities which address the priority areas identified in the Learning and Skills Council Co-financing Plan.

The Learning and Skills Council Co-financing Plan will be delivered under 5 Policy Fields and 12 underpinning Measures.

The Co-financing Plan has been endorsed by the North East Objective 3 Regional Committee. Applicants must therefore be aware that when applying for funds, the proposed target groups, activities, and impacts cannot be compromised without the risk of losing the ESF grant.

It is suggested that applicants familiarise themselves with the overarching strategies and policy requirements that ESF Funding through Objective 3 supports. These include:

- North East of England Objective 3 Programme Regional Development Plan (RDP)
- Regional Economic Strategy (RES)
- Learning and Skills Council Co-financing Plan December 2004
- Learning and Skills Council Bidding Guidance March 2007
- European Social Fund Good Practice Guide <http://www.esf.gov.uk/guidance/documents/index.asp>

Please note that for this regional tendering round all tenders must be submitted to Learning and Skills Council Tyne and Wear – see Section 8 ‘Application Process’ for further details.

Applicants are strongly advised to read the following guidance notes thoroughly before completing their application.

2. CONTACTS

Please contact the following for further information or guidance about co-financing and the application process.

Name	Telephone Number	E-mail Address
Karen Price	0191 492 6357	Karen.price@lsc.gov.uk
Karen Kean	0191 492 6342	Karen.kean@lsc.gov.uk

3. WHAT IS CO-FINANCING?

From January 2001, a system of co-financing ESF has gradually been introduced to deliver Objective 3 ESF programmes in England. This means that ESF funding and domestic match funding will be channelled to applicants as a single funding stream by Co-financing Organisations (CFOs) such as the Learning and Skills Council. In the future it is anticipated that most ESF funding will be channelled through CFOs in this way.

Co-financing aims to support a more strategic use of ESF, alongside UK public and other funds. Co-financing involves the management and planning of ESF at Measure level, rather than project level. This will allow greater flexibility in the use of match funding and therefore more scope to support innovative projects. Additionally, this approach will aim to fund new activities not previously delivered and allow provision to be responsive to the demand of local/community needs.

4. ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Please note that the following basic principles and criteria **must** be observed before your proposal will be eligible for inclusion in the selection process.

1. A fully completed Co-financing Application Form, an electronic copy by e-mail to either Karen.kean@lsc.gov.uk or karen.price@lsc.gov.uk, together with two photocopies, should be submitted to reach the Learning and Skills Council by the specified deadline.
2. Proposals must relate only to the Priority, Measure, eligible activities and eligible target beneficiary groups as detailed in the Learning and Skills Council Co-financing Plan and Bidding Prospectus.
3. Activities will only be supported through co-financing where they cannot be supported from main Learning and Skills Council programme funds or from other sources. Co-financing will only be used strategically to **add value** to mainstream provision or to provide support for piloted, targeted or innovative actions.
4. Organisations applying for funding must be eligible under ESF rules, which includes any organisation which is legally formed, but **excludes** sole traders and individuals.
5. Activities must take place within the North East Region.

5. ESF REGULATIONS

Please read the relevant sections of the ESF rules and regulations (National Guidance) carefully to ensure ineligible activity and costs are not included in your proposal.

1. Capital Expenditure

Please note that ESF is **not** a Capital Programme. Therefore any expenditure for items of equipment must be kept to an absolute minimum and must be relevant to the project. No single item can cost £1000 or more.

2. Training For The Public Sector

ESF is **not** usually available for training individuals who have permanent jobs in the public sector, as the Commission believe that direct training of public employees should be supported by the Member State. However there are some exceptions. These include:

- Training people to allow them to enter the public sector
- If the public sector contracts out work to private companies, the contracted company is not considered part of the public sector so training activity will be eligible
- Support for public sector workers who have been given or are threatened with redundancy, which requires them to carry out vocational training to fit them for a new post
- Lifelong learning for public sector workers employed in traditionally low skilled work who need career development in their current post. For Learning and Skills Council purposes the definition of 'Low skilled' covers those learners who have not achieved a full Level 2 qualification
- Training Jobcentre Plus staff working on modernising or providing activity which is additional to normal Jobcentre Plus activity
- Funding teachers for activity beyond the standard support available to help the teachers meet the needs of stated ESF client groups.

