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**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
 NORTHWEST**



Leading learning and skills

ESF CO-FINANCE

**EMPLOYER TENDER
 SPECIFICATIONS**

SEPTEMBER 2008

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Title: North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area – Training In-Company Mentors to Support Employee Retention	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S22
Aim <p>This tender supports the post-employment phase of the Skills for Jobs Framework.</p> <p>The aim of this tender specification is to seek providers to deliver a comprehensive package of training and development to potential mentoring staff in the workplace. This package will enable employers to provide their own in-house support for newly recruited employees, particularly long term unemployed.</p>	
Service requirement Background <p>The LSC's Skills For Jobs Framework aims to deliver an integrated employment and skills system (please refer to the document: Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs, September 2008). As part of the framework, the LSC has recently procured a suite of activity which provides pre-employment training for workless individuals with the aim of securing a permanent job. Once a job is secured, 1:1 support is offered directly to these new employees to enable them to sustain their employment. This support is delivered via an external contracted provider.</p> <p>This specification is aimed at supporting employers to provide their own in-house support as part of their recruitment and retention strategy. There is evidence that such support can increase new staff retention rates. For example, the Ofsted Good Practice Database highlights the 'British Gas' 'buddy' mentoring system as a successful retention scheme, in operation since 1997, which has also been adapted for use in employer pilot programmes for long-term unemployed adults and those facing redundancy.</p> <p>It is recognised that people who have previously been out of work may find it difficult to adapt to working life and may need additional support in the workplace. The objective of this specification is to provide a comprehensive package of training and development that can be flexibly delivered to nominated existing employees in the workplace. Through the programme, these nominated employees will gain the skills to enable them to support new entrants and give them the knowledge of how to work effectively alongside the existing provider led support services already available to the individual.</p> Training Package <p>A partnership approach may be required in order to deliver a programme combining the two essential elements: element 1 will develop individual skills; element 2 will develop underpinning knowledge. Where possible, delivery should be contextualised to meet the sector routeway specific to the needs of the employer.</p> Element 1: Skill Building <p>It is essential that the individual has the necessary skills to support others in the workplace. Although not prescriptive, the package of training may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentoring and coaching skills• Team working skills• Building confidence• Working with stakeholders• Developing induction programmes	

Element 2: Knowledge Building

It is essential that the employer is given an understanding of many of the issues facing those entering the workplace from a period of reliance on benefits and the knowledge of where to signpost individuals for specific elements of support. As a minimum, we would expect the applicant to be able to demonstrate how they will incorporate into the programme an overview of:

- job-focussed pre-employment provision
- LSC funded workplace provision and how mentoring will complement/enhance this
- IAG (Information, Advice & Guidance) services
- welfare benefits system including return to work benefits
- the potential characteristics and barriers faced by work returners
- local support services (eg: childcare; transport; debt; caring responsibilities; drug rehabilitation)
- Equality and diversity issues within the North West including working with ex offenders, BME and other groups.

Flexibility in delivery

In order to ensure delivery of a programme which meets the needs of employers and employees, tenders must describe how delivery will be flexible around learners' working hours or dependant support activity (i.e. children or carer activity) and with the full co-operation of employers.

Marketing the programme

Applicants must outline how they will liaise with providers of job-focussed pre-employment training programmes in order to effectively market this provision to receptive employers recruiting for vacancies via these routes. This could include:

- Job Centre Plus providers
- Employers signed up to a Job Centre Plus Local Employment Partnership
- LSC Skills for Jobs providers
- LSC SEP Providers
- Local Authority programmes
- City Employment Strategy (or equivalent) programmes
- NWDA programmes

Applicants will also be required to outline how they will market their services to employers not previously engaged in such activity and should also outline how they will work with Business Link North West to offer this programme as part of the Train to Gain service for employers.

Selection of learners

Applicants must outline how they will ensure potential learners, as part of an initial assessment, are ready to become 'workplace mentors' and are:

- competent and experienced in the occupational job roles they will be supporting;
- good at motivating and encouraging people;
- interested in helping people develop;
- able to relate to staff at all levels;
- willing to engage with external support agencies.
- Willing to work with union learning representative's where appropriate

Learners must have access to newly recruited employees to support. The tender must outline how this will be achieved.

Quality

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.
- Providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for each sector in which they wish to deliver. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from <http://www.newstandard.co.uk> .

Employer Unique Reference Number (URN)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Target groups & priority

Employers based in the North West, in any sector including the voluntary and community sector.

Participants must either be a resident in or work (both paid and unpaid) in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this tender specification.

ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce.

Training to support low skilled public sector workers to gain basic skills and level 2 qualifications is eligible. This is because the benefits of training at this level primarily benefit the individuals concerned and promote career development and mobility.

Additionally, the Learning and Skills Council would like to see providers demonstrate in their tenders that they are making linkages with employers actively engaged in recruitment via Job Centre Plus and/or Skills for Jobs Framework Programmes.

Geography / area of delivery

The service should be available across the whole of the North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Outputs

The minimum outputs to be delivered are:

- A programme of support (one per contract)
- 1440 Employee starts on a programme of training and development of which 360 (25%) must be from the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

Results

The minimum results to be delivered are:

- 1200 Employee completions on a programme of training and development of which 250 (25%)

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must be from the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

- 288 NCFE Certificate in Work Based Support & Mentoring and/or provider certification for non-accredited bespoke programme of which 72 (25%) must be from the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.
- 600 Employers engaged in the programme of which 150 (25%) must be from the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

Other Outcomes

Successful applicants will be required to submit six monthly performance and evaluation reports providing details of employers engaged in the programme with case studies to demonstrate impact.

Best practice from providers will be collected and communicated to all involved in the programme..

Funding available

Total ESF funding for this programme is £900,000, of which £225,000 is available for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £675,000 is available for the rest of the Northwest.

The split of funds identified within geographic locations is indicative; the exception to this is the allocation for Merseyside Phasing-In Area which is exclusively available for that area.

Below is an indicative split of funding for the Northwest allocation.

- Cheshire and Warrington - 13%
- Cumbria - 6.5%
- Greater Manchester – 52%
- Lancashire – 26%
- Halton – 2.5%

It is anticipated that the average unit cost would be no greater than £*** per beneficiary and indeed we expect that for many it will be a lot less. We therefore expect applications that can demonstrate value for money comparable to the client group targeted.

Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations. State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through ‘state resources’ that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.

It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial environment (whether for profit or not).

Guidance will be provided on State Aid to the successful applicant(s), however it is important to note the LSC will initially be operating De Minimis. Successful providers will need to ensure that employers have not breached the £138,000 ceiling over 3 fiscal years. If this ceiling is breached then the following limits will be applied for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the State Aid General Block Exemption. Above these limits cash or where agreed with the LSC, in-kind contributions must be sought from the employer.

It should also be noted that the LSC expects that **ALL** training delivered under this Tender Specification to be ‘General’ as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
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Intervention Rate	25%	60%
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	35%	70%

Definition of General training is: If the training of employees is applicable not only to an employees' present or future position in the enterprise being assisted because the provision of qualifications provides transferable skills that substantially improve the employability of the employee concerned. Where training leads to the award of National Vocational qualifications and Key Skills Qualifications training will be considered to be general in nature

Definition of Specific training is: Where training provided is principally applicable to the employee's present or future position in the assisted enterprise and provides qualifications that are not transferable, the maximum aid intensities for specific training will apply.

Where Deminimis has been limits have been exceeded, providers are required to ensure that each beneficiary company must contribute to the total cost of support provided. Therefore this allocation is conditional on the beneficiary company providing the correct contribution to the cost of training they have received. The company contribution can either be financial or in-kind (unless the LSC instructs that financial or in kind is specifically required). The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

It should be noted that the LSC will be applying for the General Block Exemption to be applied to LSC ESF funded activity for the 07/13 ESF programme, but until this application is approved, Deminimis is the only valid exemption

Providers will be responsible for securing and evidencing the employer contribution, this evidence must be readily available for audit purposes. No claim against the ESF will be valid until the employer contribution has been received by the provider. The provider will be required to complete company information records and state aid documentation for all companies supported through the programme.

Start and end dates

Projects must not start activity before 1 May 2009 and must complete all of their activity by 31 July 2011(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

Up to 5 contracts may be awarded in the North West. The Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. Where applicants seek to deliver activity across the North West and Merseyside Phasing-In Area then the LSC would need to issue 2 contracts.

