



European Union
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Investing in jobs and skills

**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
NORTHWEST**

ESF CO-FINANCE

ADULT TENDER SPECIFICATIONS



Leading learning and skills

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For Information Only

Title: Cumbria – Skills for Jobs – Sector Routeways	Reference: NW/ADULT/S25
Aim	
<p>The overall strategic aim is to support the delivery of an integrated employment and skills system. This is one of a suite of specifications that will procure activity that contribute to the Skills for Jobs framework.</p> <p>The Sector Routeways programme aims to develop employability skills to enable individuals to enter sustainable employment in key sectors within Cumbria.</p> <p>The programme will deliver sector focussed activity and will contribute to county and district employment and skills strategies. It will support Local Employment Partnership delivery, complement Skills Pledges and work in partnership with other programmes addressing worklessness across Cumbria.</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>Skills for Jobs aims to tackle worklessness by reducing the number of individuals not in employment through a process of effective engagement, coaching, skills development and ongoing support into sustainable jobs and enabling them to progress towards the achievement of qualifications.</p> <p>This will be achieved by linking people who want to work with employers/sectors where there are vacancies and preparing individuals to secure and sustain employment.</p> <p>The LSC has developed three Skills for Jobs Routeways to reduce the number of individuals not in employment. This specification relates to the <u>Sector Routeway – Demand Led Programmes with Employers</u> (please refer to the Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs).</p> <p>By identifying employment opportunities and working with other bodies including Sector Skills Councils, demand led sector routeways should be designed and delivered to support eligible learners through pre-employment training into identified and sustainable employment, ideally progressing to Level 2 training via Train to Gain. This can be linked to a maximum 3 week Work Trial and may utilise other programmes on offer in the relevant geographic locations.</p> <p>The key target sectors in Cumbria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Construction, Health and Social Care, Manufacturing/Engineering, Retail, Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality and Logistics > Other sectors with identified growth and employment potential. <p>The expectation in Cumbria is to contract with a <u>lead organisation</u> that can facilitate sub-structures within a partnership and maintain service requirements. A partnership or consortium approach is essential and applicants must describe how they will work with the capacity of existing partnerships/consortia or how these will be developed for each geographic location within Cumbria. The geographic locations are Carlisle, West Cumbria (Allerdale and Copeland), Barrow and East Cumbria (Eden and South Lakeland).</p> <p>Applicants must explain how they will work with a range of agencies, partners and providers to develop a comprehensive menu of progression opportunities and ensure smooth transition arrangements for individuals along the programme journey. This will include Jobcentre Plus, outreach organisations, those delivering programmes under Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Jobcentre Plus/DWP, Neighbourhood Learning and Deprived Communities (NLDC), Community Grants, Advice and Guidance and other providers of employment programmes to disadvantaged communities. A list of some potential partner organisations for each of the geographic areas in</p>	

Cumbria is available on the website ([link](#))

Applicants must explain how they will make clear links to bespoke Adult Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services. The successful applicant will be required to work with the interim service and, after April 2009, with the new Adult Advancement service. It will also be a requirement to work closely with Skills for Jobs Adult IAG provision across Cumbria. In all instances, the aim is to make appropriate referrals and provide continued IAG support at each stage of the Sector Routeway.

Where necessary protocols or Service Level Agreements must be developed with these organisations to ensure a smooth transition for individuals, and should include arrangements for the sharing of data and avoidance of double-funding of outputs.

Applicants are strongly advised to read Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs ([link](#)) which accompanies all Skills for Jobs Tender Specifications as it includes information which will inform the design and content of applications.

Sector Routeway activity will support existing priorities including those in the Cumbria local area agreement, joint delivery plan with Jobcentre Plus, growth areas, and regeneration projects.

It will necessarily need to cross reference with, and complement, the mainly client engagement focussed activities procured by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) through their ESF Priority One Co-Financing round and also LSC procured, ESF funded, Offender Learning provision. It is recognised that the balance of JCP led and LSC led activities contributing to the learner's journey to sustainable employment will vary in each geographic area.