For ESF purposes, the following are considered to be part of the public sector:

- Central Government;
- Local Authorities;
- The Armed Forces;
- NHS Trusts;
- GP Fund-Holders; and
- Grant-Maintained Schools

6. ACTIVITIES

All provision should be consistent with the national priorities of the Learning and Skills Council, as set out in Raising the Game: Our Annual Statement of Priorities. Namely to:

- 1) Raise the quality and improve the choice of learning opportunities for all young people to equip them with the skills for employment, further or higher learning, and for wider social and community engagement;
- 2) Raise the skills of the nation, giving employers and individuals the skills they need to improve productivity, employability and social cohesion;
- 3) Raise the performance of a world-class system that is responsive, provides choice and is valued and recognised for excellence;
- 4) Raise our contribution to economic development locally and regionally through partnership working.

Prioritisation will be based upon compliance with the Bidding Prospectus and the associated priorities, and on value for money based upon unit costs derived at Measure level.

Bids are invited to deliver the following Measure level activities:

Policy Field 5 Measure 1

LSC North East Region

Tender Specification Reference: 5.1a (May 2007)

Title: Training for Women in Custody

Background (National)

The Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) was introduced in the North East on 1 August 2005 as one of the 3 National Pilot Development Regions. The service has since been rolled out to the rest of the English regions.

The vision for OLASS is to ensure that:

- Offenders in prisons and those supervised in the community, according to need, should have access to learning and skills provision to enable them to gain the skills and qualifications to hold down a job and have a more positive role in society;
- The content and quality of learning programmes and qualifications for offenders in custody and in the community are the same as comparable provision elsewhere.

Women account for around 6% of the prison population in England. They continue to be one of the most severely disadvantaged groups in terms of accessing suitable learning, skills and ultimately employment opportunities, facing a range of challenges and barriers including:

Family:

For many women their children and family are the main focus of their lives. Offenders are much less likely to have the support of a stable relationship and are therefore more likely to have childcare responsibilities. Around 55% of women in prison have children under the age of 16 and many women are also primary carers for elderly relatives.

Health:

Women tend to place greater demand on medical services than men. Over 66% of women in custody were recently assessed as having a neurotic disorder, such as depression, anxiety and phobias (less than 20% in the community). Self harm is particularly prevalent amongst women in prison. Women account for over 25% of self harm incidents yet they represent less than 1/10th of the prison population. Women are also more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

Drugs:

Studies have shown that whereas male prisoners tend to have moderate polydrug use, women tend to have severe polydrug use. They also have a tendency to be on hard drugs such as heroin. Some 60-70% of women admitted to prison require a clinical detoxification. Alcohol misuse is also an issue.

Distance From Home:

Because there are relatively few womens' prisons, the catchment area is proportionately larger. This increases the distance from home for women and provides greater problems

in maintaining family links and in using local labour market information to inform training and employment opportunities.

Education:

Generally women have lower educational attainment.

Resettlement:

Whilst for men, the first priority is often getting employment, for women accommodation normally ranks higher. Accommodation provides the basis for family life and subsequent family responsibilities often make employment impractical.

Generally speaking, these challenges can delay and lengthen education and training interventions and make positive outcomes more difficult to obtain.

Background (Local)

HMPYOI Low Newton is the only female prison in the North East. It has a Certified Normal Accommodation of 317.

Between 50% and 75% of those in custody at any one time at HMPYOI Low Newton are engaged in existing OLASS provision, delivered by the lead OLASS provider within the establishment. This project is aimed at reaching those not currently engaged in existing OLASS provision and enhancing and adding value to those that are.

For information and planning purposes, the following information has been made available from HMPYOI Low Newton (May 2007):

Total number of women inducted into education (August 06 to May 07) - 441

Sentence length of incoming prisoners in the last 6 months:

- Under 6 months 81
- 6 months to 1 year 44
- 1 year to 2 years 54
- More than 2 years 38

Counties from which prisoners were received in the last 5 months:

- Northumbria 18
- Tyne and Wear 38
- County Durham 21
- Cleveland 38
- Cumbria 14
- North Yorkshire 30
- Out of Area 26

Women released in the last 6 months ranges from 31 to 44 per month, with an average of 37 per month.

Aim

This tender specification seeks to reduce recidivism by improving the employability of women offenders in custody and removing their barriers to the labour market.