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

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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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 May 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Participant Assessment, Planning and Support	£82	1440	£118,080
S4	Employees undertaking non-accredited training and development learning activity	£180.00	1440	£259,200
S7	Employees undertaking accredited qualifications at Level 2 or notional Level 2(NCFE Certificate in Work Based Support & Mentoring). NB These learners are part of the overall 1440 in S2 & S4	£180.00	350	£63,000
S22*	Mid-Point Payments (x2 per learner) based on average length of stay for S4 Starts (6 months). NB. This has been calculated using a flat line drop of rate.	£50.00	2640	£132,000
A2	Completion of non-accredited training and development learning activity	£180.00	1200	£216,000

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A10	Employees achieve accredited qualifications at Level 2 or notional Level 2 (NCFE Certificate in Work Based Support & Mentoring). NB These learners are part of the overall 1440 in S2 & S4	£180.00	288	£51,840
C3	Companies engaged	£100.00	600	£60,000
M11	Project Evaluation including Case Studies (evaluations to be submitted February and August and Case Studies May and November) + Final Evaluation at Project End	£0.00		£0
Total				£900,120

***NB Providers are asked to set out their programme design for this tender specification. The above deliverables have been based on a 6 month delivery programme per learner, if however the proposed course is different to this, the deliverables will be amended at contract clarification to reflect the average length of stay in the application.**

Title: North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area – Functional IT Skills in the Workplace	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S23
Aim	
<p>The aim of this Invitation to Tender is to respond to employer demand for functional IT training, recognising that increasingly, most employees now need to be able to use computers to enable them to be competent in their job role.</p>	
<p>This Tender Specification will provide ESF funding for individuals to undertake an ITQ Level 1, either alongside an NVQ/SfL qualification or as a standalone qualification.</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>This provision is intended for employees who need support to enable them to improve their functional IT skills and for whom an ITQ Level 2 would not be appropriate. Volunteers are also eligible as part of an organisation's workforce, as are self-employed learners.</p>	
<p>Providers should note that ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce.</p>	
<p>Although the employees may work in any sector, the sectors below have been identified as having higher demand for this provision. Employees within these sectors are more likely to be unqualified and evidence from the National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) shows that these sectors also have above average levels of skills gaps:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail• Hospitality• Food and Drink Manufacturing• Leisure, Travel and tourism• Care• Engineering and Manufacturing• Textiles• Construction• Warehousing	
<p>In order to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development and that delivery of the ITQ L1 is aligned with NVQ/SfL delivery where appropriate, successful applicants must either already hold a Train to Gain contract, or work closely with partners who hold Train to Gain contracts.</p>	
<p>The successful provider will be required to:</p>	
Identify potential employers and participants	
<p>Applicants should explain how they will market the programme to employers as part of an integrated package of skills solutions and how they will work with Business Link Northwest and with providers delivering Train to Gain to ensure that employers are able to access this provision.</p>	
<p>Applicants should also demonstrate how they would identify learners who need this skills development and how they would carry out initial assessment to ascertain learners' individual needs.</p>	
<p>Individual learning plans must be agreed with each learner and should reflect, where appropriate,</p>	

arrangements to align delivery with the individual's NVQ and /or SfL programme.

Flexible delivery

The expectation is that most delivery will take place in the workplace, as it does in Train to Gain. The Assess-Train-Assess model should be utilised to ensure learners receive credit for prior learning. Applicants should explain how they will ensure that delivery is flexible in order to meet both learners' and employer needs.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited.

Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Progression to further learning

Applicants should describe how they will facilitate the learners' progression to further learning where appropriate, for example some learners may wish to further improve their IT skills by undertaking an ITQL2, others may wish to undertake their first full NVQL2/3.

Where progression entails the learner transferring to another provider, applicants must:

- Demonstrate that they have partnership arrangements in place with other providers or outline plans to put them in place and
- Show how they will ensure a smooth transition for the learner

Quality of provision

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.
- Providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for each sector in which they wish to deliver. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from

<http://www.newstandard.co.uk> .

Employer Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR) prior to submission of data. Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

New qualification - ITQ for Life

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Applicants are requested to note that a new qualification will be available from August 2009 - ITQ for Life* – which may be more suitable for some learners and will be deliverable under this tender specification as an alternative to ITQ Level 1.

*ITQ for Life is a level 1 pathway within the ITQ Framework, developed by e-skills UK and employers to raise the ICT literacy of learners. The qualification supports the development of IT skills required for employment together with opportunities for development of literacy and numeracy skills. Further information may be obtained from the publication “ ITQ for Life – a Guide for Training Providers” available from e-skills UK at www.e-skills.com

Target groups & priority

Employees, volunteers or self-employed individuals aged 19 yrs or older who are seeking to improve their functional IT skills.

ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce.

Participants must either be a resident in or work/be a volunteer in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification.

Training to support low skilled public sector workers to gain basic skills and level 2 qualifications is eligible. This is because the benefits of training at this level primarily benefit the individuals concerned and promote career development and mobility.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

Output	Northwest	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Total
Learners starting on the programme	1825	725	2550

- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme
- A project evaluation report to be submitted to the LSC every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation at the end of the project.

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

Result	Northwest	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Total
ITQ Level 1 achievements (a minimum of 60% of learners are expected to achieve their learning aim)	1086	443	1529

Other outcomes

- Referrals to Train to Gain provision

Successful organisations are required to produce a 6 monthly performance and evaluation report.

Funding available

A total of £2,448,000 comprised of £720,000 for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £1,728,000 for the rest of the Northwest. Identified below is a split of funding for the Northwest area, this split is indicative; the exception to this is the allocation for Merseyside Phasing-In Area which is exclusively available for that area.

- Cheshire and Warrington - 13%
- Cumbria - 6.5%
- Greater Manchester – 52%
- Lancashire – 26%
- Halton – 2.5%

Funding rate

The funding rate for this provision is £1,200 per learner undertaking ITQ Level 1.

Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations. State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through ‘state resources’ that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.

It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial environment (whether for profit or not).

Guidance will be provided on State Aid to the successful applicant(s), however it is important to note the LSC will initially be operating De Minimis. Successful providers will need to ensure that employers have not breached the £138,000 ceiling over 3 fiscal years. If this ceiling is breached then the following limits will be applied for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the State Aid General Block Exemption. Above these limits cash or where agreed with the LSC, in-kind contributions must be sought from the employer.

It should also be noted that the LSC expects that **ALL** training delivered under this Tender Specification to be ‘General’ as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	25%	60%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	35%	70%

Definition of General training is: If the training of employees is applicable not only to an employees’ present or future position in the enterprise being assisted because the provision of qualifications provides transferable skills that substantially improve the employability of the employee concerned. Where training leads to the award of National Vocational qualifications and Key Skills Qualifications training will be considered to be general in nature

Definition of Specific training is: Where training provided is principally applicable to the

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employee's present or future position in the assisted enterprise and provides qualifications that are not transferable, the maximum aid intensities for specific training will apply.

Where Deminimis has been limits have been exceeded, providers are required to ensure that each beneficiary company must contribute to the total cost of support provided. Therefore this allocation is conditional on the beneficiary company providing the correct contribution to the cost of training they have received. The company contribution can either be financial or in-kind (unless the LSC instructs that financial or in kind is specifically required). The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

It should be noted that the LSC will be applying for the General Block Exemption to be applied to LSC ESF funded activity for the 07/13 ESF programme, but until this application is approved, Deminimis is the only valid exemption.

Providers will be responsible for securing and evidencing the employer contribution, this evidence must be readily available for audit purposes. No claim against the ESF will be valid until the employer contribution has been received by the provider. The provider will be required to complete company information records and state aid documentation for all companies supported through the programme.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 May 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011.

Individuals must not be recruited if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve their learning outcome. The Learning and Skills Council reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. Where providers seek to deliver activity across the North West and Merseyside Phasing-In Area then 2 contracts will be issued.

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.

To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £200,000 for the duration of this Tender Specification.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 May 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

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.