Routeway Activity Stages

Employer focussed Sector Routeway programmes will need to include the five stages of activity which are detailed below. These need to be considered from both employer and individual perspectives. Each stage is outlined below with a range of defined potential activities. Other appropriate activities should be factored in as necessary to achieve the objective of sustainable employment for individuals. It is expected that most individuals will start at Stage 1.

Some of the defined activities will be achieved through provision that is already funded. Proposals need to show how best value will be achieved by utilising existing provision. Applicants must also ensure that it is clear, where Jobcentre Plus is funding any activities to be used by individuals on a sector routeway, how this will be included and what working arrangements will be put in place to ensure that no duplication of funding of outputs takes place.

Examples of other provision available in Cumbria to which Sector Routeways should be linked and should add value to are:

- > Employability Skills Programme (LSC) to improve basic literacy/language (ESOL), numeracy and employability skills of Jobcentre Plus customers.
- > Cumbria Employability Skills and Training (JCP) for non-engaged Jobcentre Plus customers
- > Sustainable Employment Programme (LSC) providing pre-employment training required by a Local Employer Partnership and progression into in-work training.
- > Construction Pathways (JCP) for over 18s introduced to the sector and trained to Level 1
- > Engagement (JCP) and Community Projects (JCP) for non-engaged Jobcentre Plus customer
- > Working Neighbourhood Funded (WNF) projects in Barrow and Copeland.
- > Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities currently in the FE sector.

Other LSC funded programmes such as Foundation Learning Tier programmes, Neighbourhood Learning and Development (NLDC) should be considered as well as Jobcentre Plus programmes such as Programme Centre activities, Pathways to Work and the Gateway Programme.

Proposed Routeways should predominantly comprise of activities and support drawn from the list below as deemed appropriate to meet the aim of Skills for Jobs – Demand Led Programmes with Employers.

Stages 1 and 2 - Employer and Learner Engagement

- > Individual job and skills diagnostic and assessment services
- > Development of job and skills action plan
- > Sector focussed direct learner recruitment via partners
- > Learner support
- > Job scoping/broking support
- > Responsive recruitment support
- > Gain commitment to volume recruitment
- > Engagement with employers to:
 - Design routeway requirements
 - Establish entry requirements
 - Establish Components
 - Ensure Job Interview Guarantees

Stage 3 –The Pre Employment Phase

- > Employability skills training
- > Skills for Life
- > ESOL for Work
- > Learner support
- > Pre employment support for individuals e.g. CV writing, mock interviews, skills passports etc.
- > Work placements
- > Pre recruitment bespoke training based to meet the needs of employers
- > Job Interview guarantee (pre employment support and bespoke training leading to guaranteed interviews)
- > Employability and occupational training tailored to Individual and sectoral need
- > Mentoring and support services
- > Skills Coaching
- > Specialist provision
- > “Softer” skills development (assertiveness, anger management, motivation)
- > Training and assessment services delivered on employers’ premises
- > Links to appropriate existing provision

Stage 4 –The Entry to Employment Phase

- > Job Interview Guarantee programmes (pre employment support training leading to guaranteed job interviews).
- > Work Trials/Skills for Work (Skills for Work comprises of two weeks pre-employment training and three weeks work trial before the individual enters paid employment and ideally moves into ongoing learning through Train to Gain or an apprenticeship if appropriate. This option allows access to a wide range of jobseekers that can benefit from five weeks of training and support to achieve agreed recruitment standards.)
- > Supported employment for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities including coaching
- > Mentoring and support services
- > Support to develop employer Equality and Diversity policy and practice
- > Transitional support from Welfare to Workforce
- > Coordination of learner support as a bridge between employment and training.
- > Specialised provision

Stage 5 –The Post Employment Phase

- > Development of a job and skills action plan
- > Transitional support from Welfare to Workforce
- > Post recruitment bespoke training based to meet the needs of employers (leading to T2G)
- > Supported employment for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

- > including coaching
- > Post employment mentoring and support for individuals
- > Post recruitment bespoke training based to meet the needs of employers
- > Progression through to Train to Gain/Adult Apprenticeships/Further workplace learning

The LSC is not willing in this tender to consider proposals which only seek to deliver particular stages or actions within the stages detailed above and therefore applicants should ensure that their proposals contain activities that will deliver *all* of the defined progression stages either by themselves or by other partnership/consortia members.