Therefore, the Learning and Skills Council wishes to receive applications which will:

- enhance or add value to the existing OLASS provision.
- boost personal and social development.
- increase skills levels.
- improve employment prospects.
- support and encourage the target group to progress into government or non-government funded learning provision.

Activity To Be Supported

Activities must link to the North East Regional Resettlement Strategy (accessible via the following link: www.go-ne.gov.uk/publications) and the Offender Learning Journey (accessible via the following link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning>)

All activity must be over and above that which is already supported and funded by OLASS via the lead provider and its sub-contractors.

The following activities should be included within the application and be accessible by each beneficiary as determined by the results of their initial assessment:

- Development and implementation of innovative learning methods to engage women prisoners in programmes with vocational learning aims.
- Provision of training that will lead to the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications at Level 1 or 2 or equivalent, which are identified on the Learning Aims Database. This could include, but is not restricted to, qualifications in retail, customer care, contact centre operations and personal and social development.
- Provision of pre-employment training initiatives that will enable beneficiaries to gain and maintain employment on release.
- Intensive support packages, including mentoring and coaching, to encourage beneficiaries to reach their potential, both while in custody and on release.

All applicants should provide evidence of collaboration with relevant organisations (e.g. Her Majesty's Prison Service, the National Probation Service and voluntary and community organisations).

All applicants and partners should be able to demonstrate a proven track record of working with this target group.

Target Groups

Female offenders in HMPYOI Low Newton who are:

- Sentenced to less than two years.
- Sentenced to more than two years, but have less than two years of their sentence remaining.

Target Locations

Only one application will be supported and the project must come from an applicant or partnership that can demonstrate an ability to work proactively with HMPYOI Low Newton.

Outputs / Outcomes

The application must deliver all of the outputs/outcomes listed below:

Total number of beneficiaries to be supported under this activity **150**

Number of beneficiaries working towards a nationally recognised Level 1 or 2 or equivalent qualification **120**

Percentage of the total number of beneficiaries (150 beneficiaries) achieving a full nationally recognised Level 1 or 2 or equivalent qualification **60%**

Percentage of beneficiaries completing all ESF activities within their Individual Learning Plan **75%**

Percentage of beneficiaries moving into further learning within 6 months of release **20%**
(Please note: This should be within the period of activity of the project and no later than 30 June 2008)

Percentage of beneficiaries gaining paid employment (including self employment) within 6 months of release **20%**
(Please note: This should be within the period of activity of the project and no later than 30 June 2008)

Percentage of beneficiaries achieving a positive outcome **75%**

Funding Available

£187,500

Policy Field 5 Measure 1

LSC North East Region

Tender Specification Reference: 5.1b (May 2007)

Title: Training for Women In The Community (Offenders, Ex-offenders and Those at Risk of Offending)

Background (National)

The Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) was introduced in the North East on 1 August 2005 as one of the 3 National Pilot Development Regions. The service has since been rolled out to the rest of the English regions.

The vision for OLASS is to ensure that:

- Offenders in prisons and those supervised in the community, according to need, should have access to learning and skills provision to enable them to gain the skills and qualifications to hold down a job and have a more positive role in society.
- The content and quality of learning programmes and qualifications for offenders in custody and in the community are the same as comparable provision elsewhere.

Women offenders continue to be one of the most severely disadvantaged groups in terms of accessing suitable learning, skills and ultimately employment opportunities, facing a range of challenges and barriers. They are:

- Less likely to have the support of a stable relationship and are therefore more likely to have childcare and other carer responsibilities
- More likely to experience physical problems (e.g. domestic violence) and psychological problems (e.g. depression, anxiety)
- More likely to have diagnosed drug and / or alcohol related problems
- More likely to have poor educational attainment and very limited experience of sustained employment.

Generally speaking, these challenges can delay and lengthen education and training interventions and make positive outcomes more difficult to obtain.

Background (Local)

Youth Offending Teams in the North East

There is a Youth Offending Team (YOT) in every local authority area in England and Wales. They are made up of representatives from the police, probation service, social services, health, education, drugs and alcohol misuse and housing officers. Each YOT is managed by a YOT manager who is responsible for co-ordinating the work of the youth justice services for 11-18 year olds. (Please note that this ESF money can only be used for those aged 16 and over).