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively

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tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Individual learning plan produced	£50	2550	£127,500
S6	Learner engaged on ITQ Level 1	£250	2550	£637,500
S21	Beneficiary retention payment (learners will claim 2 retention payments and the overall volumes for these are calculated using a straight line drop off rate)	£300	4081	£1,224,300
A9	Achievement of qualification at Level 1	£300	1529	£458,700
M4	Project evaluation including case studies	£0.00		£0
Total				£2,448,000

Title: Greater Manchester and Merseyside Phasing-In Area – Pathway to NVQ Level 2	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S24
Aim <p>The Learning and Skills Council recognises that some employees who do not have an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent, may not be ready to undertake an NVQ Level 2 because they lack confidence or require personal development or would in some sectors benefit from first undertaking an NVQ Level 1.</p> <p>This Tender Specification will provide ESF funding for individuals to undertake a personal development programme or a vocationally relevant NVQ Level 1 if appropriate, to help them to progress to NVQ Level 2.</p>	
Service requirement <p>This provision is intended for employees who do not already hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (eg 5 GCSEs grades A-C) and who need support to enable them to progress to their first NVQ. Volunteers are also eligible, as part of the organisation’s workforce, as are self-employed learners. ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce.</p> <p>Although the expectation is that many of these learners will progress into Train to Gain, it is acknowledged that this outcome may not be possible for some learners.</p> <p>Eligible employees may work in any sector, however the sectors below have been identified as having a relatively low-skilled workforce. Employees within these sectors are more likely to be unqualified and evidence from the National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) shows that these sectors also have above average levels of skills gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail• Hospitality• Food and Drink Manufacturing• Leisure, Travel and tourism• Care• Engineering and Manufacturing• Textiles• Construction• Warehousing <p>In order to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development and that where appropriate, progression for individuals to NVQ2 takes place with the minimum of disruption, successful applicants must either already hold a Train to Gain contract, or must work closely with partners who hold Train to Gain contracts.</p> <p>The successful provider will be required to:</p> <p>Identify participants who could benefit from a pre-NVQ Level 2 programme</p> <p>Applicants should explain how they will market the programme to employers as part of an integrated package of skills solutions and how they will work with Business Link Northwest and with other providers to ensure that employers are referred to this programme.</p> <p>It is essential that the provision in this tender specification does not duplicate or displace activities</p>	

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supported through other funding streams, for example Skills for Jobs support which is in place for the first 13 weeks after an individual gains employment, and similar support provided through the Sustainable Employment programme.

Applicants should therefore explain how they will link with other partners and agencies to ensure that this programme complements and builds on support programmes already in place.

Applicants should also demonstrate how they would identify learners for whom this option is more suitable than an NVQ Level 2 qualification and should outline how they would carry out initial assessment to ascertain those learners' individual needs including a full diagnostic assessment of Skills for Life (SfL) needs (carried out by appropriately qualified staff in line with LLUK specifications). The provider will be expected to produce an individual learning plan for each learner with milestones to show progress, which should include planned progression to NVQ Level 2 where appropriate.

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited.

Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Learning programmes

Each learner must have an individual learning plan which builds on the outcome of initial assessment. The plan should include timescales and milestones by which to measure progress and should include progression into further learning, preferably NVQ Level 2 where appropriate.

Learning programmes could include vocational knowledge, personal development, communication skills, interpersonal skills, confidence building, working in teams, improving ICT skills, Skills for Life, however this is not intended to be an exhaustive list since each learner's programme should meet their needs. Delivery of learning should be as flexible as possible in order to meet employee and employer needs.

Applicants must clearly outline the content of the Personal Development Programme, identifying direct contact time with participants.

Where it is appropriate for the individual and is an accepted route for the sector, the learner may choose to undertake an NVQ Level 1 programme. This should be delivered in the workplace unless otherwise agreed with the employer.

Many learners identified as potential beneficiaries for this provision are likely to also have SfL needs, therefore applicants should explain how SfL needs will be met, for example by integrating SfL within the learning programme, or if appropriate, by the learner undertaking a separate SfL qualification. It is not intended that this programme will fund separate SfL qualifications as they are already funded through Train to Gain. If the applicant does not hold a contract for provision of SfL, they must explain how they will work with partners to provide this support.

Facilitate progression to further learning

Regular progress reviews must be carried out to monitor individual learners' progress. This will be particularly important towards the end of the learner's programme in order to facilitate the arrangements for their progression to further learning where appropriate.

Applicants must explain how they will facilitate the learners' progression to further learning and how they will ensure a smooth transition for the learner including provision of aftercare.

Where progression entails the learner transferring to another provider, applicants must:

- Demonstrate that they have partnership arrangements in place with other providers or outline plans to put them in place and
- Show how they will ensure a smooth transition for the learner including provision of aftercare.

Quality of provision

Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as the Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.

Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from <http://www.newstandard.co.uk> .

The Learning and Skills Council will welcome applications that make links between the provision funded under this specification and the emerging Foundation Learning Tier.

Employer Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR) prior to submission of data. Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Target groups & priority

This provision is intended primarily for employees in low skilled job roles who do not already hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (eg GCSEs grades A-C), however it is available for other employees as long as they do not hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent and who need support to enable them to progress to NVQ Level 2.

Volunteers are also eligible, as part of the organisation's workforce, as are self-employed learners. ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce.

Participants must either be a resident in or work (in either a paid or unpaid capacity) in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification.

Training to support low skilled public sector workers to gain basic skills and level 2 qualifications is eligible. This is because the benefits of training at this level primarily benefit the individuals concerned and promote career development and mobility.

Geography / area of delivery

Provision is sought for the Greater Manchester and the Merseyside Phasing-In (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helen and Wirral) Area.

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

Greater Manchester

- 1,396 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme
- A project evaluation report to be produced every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the programme

Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 1158 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme
- A project evaluation report to be produced every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the programme

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

Greater Manchester

- 838 learners (60%) progressing to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision
- NVQ Level 1 achievements (a minimum of 60% of learners undertaking NVQ Level 1 are expected to achieve their learning aim) or
- Learners completing their Personal Development Programme

Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 695 learners (60%) progressing to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision
- NVQ Level 1 achievements (a minimum of 60% of learners undertaking NVQ Level 1 are expected to achieve their learning aim) or
- Learners completing their Personal Development Programme

Other outcomes

- Referrals to SfL provision

Successful providers will be required to provide a 6 monthly performance and evaluation report.

Funding available

A total of £1,966,500 comprised of £1,090,500 for Greater Manchester and £876,000 for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

The unit price for learners undertaking an NVQ Level 1 qualification is £1,000 per learner, of which 10% will be payable on confirmation of their progression to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2.

Where participants undertake a Personal Development Programme as an NVQ Level 1 is not appropriate, the unit price is £1,000 per learner, of which 10% will be payable on confirmation of their progression to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2.

Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations. State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through 'state resources' that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.

It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial environment (whether for profit or not).

Guidance will be provided on State Aid to the successful applicant(s), however it is important to note the LSC will initially be operating De Minimis. Successful providers will need to ensure that

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employers have not breached the £138,000 ceiling over 3 fiscal years. If this ceiling is breached then the following limits will be applied for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the State Aid General Block Exemption. Above these limits cash or where agreed with the LSC, in-kind contributions must be sought from the employer.

It should also be noted that the LSC expects that **ALL** training delivered under this Tender Specification to be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	25%	60%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	35%	70%

Definition of General training is: If the training of employees is applicable not only to an employees' present or future position in the enterprise being assisted because the provision of qualifications provides transferable skills that substantially improve the employability of the employee concerned. Where training leads to the award of National Vocational qualifications and Key Skills Qualifications training will be considered to be general in nature

Definition of Specific training is: Where training provided is principally applicable to the employee's present or future position in the assisted enterprise and provides qualifications that are not transferable, the maximum aid intensities for specific training will apply.

Where Deminimis has been limits have been exceeded, providers are required to ensure that each beneficiary company must contribute to the total cost of support provided. Therefore this allocation is conditional on the beneficiary company providing the correct contribution to the cost of training they have received. The company contribution can either be financial or in-kind (unless the LSC instructs that financial or in kind is specifically required). The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

It should be noted that the LSC will be applying for the General Block Exemption to be applied to LSC ESF funded activity for the 07/13 ESF programme, but until this application is approved, Deminimis is the only valid exemption.

Providers will be responsible for securing and evidencing the employer contribution, this evidence must be readily available for audit purposes. No claim against the ESF will be valid until the employer contribution has been received by the provider. The provider will be required to complete company information records and state aid documentation for all companies supported through the programme.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011.

Individuals must not be recruited if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve their learning outcome. The Learning and Skills Council reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council envisages awarding a maximum of 4 contracts, 2 for Greater Manchester and 2 for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area. Proposals may be submitted to deliver

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activity across both Greater Manchester and the Merseyside Phasing-In Area, however, the LSC would need to issue a separate contract for each area.