The achievement of entering employment is not seen as the end of the learner's journey as we wish to ensure that in-work support ensures sustainability of employment and, where appropriate, also progression to Level 2 learning via Train to Gain.

Support may require that new services are developed to tackle specific gaps or need; or may extend existing good practice by geographical location or by client group. It will be essential for the successful contractor to work in close cooperation and liaison with providers of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services.

Provider behaviour will need to ensure the avoidance of the duplication of provision. The offer to participants must align and enhance existing funded activity *not* replicate it. We would expect that protocols will be developed with key partners to ensure smooth transition for customers and sharing of information etc e.g. Jobcentre Plus, learning providers.

The successful applicant will be required to work closely with employers, their intermediaries and other representative bodies. In particular, the principles of the programme will require the successful applicants to:

- > Develop customised training programmes with a focus on employment within growth and key employability priority sectors in Cumbria, particularly Retail, Construction, Manufacturing/Engineering, Health and Social Care, Tourism and Hospitality and Logistics. Each sector will require a specific, customised programme to cater for their needs, whilst still sharing some common principles.
- > Applying and adapting relevant Sector Employability Toolkits developed by Sector Skills Councils.
- > Provide evidence of strong working relationships with employers and their representative bodies within the priority sectors to which they are seeking to deliver the programme.
- > Deliver a programme that provides a 'fit for purpose' menu of learning outcomes and activities capable of responding to the needs of a diverse client group and the range of job opportunities.
- > Provide all learners with the support and opportunity to progress to positive outcomes, particularly interviews for employment or other sustainable employment prospects and progression to further learning.
- > Add value to and take full account of existing provision and programmes.
- > Demonstrate good working relationships with Jobcentre Plus and experience of working within benefit agency rules and regulations as they relate to the particular client groups.
- > Devise and implement methods of delivery that support the needs of rural learners and businesses.

LSC Cumbria is committed to contributing to the achievement of objectives in the Cumbria Community Strategy and applicants should demonstrate how they will align and work to address neighbourhood disparities in skill levels and worklessness, particularly in the deprived wards of target geographic locations. It is necessary to outline methods of working with engagement and delivery partners at neighbourhood level, particularly those from the local Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors.

LSC Cumbria recognises that the successful applicant will be required to locally manage and co-ordinate activity across a range of delivery agencies. Descriptions of how this will be done should be clearly detailed in the proposal, including any relevant capacity building. It is important that delivery reaches out to local communities and to vulnerable groups, including those in rural locations.

In particular, this needs to maximise the existing skills and experience of a wide range of agencies, in order that the needs of particular priority groups and specific geographic areas are addressed. Proposed delivery should

incorporate and extend existing successful activities.

Sub-contracting arrangements should be consistent with value for money, use of associates and partners should be clearly described in applications.

All information requested should be given in respect of the lead applicant organisation. Relevant information should also be provided in respect of partnership members who will play a significant role in the delivery of services or products under any ensuing contract. Responses must enable the LSC to assess the overall service proposed.

Formative Evaluation

Successful tender applicants will need to participate in evaluation activity as appropriate. They will need to articulate their baseline starting point so that the distance of travel can be measured. Please see the Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs for more details.

Target groups & priority

Skills for Jobs is intended to create better engagement of disadvantaged adults who are both economically inactive or on benefits, and who need additional training, upskilling and support to prepare them for employment; and in-work training and help to enable them to sustain and progress in employment.