There are 11 YOTs in the North East (see www.yjb.gov.uk). The 2005-06 Youth Justice Board data shows that in the North East there were 3,612, 10-17 year old female disposals (ranging from a police warning to a community supervision order (custody not included)). Females aged 16 and 17 represented 45% of the total number of disposals, with crimes ranging from violence against the person to criminal damage.

Research undertaken in 2004 in the North East which contributed to the North East Youth Resettlement Framework suggested that young people would be happy to return to education but often find it difficult to get a place. The report identified that there is not always a seamless flow into education for young offenders (and those at risk of offending) – access and transport are issues in rural areas and there is often a stigma attached to attending training programmes for those who are one-off offenders.

National Probation Service in the North East

There are 3 National Probation Services in the North East: Northumbria, County Durham and Teesside. The following table provides a snapshot of the number of offenders each Probation Service supervises at any given time (source: North East Reducing Re-offending Strategy November 2005). The number of females is in bold print.

Probation Area	Community Sentences		Total	Pre/post License Release		Total
	Male	Female		Male	Female	
Northumbria	3581	702	4283	2091	83	2174
Durham	1429	358	1787	758	47	805
Teesside	1937	435	2372	1019	70	1089
Region	6947	1405	8442	3868	200	4068

Aim

This tender specification seeks to reduce recidivism by improving the employability of women offenders, ex-offenders and those at risk of offending, aged 16 and over, in the community and removing their barriers to the labour market.

Therefore, the Learning and Skills Council wishes to receive applications which will:

- enhance or add value to existing Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services available (e.g. Connexions, Next Step, OLASS Provider)
- enhance or add value to existing YOT and National Probation Service programmes
- boost personal and social development
- increase skills levels
- improve employment prospects
- support and encourage the target group to progress into government or non-government funded learning provision

Activity To Be Supported

Activities must link to the North East Regional Resettlement Strategy (accessible via the following link: www.go-ne.gov.uk/publications) and the Offender Learning Journey (accessible via the following link: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning>)

All activity must be over and above that which is already supported and funded by the YOTs, the National Probation Service, the lead OLASS provider and its sub contractors and mainstream post-16 Education.

The project must demonstrate how new and innovative approaches will be developed and implemented. This needs to be clearly detailed in **Section 2 of the application form.**

The following activities should be included within the application and be accessible by each beneficiary as determined by the results of their initial assessment:

- Enhanced information, advice and guidance that demonstrates added value to that which is already currently available through existing services (e.g. Connexions, Next Steps, OLASS.)
- Delivery of nationally recognised qualifications at an appropriate level including personal and social development, vocational training and / or skills for life.
- Intensive support packages including mentoring and coaching to encourage beneficiaries to reach their potential, particularly for those beneficiaries who reside in rural areas. This should include providing support for travel and childcare costs and other domestic arrangements that may prove to be a barrier.
- A programme of employability skills which can include residentials, image building, team building, mock interviews, work experience, career sampling and others as appropriate.
- Provision of a support package for beneficiaries on completion of their Individual Learning Plan to aid progression into further learning or employment and sustain participation.

All applicants should provide evidence of collaboration with relevant organisations (e.g. YOTs, the National Probation Service and voluntary and community organisations).

All applicants and partners should be able to demonstrate a track record of working with this target group.

All beneficiary learner records are to transfer to the appropriate organisation on progression.

Target Groups

Females aged 16 and over who meet one of the following criteria:

- Are leaving custody and returning to the North East region.
- Are at risk of offending and are under “referral” to one of the Youth Offending Services in the region.
- Are serving community sentences under the supervision of one of the National Probation Services in the region.

Target Locations

The Learning and Skills Council will consider supporting sub-regional projects, those that cover more than one sub-region and those that provide full regional coverage within the North East. For operational purposes, a sub-regional project is one where the vast majority of beneficiaries (at least 70%) reside within one sub-region (Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Tees Valley).

The proposal should cover, as a minimum, £150,000 of activity and for any partnership proposal a lead organisation / applicant should be identified. The lead organisation / applicant should provide details in the proposal of whether it would be operating on behalf of an established partnership or to what extent partnership development would form part of the proposal.