To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £200,000 for the period of 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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Individual learning plan produced	£150.00	2554	£383,170
S4	Learners engaged on Personal Development Programme (learners will commence a Personal Development programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£50.00	1277	£63,850
S6	Learner engaged on NVQ Level 1 (learners will commence a Personal Development Programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£50.00	1278	£63,900
S21	Beneficiary retention payment (learners will claim 2 retention payments and the overall volumes for these are calculated using a straight line drop off rate)	£225.00	4086	£919,350
A2	Participant completing Personal Development Programme (learners will complete a Personal Development Programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£250.00	766	£191,500

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A9	Achievement of qualification at Level 1 (learners will complete a Personal Development Programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£250.00	766	£191,500
P1	Progression to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision	£100.00	1533	£153,300
M4	Project evaluation including case studies	£0.00		£0
Total				£1,966,500

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

For Information Only

Title: North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area – Workforce Development in Coaching and Instructing Occupations within the Sport, Fitness and Outdoor Industries	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S25
Aim <p>To support workforce development within the Sport and Active Leisure Learning Sector by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling the paid and unpaid workforce to attain Level 2 and Level 3 National Governing Body Awards and technical qualifications within Sport, Fitness and Outdoor sub-sectors.• The LSC is making a contribution towards these qualifications to support progression within this industry and to ultimately increase the achievement of full NVQ Level 2 and 3 qualifications within the industry.	
Service requirement <p>The provider/ consortia is required to engage employers and organisations across the sport, fitness and outdoors sub-sectors in order to recruit learners either through existing relationships with employers or through the engagement of new employers in upskilling their workforce.</p> <p>The provider will be able to offer a 60% contribution towards the cost of a technical qualification.</p> <p>A wider holistic offer of workforce development must be presented to the employer and/or voluntary organisation. This will enable the organisation to gain access to further qualifications which will upskill employees and volunteers and develop their business. Particular focus must be on the delivery of full NVQ Levels 2 or 3. These can be any qualifications that support the organisation eg; customer service, ITQ or sector specific</p> <p>These can be delivered to the same beneficiary who starts the technical qualification or for another beneficiary within the same organisation.</p> <p><u>Managing the Project</u> A steering group must be established and must involve the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure Learning. The successful provider must take guidance from the steering group about allocations of funds being available from a variety of partners such as National Governing Bodies of Sport. This should be based on evidence of need based on skills gaps, shortages and employment opportunities.</p> <p>In order to effectively manage this holistic workforce development offer across the region the recruitment of a co-ordinator will be necessary. This post will support the steering group, providers and partners to produce the outcomes required.</p> <p>This project will be region wide and will deliver across the sub sectors of Outdoors, Sport & Fitness. Effective co-ordination of delivery to these employers and volunteer organisations is key to increasing progression onto Train to Gain.</p> DEFINING THE ACTIVITY <p>This project is designed to increase opportunities for workforce development within the Sport and Active Leisure Learning Sector. This includes for this particular Tender Specification training and qualifications to be delivered in sport coaching, fitness and outdoor industries. Support for a variety of qualifications including Continual Professional Development (CPD) modules in order to improve the employability and progression routes of beneficiaries will be encouraged.</p>	

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A full list of qualifications that must be considered are highlighted in Appendix1.

The activity is to deliver National Governing Body (NGB) Awards technical qualifications within the sport, fitness and outdoor industries.

In order to promote progression within the sector, for sport (NGB) Awards beneficiaries should:

- Currently be engaged as a coach or intend to start coaching in a sports club environment across the North West either volunteer or paid. (This is only relevant to Sports Coaching and Outdoor Instructing where there is a high volume of volunteers)
- Want to achieve their first or next level (levels 2 or 3) recognised coaching qualification

It is recommended that each beneficiary within the coaching industry attains both a NGB award and CPD modules as endorsed by Skills Active (the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure Learning) and Sport Coach UK. This will enable the beneficiary to increase their professionalism in the industry along with access to more employment within the sector. The list for CPD courses for Sport Coaching (endorsed by SkillsActive and Sport Coach UK) can be found in Appendix 1.

Applicants should outline how they would work with partners to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development including technical qualifications endorsed by Skills Active and NVQ Levels 2 and 3.

As a result of engaging employers and providing a subsidy towards the cost of a technical qualification, it is an expectation that delivery of NVQ Levels 2 and 3 that complement the sport, fitness and outdoor occupations will be delivered within the organisation. The NVQs could be, for example, in areas such as customer service and IT. In addition, the successful provider should work with employers to identify and address the Skills for Life needs of employees.

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance is an important aspect of this programme, in particular in terms of encouraging participation, giving ongoing support to learners during the programme and facilitating progression within the sport, fitness and outdoor industries.

Providers must ensure delivery of training is flexible and tailor-made for employers based on the need of sport, fitness and outdoor sub-sectors.

LINKAGES WITH TRAIN TO GAIN

In order to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development and that where appropriate, individuals' progression to NVQ Level 2/3 takes place with the minimum of disruption, successful applicants must either already hold a Train to Gain contract, or work closely with partners who hold Train to Gain contracts.

Applicants should outline how they would work with partners to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development including technical qualifications endorsed by the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure Learning, Skills for Life, NVQ Levels 2 and 3. Where appropriate, employers should be encouraged to commit to the Skills Pledge, a voluntary commitment from employers to their workforce to develop their skills. For more information about the Skills Pledge see [Skills Pledge - Employers - In Our Hands](#)

Successful providers will be required to work closely with the skills brokerage service (Business Link Northwest) to identify employers who could potentially benefit from this provision.

CAPACITY AND TRACK RECORD

Contracts should be delivered via a partnership/consortium approach. Applicants must have previous experience of delivering in the sport and active leisure learning sector and have experience of working

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in partnership with County Sport Partnerships and National Governing Bodies of sport.

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers who are already in receipt of LSC funding and have been inspected by either OFSTED or ALI must have received an inspection grade of 3 or above.
- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees in the Sport and Active Leisure Learning Sector. Evidence of inspections grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as New Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard. Providers should also be planning to obtain Part B on the Training Quality Standard for the Sport and Active Leisure Learning sector.

Applicants should note that during the lifetime of any contracts resulting from this tender specification, some of the eligible qualifications may change as a result of the appropriate Sector Skills Council sector qualification strategy. The strategy will state which qualifications the SSC considers are priority qualifications for its sector and the LSC will agree with each SSC which qualifications it will prioritise for future funding.

Providers will therefore need to ensure that the qualifications they are delivering continue to be amongst those that are approved by the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure Learning and agreed with the LSC for funding.

COMPLEMENTARITY AND LINKAGES

- The provider must identify how they will link in to regional initiatives and strategies such as the Sport and Active Leisure Skills & Productivity Alliance (SALSPA), the National Skills Academy for Sport and Active Leisure Learning (including the Outdoors), the NW Coaching Agency, County Sport Partnership Workforce Development Plans and projects and emerging National Governing Body Plans from 2008.
- A steering group must be established and must involve the Sector Skills Council for Sport and Active Leisure Learning. The successful provider must take guidance from the steering group about allocations of funds being available from a variety of partners such as National Governing Bodies of Sport. This should be based on evidence of need based on skills gaps, shortages and employment opportunities.
- Individual learners who attain fitness qualifications should have the opportunity to be registered with the Register of Exercise Professionals (REPS)
- Individual learners should have the opportunity to obtain a Skills Passport issued by SkillsActive.
- Individual learners who attain coaching awards will have the opportunity to register with the NW Coaching Agency

DELIVERY

The Learning and Skills Council will require assurance that the contracting arrangements it enters into for delivery of this programme are robust and effective. It is therefore a requirement of this specification that the applicant sets out clearly:

- Their ability to ensure that qualifications/training listed in Appendix 1 can be delivered – either by themselves or through consortium or sub-contracting arrangements
- The successful applicant will be required as part of contract clarification to provide outline delivery plans and costs per learner/ beneficiary.

Target groups & priority

All individual participants must either be a resident of or work (paid or unpaid) in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification and must be adults 19+ who are paid or unpaid within the sport, fitness and outdoor occupations.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

Outputs	Cumbria	Cheshire & Warrington	Greater Manchester	Halton	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Lancashire	Total
No. of beneficiaries <u>receiving</u> training for technical qualifications at levels 2	143	92	200	11	125	143	714
No. of beneficiaries <u>receiving</u> training for technical qualifications at levels 3	61	40	86	5	53	61	306

Of the 1020 beneficiaries undertaking technical qualifications within the sport and active leisure learning sector:

- A minimum of 75% must be delivered in Sport Coaching and Outdoor Instructing/leadership in respect to NGB Awards and CPD modules to support these qualifications.
- The remainder can be delivered for the Health & Fitness Industry.

Qualifications that should be delivered can be located in Appendix 1.