The target group is adults (19+) not currently in employment who want to work but lack skills and qualifications that are up-to-date and relevant to the job market and who are residents of the geographic locations identified for this tender specification. Within this broad category, groups facing specific barriers and experiencing significant disadvantages will be prioritised, reflecting local and sub-regional needs, as detailed below:

- > Incapacity Benefit claimants
- > Income Support benefit claimants
- > Lone Parents
- > People with Skills for Life needs below Level 2
- > Workless Households
- > Ex Offenders and Offenders under supervision in the community
- > People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities
- > People over 50 years of age
- > Homeless people
- > People from BME Communities

In addition, in Cumbria we include a small target group of unemployed adults recently made redundant who require minimal Stage 4 activity within their job and skills action plan to return to sustainable employment without becoming claimants. Employed individuals, under threat of redundancy, have recourse to other programmes of support and are therefore ineligible for this programme.

We expect delivery to the above groups to be in line with the statistical profile of economic inactivity for Cumbria as identified in the [North West Strategic Analysis and Sub Regional Analysis Report](#) which is available on the LSC's website.

Where applicants are seeking to support offenders who are serving their sentence, or are under probation supervision, in the community, it is important that applicants are aware that the current ESF programmes being delivered until July 2008 continue to generate evidence of effective practice and that their proposals demonstrate how they will build on this.

There are established local partnerships responsible for employment, learning and skills for offenders. Applicants will need to specify how they will work with these partnerships so that offenders in the

community benefit from a holistic, integrated package of support which takes account of their sentence requirements.

For ESF purposes, unemployment is defined as a period where a person is not in paid employment (subject to certain exceptions). Claiming a benefit allowance from Jobcentre Plus is not needed as evidence of unemployment. However, it is your responsibility to make sure that you accurately record the length of time all the beneficiaries were unemployed before they started on an ESF project, including those recently made redundant.

The following are considered as periods of unemployment. Time spent:

- > on Jobseeker's Allowance;
- > on Income Support;
- > on Incapacity Benefits;
- > on Invalid Care Allowance;
- > on a New Deal Option or Gateway (except the employment option);
- > in custody.

The following conditions **do not affect** qualifying periods of unemployment for beneficiaries: periods of unpaid work;

- > casual or temporary work of not more than four weeks;
- > part-time work of less than 16 hours a week in total, provided that the skills needed for the work will not lead to greater involvement in the labour market;
- > time spent on an earlier ESF project where the current project will develop the previous one. Where you cannot clearly show this, the beneficiaries will need to serve the qualifying period again. Beneficiaries may only continue to work on the current project if you agree; and
- > time spent on government-funded programmes under four weeks long such as New Deals or work-based learning where people are **not** considered part of the workforce.

The following **do not count** as periods of unemployment:

- > time spent on work-related government programmes such as New Deal
- > where people are considered to form part of the workforce;
- > days for which Statutory Sick Pay or Statutory Maternity Pay have been claimed;
- > time spent in compulsory education; and
- > time spent on training or education courses that last longer than four weeks.

Where individuals are in part-time employment or casual or temporary work of not more than 4 weeks, beneficiaries may not be employed in the public sector. This is because ESF is not usually available for training individuals who have permanent jobs in the public sector, as the Commission believes that direct training of public employees should be supported by the Member States.

For ESF purposes, people who are economically inactive are:

- > of working age;
- > not employed;
- > not self-employed; and
- > not actively seeking work.

Skills and employment training under skills for jobs programmes will need to be compliant with existing benefit regulations, for example the 16-hour rule to those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Job Seekers Income Support.

Applicants must also note that the normal eligibility criteria will apply to existing provision which may form part of the Sector Routeway. For mainstream LSC provision this criteria can be found at:

http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/Furthereducation/Funding_Guidance_for_Further_Education_in_200708.htm For provision funded by other agencies, applicants should contact those agencies to obtain their eligibility criteria.

Geography / area of delivery

We are willing to consider applications which seek to support residents from all of LSC Cumbria's administrative area; however, regard should be paid to areas of concentration of economic inactivity and to areas currently identified in existing strategic planning.