The proposal must also indicate how the project will seek to engage other appropriate organisations and offer them the opportunity to participate in the delivery network. The Learning and Skills Council recognises that partnerships do not always naturally exist, and if necessary applicants may wish to look to an initial period of development (maximum 3 months) to draw together appropriate partners, and this should form part of the proposal.

Outputs / Outcomes

Applications should deliver the full range of outputs / outcomes listed below:

Total number of beneficiaries to be supported under this activity **750**

Percentage of the total number of beneficiaries (750 beneficiaries) working towards a nationally recognised qualification at an appropriate level **65%**

Percentage of the total number of beneficiaries (750 beneficiaries) achieving a nationally recognised qualification at an appropriate level **50%**

Percentage of beneficiaries completing all ESF activities within their Individual Learning Plan **70%**

Percentage of beneficiaries achieving a positive outcome **80%**

Percentage of beneficiaries gaining paid employment (including self employment) within 6 months of release **20%**

(Please note: This should be within the period of activity of the project and no later than 30 June 2008)

Percentage of beneficiaries moving into further learning within 6 months of release **55%**

(Please note: This should be within the period of activity of the project and no later than 30 June 2008)

Percentage of beneficiaries sustaining their chosen progression after 4 weeks **50%**

(Please note: If you are bidding on a sub-regional basis (rather than for full region wide coverage) then the total number of beneficiaries should be reduced accordingly. However, the assumptions for achievements and progressions are that the percentages should remain the same.)

Funding Available

£1,112,500

7. PERIOD OF ACTIVITY

Co-financed projects in this bidding round may operate between 1st June 2007 and 30 June 2008.

It is intended that decisions will be reached and communicated in July 2007 however any expenditure incurred prior to exchange of contracts will be entirely at the applicants' own risk.

8. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants should bid using the Learning and Skills Council's Co-financing Application Form only.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is legible. Where possible we request that your response is word-processed, using minimum font size 12.

A word version of the application form can be obtained from Karen Kean tel: 0191 4926342 or Karen Price tel 0191 4926357, or by e-mail Karen.kean@lsc.gov.uk or karen.price@lsc.gov.uk

Your application should be clearly marked 'Bid for ESF Co-financing' on the covering envelope, and should be returned for the attention of:

Susan Robinson (Mrs)
Learning and Skills Council
Moongate House
5th Avenue Business Park
Team Valley Trading Estate
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE11 0HF

Applications should be received no later than **12.00pm midday 3 July 2007.**

A signed hard copy, an electronic copy by e-mail to either Karen.kean@lsc.gov.uk or karen.price@lsc.gov.uk, together with two photocopies of the application form should be submitted for each proposal by the deadline.

Any deliveries made by hand should be made during normal office hours.

Any proposal received after this deadline, or produced using any other documentation will be rejected.

9. SELECTION PROCESS

Bids will be appraised against the selection criteria attached to this prospectus and considered by a selection panel chaired by the Head of External Funding with membership drawn from across the local Learning and Skills Councils. The bids will also be considered by an Advisory Panel which will involve external representation.

All applicants will receive feedback on the outcome of the selection process.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force on **1 January 2005**.

Where a request for information is received, a response will be provided as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days after receiving a request. The request will be considered, and the reply should confirm or deny whether or not the information is held, and either provide the information requested, or explain why it has not been provided, quoting an exemption under the Act.

The Act requires that all requests:

- Are in writing (this does include emails)
- State clearly what information is required
- State the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence

On completion of the appraisal process, all successful bids will be moved into the public domain, and details may be published subject to written request being received.

10. PROVIDER FUNDING

Payment to providers will be agreed (as to levels and frequency) at the beginning of a contract and the process for payment will be streamlined and simplified to the provider's advantage. The majority of the simplification will arise from spend profiling and the subsequent claims, with the result, that providers should not experience peaks and troughs in their finances.

As a general statement of principle, it should only be necessary to consider paying the full 30% ESF advance in exceptional circumstances. It is anticipated that this situation may arise particularly with new providers or with the voluntary or community sector that have limited financial resources and frequently experience cash flow problems. Once successful projects have been identified the Learning and Skills Council will then be in a position to negotiate a contract with the successful provider. A key element of that contract will be a payment profile that will detail when payments will be made according to the need of the provider. As part of this negotiation, consideration will be given to the particular cash flow needs of the project and provider and whether all or part of the 30% advance will be required. This is a departure from current ESF practice where each applicant receives a 30% advance of 45% of the cost of the project regardless of need. It should be noted that the Learning and Skills Council contract will cover up to 100% of the costs and identify cash flow needs of the whole project rather than a proportion of the project. This should ensure that no organisation would be disadvantaged by the payment system.