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

Results	Cumbria	Cheshire & Warrington	Greater Manchester	Halton	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Lancashire	Total
No. of beneficiaries achieving technical qualifications at levels 2	134	86	188	10	118	134	670
No. of beneficiaries achieving technical	57	38	81	4	50	57	287

qualifications at levels 3							
Other outcomes							
<p>The lead provider will be responsible for producing a six monthly performance and evaluation report which should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy for increasing NVQ take up across the sector in the North West. • Evidence of employer and voluntary organisations accessing the NGB & Technical awards also accessing NVQs through a wider holistic offer. • Demonstrates how providers are engaging with all partners and employers to raise awareness of this unique offer. • How providers are working with the Steering group and NGBs to look at best practise of programme delivery. • Demonstrates how providers are encouraging partners, NGBs and employers to plan for workforce development needs in the future. Particularly in relation to those awards that do not currently attract mainstream funding • Ultimately highlight to employers and learners that this subsidy is providing a lead into new and existing organisations with a holistic offer of training to include Full Level 2 & 3 qualifications and the Train to Gain offer. This must be highlighted in any marketing material. 							
Funding available							
<p>Total ESF funding for this programme is approximately £477,249, of which £83,518 is available for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £393,731 is available for the rest of the Northwest.</p> <p>Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations and therefore an employer contribution of 40% will be required. Therefore the overall budget for this Tender Specification will be £795,415.</p> <p>The cost of the Level 2 certificates, including CPD will be £627 The total amount payable by the LSC for Level 3 certificates will be £1,195.</p> <p>State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through ‘state resources’ that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.</p> <p>It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial environment (whether for profit or not).</p> <p>Under Structural Fund Regulations the LSC is required to ensure that support is used to obtain added value in a cost effective way. This means that statutory training or assessment is specifically excluded from the programme. For example, where a Training Needs Analysis identifies a requirement for Gas Fitters, the programme would be unable to pay for the Gas Fitter training, or any associated assessment or registration fees required by statutory legislation.</p>							
Start and end dates							
<p>Projects must not start activity before 1 June 2009 and must complete the activity by 31 July 2011. Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project.</p>							

The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

LSC North West would anticipate no more than **one provider being awarded a contract** to deliver this programme (as part of a consortium). The successful provider will however receive 2 contracts for this delivery one covering the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and the second covering the rest of the North West.

Please specify ALL of the envisaged sub contractors and providers to ensure effective working from the start of the contract.

The Learning and Skills Council intends to contract the activity within this tender specification against a set of deliverables, such as starts, qualifications, 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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1st June 2009 and 31st July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

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.

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

The below table is provided as an example of how a full contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Participant Assessment, Planning and Support	£100	1020	£102,000
S7	Participants undertaking qualification at Level 2 or Notional Level 2	£100	714	£71,400
S8	Participants undertaking qualification at Level 3 or Notional Level 3	£300	306	£91,800
S21	Beneficiary retention payment (learners will claim 2 retention payments and the overall volumes for	£50	1977	£98,850

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	these are calculated using a straight line drop off rate)			
A9	Full achievement of a Qualification at Level 2 or notional Level 2	£76	670	£50,920
A10	Full achievement of a Qualification at Level 3 or notional Level 3	£217	287	£62,279
M11	Project Evaluation including Case Studies (evaluations to be submitted February and August and Case Studies May and November) + Final Evaluation at Project End	£0.00		£0
Total				£477,249

For Information Only

Title: North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area - Additional NVQ Level 2 and 3

Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S26

Aim

The aim of this tender specification is to support employers to develop their workforce through the delivery of additional NVQ level 2 and 3 qualifications.

This provision is intended to enhance the Train to Gain offer by widening the range of employees who can benefit from LSC- funded training provision.

Service requirement

Background

Following the introduction of additional flexibilities in Train to Gain (for further information see “Additional Flexibilities 2008/09 - A guide for Colleges and Training Providers. Version 3, 11th August 2008”), additional NVQs at Levels 2 and 3 will now be funded through Train to Gain.

Note : Additional qualifications are NVQs delivered to employees (or volunteers or self-employed learners) who already hold at least one NVQL2/3 or equivalent and who require a further vocationally relevant qualification.

However, as there is a limited amount of funding for additional qualifications available through Train to Gain, the Learning and Skills Council is seeking providers to deliver additional NVQ Level 2 and 3 qualifications through this tender specification to ensure that there is sufficient provision available to meet demand.

The funding awarded under this specification should be accessed only when a provider has insufficient additional NVQL2/3s available from within their allowance to meet employers needs. In order to respond to demand from other providers who have exhausted their own allocations of additional NVQL2/3 utilisation of this funding must not displace activity that a provider could fund through mainstream Train to Gain.

Sectors

Additional NVQ Level 2

The Sector Qualification Strategy (SQS) issued in September (available at <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-secondfullL2sv22final-sep08.pdf>) lists containing those qualifications that Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) have identified as priorities for additional NVQL2 funding.

All the qualifications on the SQS list are in scope for this tender specification (subject to the stipulation above that providers must first utilise their Train to Gain allocation of additional NVQL2).

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders that there is demand for the additional NVQL2 qualifications they propose to deliver, except for those listed in Table 1, where research has already identified NVQs expected to generate high demand for additional qualifications.

Table 1 - Sectors where demand for additional NVQ L2 is expected to be high

Sector	NVQ
Construction	Plant operations
Transportation	Road passenger transport
Engineering and Manufacturing	Business Improvement Techniques
Automotive	See SQS list for details
Health, Public Services and Social Care	Providing security services
Health, Public Services and Social Care	Certificate for Security Practitioners
Health and Social Care	See SQS list for details
Retail and commercial enterprise	Cleaning and support services

Cross –cutting sectors	Customer service, ITQ, Business Admin**
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Notes

**Providers should note that Skillsmart Retail have advised that the preferred qualification for retailers is Retail Skills instead of Customer Service, because it embeds customer service as part of the NVQ.

Additional NVQ Level 3

Priority qualifications for full additional NVQL3 will be identified in Sector Compacts, however at 30 September, only one Sector Compact had been fully implemented (SEMTA).

With the exception of Business Improvement Techniques which was included in the SEMTA Sector Compact, applicants must provide a rationale for all additional NVQL3 qualifications they propose to deliver.

Most Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) have now published their Sector Qualifications Strategy; therefore applicants should confirm in their tender that they have checked with the relevant SSC that the additional NVQL3 they propose to deliver is a sector priority.

Applicants should note that as more Sector Compacts are implemented, it may be necessary to vary contracts to ensure that additional qualifications funded through this tender specification continue to reflect Sector Skills Councils' priorities. In all cases where a qualification is fundable through mainstream Train to Gain, then mainstream funding should be maximised.

Applicants must provide details (in Appendix A to this specification) of their proposed volumes for NVQ2 and 3 and the sectors and sub-regions in which they propose to deliver.

Employer engagement

Successful providers will need to both generate their own employer leads for the delivery of this activity and to work with Business Link North West to meet the needs of employers who have accessed Train to Gain via the Brokerage Service. Applicants should explain how they will engage employers, whether through existing relationships with employers or through the engagement of new employers.

Successful providers must already hold Train to Gain contracts or work closely with partners who have Train to Gain contracts.

Providers must ensure that where an employer has skill needs they are unable to address, an appropriate referral is made to another provider or to Business Link North West.

Delivery Method

Providers are expected to deliver the qualifications in the workplace and to be flexible in meeting learners' and employers' needs. The Assess-Train-Assess model should be utilised to ensure learners receive credit for prior learning. Applicants should explain how they will ensure that delivery is flexible in order to meet both learners' and employer needs.

Applicants must demonstrate how they would carry out initial assessment to ascertain the learners' individual needs, including assessment of Skills for Life (SfL). The provider will be expected to produce an individual learning plan for each learner with milestones to show progress and which must include SfL support if appropriate.

It is not intended that this programme will fund separate SfL qualifications as they are already funded through Train to Gain. If the applicant does not hold a contract for SfL provision, they must explain how they will work with partners to provide this support.

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix

standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Quality

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.
- Providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for each sector in which they wish to deliver. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

Further information

Applicants should refer to the suite of provider guidance documents at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/traintogain/> for further information about the delivery of provision in the workplace, SfL support and Information, Advice and Guidance.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from <http://www.newstandard.co.uk>.

Employer Unique Reference Number (URN)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Target groups & priority

Employees aged 19 years or older. Providers should note that the LSC's preferred route for 19-24 year olds is the Apprenticeship programme.

For additional NVQ Level 2

Already hold a minimum of NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualification,

For additional NVQ Level 3

Already hold a minimum of NVQ Level 3 or equivalent qualification,

And who are resident in or work in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification.

Volunteers are also eligible, as part of the organisation's workforce, as are self-employed learners. ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited onto the programme through targeting a wider employed workforce.