Employment opportunities are linked to growth sectors and regeneration projects, therefore we would expect to see delivery which supports these sectors and projects. For the period of this activity, the following are of particular note:

- > The Energy Coast (West Cumbria Spatial Masterplan) regeneration plans arising from significant changes to the dominant nuclear industry and future decommissioning developments.
- > Barrow Docklands and Waterfront initiatives will increase employment opportunities initially in construction and retailing. Other sectoral needs will emerge as inward investment is attracted to the area.
- > Significant funds are being deployed through Carlisle Renaissance, across a range of tourism, education and business opportunities.
- > In the East and South of the county, Penrith Town Centre and Lowther Castle developments and Kendal town initiatives all provide future employment opportunities.

In order to meet the spatial needs of Cumbria, activities should be delivered across the county in the following proportions:

Allerdale/Copeland	35%
Barrow	30%
Carlisle	25%
South Lakeland/Eden	10%

Applicants must complete Annex 1 detailing proposed delivery for each of the aforementioned areas.

Outputs

LSC Cumbria is looking to support activity that will deliver or contribute towards the following outputs. Applicants must specify on the tender form what activity will be delivered against each of these outputs.

- A minimum of 355 adults completing a Skills for Jobs Action Plan
- A maximum of three Skills for Jobs learner action plan main Stage Progressions per participant (i.e. progression from stage 1 engagement, to stage 3, to stage 4 and then stage 5). Stage 5 support is limited to a maximum of 6 months per individual
- A minimum of 30 unemployed and recently redundant adults completing a Skills Update Action Plan.

Results

LSC Cumbria is looking to support activity that will deliver or contribute towards the following results. Applicants must specify on the tender form what activity will be delivered against each of these results.

- A minimum of 142 (40% of 355 adults) of participants entering employment with training
- A minimum of 117 (33% of 355 adults) of participants continuing in employment with training after 13 weeks (training is defined as LSC funded provision, which may include ESF activity such as 'Pathways to an NVQ2').
- A minimum of 92 (26% of 355 adults) of participants in employment after 6 months
- A minimum of 30 unemployed and recently redundant adults supported from stage 4 to stage 5.

Other outcomes

LSC Cumbria is looking to support activity that will deliver or contribute towards the outputs and results specified above. However, applicants are invited to identify any other outcomes, including soft outcomes that their project will deliver.

Funding available

The maximum amount of funding available for this tender specification is: £545,750.

Applicants may not apply for more than the maximum level of funding which has been identified for this Tender Specification.

The minimum tender size for projects seeking support via this tender specification is **£545,750**. This is to keep overheads, contract management costs and bureaucracy down to a minimum and ensure strategic impact. Where organisations wish to deliver a smaller project, or a part of a larger Tender, they should collaborate with a lead organisation to develop the full range of activities to reach the minimum tender size.

The following unit costs have been calculated purely for comparison purposes, they do not reflect the actual unit cost that the LSC will pay providers for the delivery of the activity specified in this Tender Specification. Applicants are required to identify, as required in the questionnaire, the average unit cost of their activity based on their proposed actual costs.

> Average cost per participant assisted via the Sector Routeway	£1,500
> Average cost per participant assisted via this Tender Specification who remains in employment for at least 13 weeks	£4,547
> Average cost per recently redundant participants assisted from Stage 4 to Stage 5	£500

Start and end dates

Projects must not start activity before 1st October 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31st December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities).

Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

LSC Cumbria would expect to let no more than one contract against this tender specification.

The Learning and Skills Council intends to contract the activity within this tender specification against a set of deliverables, such as starts, qualifications, job outcomes, companies assisted; as applicable with the activity defined in the Outputs and Results section of this Tender Specification. Each key deliverable will be assigned a unit cost and the LSC will pay against this profile of activity. Successful applicants will be required to submit regular learner and performance related information to the LSC and the LSC will normally reconcile contracts on a quarterly basis, which will affect future profile payments, or seek to recover funds where necessary.

The Learning and Skills Council may also choose to invite projects to be retained on a reserve list to enable them to be funded at a later point.

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