11. PROVIDER CONTRACTS

On successful approval of the Co-financing Application (and, where applicable, the New Provider Assessment), the provider will be issued with a contract confirming the delivery of co-financed provision.

Until signed copies of these contracts are agreed, no delivery will be deemed eligible for funding.

Providers will be expected to submit information relating to learner data on an ongoing basis during the lifetime of the project.

12. NEW PROVIDERS

If you do not currently hold a contract with the local Learning and Skills Council and your application for funding is selected for support you will need to complete an application form for new organisations who wish to deliver Learning and Skills Council funded learning. This covers the following areas: -

- Management structure and background information.
- Details of publicly funded projects.
- Details relating to qualifications of staff.
- Organisations prospectus or leaflet (where available).
- Business Plan/Development Plan.
- Financial information as appropriate.
- Completed financial statement.
- Completed health and safety questionnaire.
- Completed equal opportunities questionnaire.

A copy of this application form can be obtained from the Learning and Skills Council should it be required.

13. PROVIDER PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Much of the learning provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council is subject to Provider Performance Review, conducted periodically to assess factors such as the quality of education and training; continuous improvement; aspects of leadership and management; delivery of agreed volumes and data management. Co-financed provision falls within the arrangements of Provider Performance Review, and the Learning and Skills Council is introducing mechanisms to review and evaluate Providers' delivery to:

- Identify areas for improvement.
- Promote continuous improvement.
- Identify excellence and disseminate good practice.
- Inform future planning and allocations.

14. QUALITY STANDARDS

The Provider will be expected to deliver its provision to an acceptable standard as defined by the Learning and Skills Council, which meets the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework regarding the quality of education and training, the standards achieved by those receiving that education and training; whether financial resources made available to those providing that education and training are managed efficiently and used in such way which provides value for money, and should take all reasonable steps to:

- Minimise drop out rates and deliver high completion and achievement rates, and appropriate progression
- Ensure competent and appropriately qualified staff deliver and assess learning.
- Offer equality of access to learning opportunities and close equality gaps in learning and outcomes.
- Provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment which meets the needs of learners.
- Provide good management and leadership of the learning process.
- Deliver value for money and financial probity.

The Provider shall continuously seek to improve its provision and raise standards to benefit the learner. The Provider shall have the primary responsibility for improving standards and will need to demonstrate to the Learning and Skills Council's satisfaction that it has an effective quality assurance system based on self-assessment, development plans, target setting and a continuous improvement strategy.

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Provider shall have an Equal Opportunities Policy Statement written in accordance with the guidelines available from the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission, and which shall have regard to the views of the Learning and Skills Council in respect of the provision of Learning.

In addition, applicants will be expected to demonstrate how Equal Opportunities is mainstreamed into the project proposal, how it will assist the promotion of equality between men and women, how equality issues are considered in policy development and implementation, how they will be addressed, including positive actions to help under represented groups and how it will impact on the project and its target groups.

16. PROPOSAL PRE-SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

A checklist of useful questions is detailed below which should form the basis of checking your application form before submission to the Learning and Skills Council and should provide the senior manager or director responsible for authorising a proposal with the assurance that key risk areas have been considered:

- Have all the key staff, who would be involved in the project delivery, reviewed the proposal and agreed to its content?
- Has an appropriate finance officer agreed the estimated cost of the proposal including any cost forecasts?
- What evidence is there to support the cost estimates?
- Has the senior management group in the organisation approved the project?

Areas to consider longer term, if your proposal is considered eligible.

If the proposal relates to training in a specific sector, has the relevant National Training Organisation been consulted?

- Have all organisations or partners involved in the project given verbal support to the proposal, (letters of support will be expected to accompany the proposal at the application stage).
- What are the cash flow implications of the project and how do they fit with the cash flow profile of the organisation as a whole?
- What evidence of need for the project is there to support the application?
- What is the "added value" for the project and how is this documented?
- What evidence do you have to support the proposed beneficiary numbers?