Note : this tender excludes employees who achieve employment as a result of JobCentre Plus's Local Employment Partnership arrangements and who need to undertake a vocationally relevant second NVQ Level 2, as they are eligible under Train to Gain.

Training of public sector workers at level 3 and above is ineligible except in the following cases:

- Training of trainers in the public sector to deliver basic skills and other provision to support ESF priority groups, is eligible at any level;

- Where specific gaps in level 3 training are identified in regional ESF frameworks

The following are considered to be part of the public sector:

- Central Government;
- local authorities;
- the armed forces;
- NHS Trusts; and
- public education sector.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area (Knowsely, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

North West excluding Merseyside

- 5,265 starts on NVQ Level 2
- 2,970 starts on NVQ Level 3
- Initial assessment including identification of SfL needs where appropriate
- Production of an individual learning plan for each learner reflecting the outcome of information, advice and guidance

Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 1,755 starts on NVQ Level 2
- 990 starts on NVQ Level 3
- Initial assessment including identification of SfL needs where appropriate
- Production of an individual learning plan for each learner reflecting the outcome of information, advice and guidance

Results

As a minimum the results which are required are:

North West excluding Merseyside

- 3,422 (65%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 2
- 1,931 (65%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 3

Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 1,141 (65%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 2
- 644 (65%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 3

Other outcomes

Successful providers are required to submit a Performance and Evaluation report to the LSC every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the contract.

Funding available

The total value of this Tender Specification is £10,997,490, of which £2,749,373 is available for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £8,248,117 is available for the rest of the Northwest. Detailed below are the amounts available for additional NVQL2/3s and the amounts available in the differing sub-regions. The amounts specified for the Northwest are indicative allocations, however the amounts outlined for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area exclusively available for that area.

Additional NVQ Level 2

A total of £7,396,711 is available for additional NVQL2, this is comprised of £1,849,178 for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £5,547,533 for the rest of the Northwest, indicative funding allocations are:

- Cheshire & Warrington – 15.5%
- Cumbria – 10%
- Greater Manchester – 46%
- Halton – 2.5%
- Lancashire – 26%

Additional NVQ Level 3

A total of £3,600,779 is available for additional NVQL3, this is comprised of £900,195 for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £2,700,584 for the rest of the Northwest, the indicative allocations for the Northwest are:

- Cheshire & Warrington – 17.5%
- Cumbria – 9%
- Greater Manchester – 46%
- Halton – 1%
- Lancashire – 26.5%

The payment methodology will be based on the Employer Responsive model, i.e. 75% paid following the learner start in line with deliverables included in Table 4 and the remainder when the learner achieves their NVQ.

Funding Rates – Additional NVQ Level 2

Funding rates for this provision are aligned with rates payable through Train to Gain.

Where the higher rate is claimed, there must be evidence of demonstrable need for delivery of eligible learning activity for at least 15 hours.

Table 1 – Rates for Additional NVQ Level 2

Sector Subject Area	Higher rate	Lower rate
Health, Public Services and Care	1,533	1,022
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,533	1,022
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	1,839	1,226
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,839	1,226
Information and Communication Technology (ICT User)	1,226	817
Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner)	1,533	1,022
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	1,226	817
Transportation	1,839	1,226
Hair and Beauty	1,533	1,022
Hospitality	1,226	817
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	1,226	817
Business, Administration and Law	1,226	817

Funding Rates – Additional NVQ Level 3

The rates for the academic year 2009-10 in Table 3 below reflect an assumed employer contribution of 42.5%. The employer contribution will increase to 47.5% on 1 August 2009 and to 50% on 1 August 2010, at which times, contracts will be varied accordingly.

Table 2 – Rates for Additional NVQ Level 3

Sector Subject Area	Higher rate	Lower rate
Health, Public Services and Care	1,323	881
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,323	881
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	1,588	1,057
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,588	1,057
Information and Communication Technology (ICT User)	1,059	705

Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner)	1,323	881
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	1,059	705
Transportation	1,588	1,057
Hair and Beauty	1,323	881
Hospitality	1,059	705
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	1,059	705
Business, Administration and Law	1,059	705

The Learning and Skills Council reserve the right to;

- Revise the rates in future years to align with mainstream funding
- Switch funding for additional NVQ Level 2/3 to mainstream Train to Gain in response to changes in policy, for example as Sector Compacts are implemented and additional qualifications identified in this ITT become fundable through Train to Gain.
- Broaden the programme to fund first NVQ Level 2/3s.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 May 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011.

Individuals must not be recruited if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve their learning outcomes. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. West. Where providers seek to deliver across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside-Phasing-In Area then 2 contracts will be issued.

To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £200,000 over the period covered by this tender specification.

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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 May 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

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.

Table 3 Deliverables

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Volume	Unit Cost	Payment
S2	Participant Assessment, Planning and Support (All learners for NVQ Level 2 and	10,980	£50	£549,000

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	3)			
S7	NVQ Level 2 Starts (Total Volume)	7,020	£50	£351,000
S11	Higher Rate Business Administration and Law, Information and Communication Technology (ICT User), Leisure Travel and Tourism, Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality	1,170	£207	£242,190
S12	Higher Rate Agriculture, horticulture and animal care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Health, public services and care, Hair and Beauty	1,170	£283	£331,110
S13	Higher Rate Construction, planning and the built environment, Engineering and manufacturing technologies, Transportation	1,170	£360	£421,200
S14	Lower Rate Business Administration and Law, Information and Communication Technology (ICT User), Leisure Travel and Tourism, Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality	1,170	£104	£121,680
S15	Lower Rate Agriculture, horticulture and animal care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Health, public services and care, Hair and Beauty	1,170	£156	£182,520
S16	Lower Rate Construction, planning and the built environment, Engineering and manufacturing technologies, Transportation	1,170	£207	£242,190
S21	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S11 Starts (7 months)	1,930	£307	£592,510
S22	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay S12 Starts (8 months)	1,930	£383	£739,190
S23	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S13 Starts (6 months)	1,930	£460	£887,800
S24	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S11 Starts (7 months)	1,930	£204	£393,720
S25	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay S12 Starts (8 months)	1,930	£256	£494,080
S26	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S13 Starts (6 months)	1,930	£307	£592,510
A10	NVQ Level 2 Achievement (Total Volume)	4,563	£100	£456,300
A14	Higher Rate Business Administration and Law, Information and Communication Technology (ICT User), Leisure Travel and Tourism, Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality	760	£207	£157,320
A15	Higher Rate Agriculture, horticulture and animal care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Health, public services and	760	£283	£215,080

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	care, Hair and Beauty			
A16	Higher Rate Construction, planning and the built environment, Engineering and manufacturing technologies, Transportation	760	£360	£273,600
A17	Lower Rate Business Administration and Law, Information and Communication Technology (ICT User), Leisure Travel and Tourism, Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality	760	£104	£79,040
A18	Lower Rate Agriculture, horticulture and animal care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Health, public services and care, Hair and Beauty	760	£156	£118,560
A19	Lower Rate Construction, planning and the built environment, Engineering and manufacturing technologies, Transportation	760	£207	£157,320
S8	NVQ Level 3 Starts (Total Volume)	3,960	£50	£198,000
S17	Higher Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	660	£165	£108,900
S18	Higher Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	660	£231	£152,460
S19	Higher Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	660	£297	£196,020
S20	Lower Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	660	£76	£50,160
S21	Lower Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	660	£120	£79,200
S22	Lower Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	660	£164	£108,240
S27	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S14 Starts (7 months)	1,089	£265	£288,585
S28	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay S15 Starts (8 months)	1,089	£331	£360,459
S29	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S16 Starts (6 months)	1,089	£397	£432,333
S30	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based	1,089	£176	£191,664

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	on average length of stay for S14 Starts (7 months)			
S31	lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay S15 Starts (8 months)	1,089	£220	£239,580
S32	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S16 Starts (6 months)	1,089	£264	£287,496
A11	NVQ Level 3 Achievement (Total Volume)	2,574	£100	£257,400
A20	Higher Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	429	£165	£70,785
A21	Higher Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	429	£231	£99,099
A22	Higher Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	429	£297	£127,413
A23	Lower Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	429	£76	£32,604
A24	Lower Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	429	£120	£51,480
A25	Lower Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	429	£164	£70,356
Total				£11,000,154*

*NB Funding difference in this table to funding available section is due to rounding

Whilst this Level 2 & 3 provision forms a single tender specification, the actual activity may be contracted in separate Level 2 and Level 3 contracts.

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

Title: North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area – NVQ Level 4	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S27
Aim	
<p>To support employers in the North West to develop their workforce and to raise regional skills levels by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling employees who do not hold a NVQ Level 4 or equivalent to achieve their first full NVQ Level 4, at a subsidised cost to the employer• Enabling employees who already hold a NVQ Level 4 or equivalent to achieve an NVQ 4 that is vocationally relevant to their current job• Expanding the Train to Gain offer by ensuring individuals have access to progression routes, for example from NVQ Level 3 to NVQ Level 4.• Enhancing the higher level skills offer across the region, complementing the provision already available• Supporting sectors identified as priorities in relation to higher level skills	
Service requirement	
<p>The requirement is for providers to deliver the full NVQ Level 4 qualification, primarily for employees who do not already hold an NVQ Level 4 or equivalent, but who do hold a full Level 3 qualification. (Employees without a Level 3 but for whom a Level 4 is appropriate should be supported as ‘level 4 jumpers’ through mainstream Train to Gain).</p>	
<p>Where providers are proposing to deliver vocationally relevant repeat NVQ Level 4s, applicants should note that it is the intention of the Learning and Skills Council to restrict allocations for repeat L4 to no more than 20% of the total funding available for this provision. Such allocations will be made alongside allocations for first Level 4s. Applicants should note that tenders solely for delivery of repeat Level 4 provision will not be approved.</p>	
<p>Applicants should also note that this tender specification is strategically aligned to the Higher Level Skills Pathfinder (HLSP). The HLSP is being expanded to cover an additional three priority sectors, and will also support the development of provision which is not eligible for Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funding i.e. non-prescribed HE (including NVQs).</p>	
<p>It is anticipated that any non-prescribed programmes developed through HLSP that meet the requirements set out in this specification could be delivered through providers successful in securing contracts against this Invitation to Tender.</p>	
<p>The Learning and Skills Council will consider applications for delivery of full qualifications that are equivalent to NVQ Level 4, provided that an NVQ Level 4 does not exist in the relevant sector and that the applicant can clearly demonstrate there is a demand for the qualification. Applicants will be expected to show that equivalent qualifications are “true” equivalents in terms of delivery hours and content.</p>	
<p>This funding cannot be used to deliver qualifications fundable by HEFCE.</p>	
Sectors	
<p>Provision for full NVQ Level 4 can be delivered across all sectors, however applicants should note that the Learning and Skills Council will prioritise funding for qualifications to be delivered in the following North West regional priority sectors;</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advanced engineering and materials (especially aerospace and engineering, automotive, chemicals, advanced flexible materials/technical textiles)• Bio-medical• Business and professional services	

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- Construction
- Digital and creative industries
- Energy and Environmental technologies*
- Food and Drink

***Note** : new NVQL4 in Environmental Technologies due to be available shortly

In addition to the above sectors, the Learning and Skills Council would welcome applications relating to the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Applicants must identify the sectors and qualifications they propose to deliver in each sub-region.

Successful providers will be part of the broad Train to Gain service, and should seek where possible to make available a wide range of provision to employers, drawing on the range of funding and contracts they have available to meet their needs.

Providers should also ensure that where an employer has skill needs they are unable to address, an appropriate referral is made to another provider or to Business Link North West to ensure that the employer's needs are met.

Engagement of employers and individuals

Applicants should explain how they will engage employers, whether through existing relationships with employers (e.g. employers already engaged with Train to Gain) or through the engagement of new employers. Applicants should also explain how they will market the programme to employers as part of an integrated package of skills solutions and how they will work with Business Link Northwest and with other providers to ensure that where appropriate, employers working with providers that do not deliver NVQ Level 4 provision are referred to this programme.

Applicants should explain how they will recruit individuals for the programme and should describe in detail how they will carry out initial assessment to ascertain the learners' skills, experience and learning styles together with any Accredited Prior Learning.

The proposal must also describe how individual needs will be identified and addressed, including assessment of Skills for Life (SfL). The provider will be expected to produce an Individual Learning Plan for each learner with milestones to show progress, including SfL where appropriate.

Where individual SfL needs are identified, support should be provided either by integrating it into the NVQ delivery or, if appropriate, by delivery of SfL qualifications. If the applicant does not hold a contract for SfL provision, they must explain how they would work with partners to provide this support.

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Employer Unique Reference Number (URN)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Delivery of training

Applicants should explain how they will ensure that delivery is flexible to meet learners' and employers' needs. The expectation is that the Assess-Train-Assess model will be utilised to ensure learners receive credit for prior learning. The delivery of NVQs should be focused on workplace delivery; for equivalent qualifications the delivery model should be designed to meet employer needs; providers should set out how their delivery model will operate and show how that approach best meets employer needs.

Quality

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as the Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.
- Providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for each sector in which they wish to deliver. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

Further information

Applicants should refer to the suite of provider guidance documents at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/traintogain/> for further information about the delivery of provision in the workplace, SfL support and Information, Advice and Guidance.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from <http://www.newstandard.co.uk>.

Target groups & priority

Learner eligibility

The priority target groups are employees, volunteers and self-employed learners aged 19+ who do not already hold an NVQ Level 4 or equivalent.

Provision should also be available to employees, volunteers and self-employed learners who already hold an NVQ Level 4 or equivalent and who wish to acquire a vocationally relevant NVQ Level 4.

Providers should note that ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce.

Company size

1) North West excluding Merseyside but including Halton

Eligible employees must be employed by Small Enterprises as defined below.

A Small Enterprise is defined as having:

- fewer than 50 employees; and **either**
- an annual turnover of less than €10m, or
- an annual balance sheet of less than €10m and;
- *is not more than one quarter owned by firms that do not qualify as SMEs under the above requirements*

2) Merseyside phasing-in area

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Eligible employees must be employed by Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as defined below.

An SME is defined as an enterprise which has:

- fewer than 250 employees; and **either**
- an annual turnover of 50 million euros (approximately £35m) or less; **or**
- an annual balance-sheet total of 43 million euros (approximately £30m) or less.

All individual participants must either be a resident of or work in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Applications are particularly welcomed for Cheshire and Warrington as this area was under-subscribed in the previous tendering round.

Outputs

The **minimum outputs** which are required are:

North West including Halton

- 576 starts on NVQ Level 4
- Initial assessment for each learner
- Production of an individual learning plan for each learner reflecting the outcome of information, advice and guidance

Merseyside phasing-in area

- 162 starts on NVQ Level 4
- Initial assessment for each learner
- Production of an individual learning plan for each learner reflecting the outcome of information, advice and guidance

Results

The **minimum results** which are required are:

North West including Halton

- 374 (65%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 4

Merseyside phasing-in area

- 105 (65%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 4

Other outcomes

A performance and evaluation report must be submitted to the LSC every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the project.

Funding available

A total of £672,271 is available, comprised of £523,701 for the Northwest including Halton and £148,570 for the Merseyside phasing-in area.

The split of funds identified within geographic locations is indicative; the exception to this is the allocation for Merseyside Phasing-In Area which is exclusively available for that area.

- Cheshire and Warrington - 38%
- Cumbria - 8%
- Greater Manchester – 27%

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- Lancashire – 23%
- Halton – 4%

Funding rates for this provision are aligned with rates payable through Train to Gain.

Where the higher rate is claimed, there must be evidence of demonstrable need for delivery of eligible learning activity for at least 15 hours. For further information about evidence requirements, applicants should refer to the suite of provider guidance documents at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/traintogain>.

The payment methodology will be based on the Employer Responsive model, i.e. 75% paid following the learner start, in line with the deliverables outlined in the example given later in this specification, and the remainder when the learner achieves their NVQ Level 4.

The rates for the academic year 2009-10 in the table below reflect an assumed employer contribution of 42.5%. The employer contribution will increase to 47.5% on 1 August 2009 and to 50% on 1 August 2010, at which times, contracts will be varied accordingly. The rates below will also apply to delivery of qualifications equivalent to NVQ Level 4.

Sector Subject Area	Higher rate	Lower rate
Health, Public Services and Care	1,323	881
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	1,323	881
Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	1,588	1,057
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	1,588	1,057
Information and Communication Technology (ICT User)	1,059	705
Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner)	1,323	881
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	1,059	705
Transportation	1,588	1,057
Hair and Beauty	1,323	881
Hospitality	1,059	705
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	1,059	705
Business, Administration and Law	1,059	705

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011.

Individuals must not be recruited for NVQ Level 4 if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve their learning outcomes. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary

Contracting details

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. Where applicants seek to deliver activity across the North West and Merseyside Phasing-In Area then the LSC would need to issue 2 contracts.

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

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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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Volume	Unit Cost	Payment
S2	Participant Assessment, Planning and Support (All learners)	738	£50	£36,900
S9	NVQ Level 4 Starts (Total Volume)	738	£50	£36,900
S11	Higher Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	123	£165	£20,295
S12	Higher Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	123	£231	£28,413
S13	Higher Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	123	£297	£36,531
S14	Lower Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	123	£76	£9,348
S15	Lower Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	123	£120	£14,760
S16	Lower Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	123	£164	£20,712
S22	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S14 Starts (7 months)	203	£265	£53,795
S23	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay S15 Starts (8 months)	203	£331	£67,193

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S24	Higher Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S16 Starts (6 months)	203	£397	£80,591
S25	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S14 Starts (7 months)	203	£176	£35,728
S26	lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay S15 Starts (8 months)	203	£220	£44,660
S27	Lower Rate Mid-Point Payments (x2) based on average length of stay for S16 Starts (6 months)	203	£264	£53,592
A12	NVQ Level 4 Achievement (Total Volume)	481	£100	£48,100
A14	Higher Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	81	£165	£13,365
A15	Higher Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	81	£231	£18,711
A16	Higher Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	81	£297	£24,057
A17	Lower Rate Information and Communication Technology (ICT user), Retail and Commercial Enterprise, Hospitality, Leisure, Tourism and Travel, Business Administration and Law	81	£76	£6,156
A18	Lower Rate Health, Public Services and Care, Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, Information and Communication Technology (ICT Practitioner), Hair and Beauty	81	£120	£9,720
A19	Lower Rate Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, Construction, Planning and the Built Environment, Transportation	81	£164	£13,284
Total				£672,271

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

Title: North West including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area - Train the Trainer	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S28															
Aim																
<p>To build additional assessor and verifier capacity in the region to support the expansion of Train to Gain and to develop further in-house training capabilities of employers as part of workforce development.</p>																
Service requirement																
<p>The requirement is for the delivery of industry relevant trainer development qualifications and Assessor and Verifier qualifications.</p>																
<p>Although this tender is aimed at employees (and volunteers and self-employed people), providers may recruit participants who are recently unemployed and who wish to acquire these qualifications in order to gain employment in sectors where there are skills shortages.</p>																
<p>Table 1 provides examples of qualifications that the LSC considers applicable for this programme. In addition, industry relevant programmes will be considered where employer demand is evidenced. However, the LSC will not support the delivery of statutory qualifications.</p>																
<p>Table 1</p>																
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="153 954 456 1016">New Unit Reference</th> <th data-bbox="456 954 743 1016">Old Unit Reference</th> <th data-bbox="743 954 1294 1016">Unit Title</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="153 1016 456 1079">A1</td> <td data-bbox="456 1016 743 1079">D32 and D33</td> <td data-bbox="743 1016 1294 1079">Assess candidates using a range of methods</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="153 1079 456 1142">A2</td> <td data-bbox="456 1079 743 1142">D32</td> <td data-bbox="743 1079 1294 1142">Assess candidates performance through observation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="153 1142 456 1205">V1</td> <td data-bbox="456 1142 743 1205">D34</td> <td data-bbox="743 1142 1294 1205">Internal verification</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="153 1205 456 1267">V2</td> <td data-bbox="456 1205 743 1267">D35</td> <td data-bbox="743 1205 1294 1267">External verification</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		New Unit Reference	Old Unit Reference	Unit Title	A1	D32 and D33	Assess candidates using a range of methods	A2	D32	Assess candidates performance through observation	V1	D34	Internal verification	V2	D35	External verification
New Unit Reference	Old Unit Reference	Unit Title														
A1	D32 and D33	Assess candidates using a range of methods														
A2	D32	Assess candidates performance through observation														
V1	D34	Internal verification														
V2	D35	External verification														
Flexibility in delivery																
<p>Providers are expected to deliver the qualifications in the workplace and to be flexible in meeting learners' and employers' needs. Applicants should explain how they will ensure that delivery is flexible.</p>																
Marketing the programme																
<p>Applicants must outline how they will engage individuals on the programme, for example by liaising with the skills brokerage service and with other partners and by marketing if appropriate.</p>																
Selection of learners																
<p>Tenders must outline how they will ensure potential learners as part of initial assessment are ready to become assessors and are:</p>																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • competent and experienced in the occupational area they want to assess; • good at motivating and encouraging people; • interested in helping people develop; • able to relate to staff at all levels; • skilled at writing reports and keeping accurate written records. 																
<p>Learners must have access to at least two NVQ candidates to assess or employees to train.</p>																

The tender must outline how this will be achieved.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited.

Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Quality

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.
- Providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for each sector in which they wish to deliver. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

Further information

Applicants should refer to the suite of provider guidance documents at

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/traintogain/> for further information about the delivery of provision in the workplace, SfL support and Information, Advice and Guidance.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from

<http://www.newstandard.co.uk> .

Employer Unique Reference Number (URN)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Target groups & priority

Employees aged 19 years or older in any sector (including the public and third sector).
Volunteers are also eligible as part of the organisation's workforce, as are self-employed people.

Also eligible are participants who are recently unemployed and who wish to acquire these qualifications in order to gain employment in sectors where there are skills shortages.

Participants must be resident in or work in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification and must not already hold the qualifications described in the Service Requirement. (Note: assessors and verifiers already holding the former D

units do not need to re-qualify).

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

- 500 Learners engaged, of which 122 must be from the Merseyside Phasing-In Area

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

- 300 learners achieving A or V qualifications (or industry relevant programmes), of which 73 must be from the Merseyside Phasing-In Area

Other outcomes

A Performance and Evaluation report to be submitted to the LSC every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the contract.

Funding available

The overall funding available for this Tender Specification is £1,020,000. This funding is split as follows:

- Northwest (including Halton) - £770,250
- Merseyside Phasing-In Area - £249,750

The split of funds identified within geographic locations is indicative; the exception to this is the allocation for Merseyside Phasing-In Area which is exclusively available for that area.

- Cheshire and Warrington – 18%
- Cumbria – 9.5%
- Greater Manchester – 40.5%
- Halton – 1%
- Lancashire – 31%

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 unit cost of participant - £2,040
- Average unit cost of qualifications achieved - £3,400

Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations. State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through 'state resources' that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.

It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial

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environment (whether for profit or not).

Guidance will be provided on State Aid to the successful applicant(s), however it is important to note the following limits to ESF for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the State Aid General Block Exemption. Above these limits cash or where agreed with the LSC, in-kind contributions must be sought from the employer.

It should also be noted that the LSC expects that **ALL** training delivered under this Tender Specification to be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	25%	60%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate (rates are for information and relate to minimum state aid requirements, this programme requires an intervention rate of 60% for SMEs)	35%	70%

Definition of General training is: If the training of employees is applicable not only to an employees' present or future position in the enterprise being assisted because the provision of qualifications provides transferable skills that substantially improve the employability of the employee concerned. Where training leads to the award of National Vocational qualifications and Key Skills Qualifications training will be considered to be general in nature

Definition of Specific training is: Where training provided is principally applicable to the employee's present or future position in the assisted enterprise and provides qualifications that are not transferable, the maximum aid intensities for specific training will apply.

The programme will provide 60% funding support for customised training needs which cannot be delivered through LSC mainstream delivery. The employer must make a 40% cash contribution to the programme.

Each month providers will be expected to submit a monitoring claim and performance claim to the Learning and Skills Council.

Where Deminimis has been limits have been exceeded, providers are required to ensure that each beneficiary company must contribute to the total cost of support provided. Therefore this allocation is conditional on the beneficiary company providing the correct contribution to the cost of training they have received. The company contribution can either be financial or in-kind (unless the LSC instructs that financial or in kind is specifically required). The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

It should be noted that the LSC will be applying for the General Block Exemption to be applied to LSC ESF funded activity for the 07/13 ESF programme, but until this application is approved, Deminimis is the only valid exemption.

Providers will be responsible for securing and evidencing the employer contribution, this evidence must be readily available for audit purposes. No claim against the ESF will be valid until the employer contribution has been received by the provider. The provider will be required to complete company information records and state aid documentation for all companies supported through the

programme.

Start and end dates

The project should commence on 1 June 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011. 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

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. Where applicants seek to deliver activity across the North West and Merseyside Phasing-In Area then the LSC would need to issue 2 contracts.

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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Participant Assessment, Planning and Support	£100	500	£50,000
S8	Participants undertaking qualification at Level 3 or Notional Level 3 (A or V Qualifications)	£450	500	£225,000
S21	Beneficiary retention payment (learners will claim 2 retention payments and the overall volumes for these are calculated using a straight line drop off rate)	£650	800	£520,000

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A10	Full achievement of a Qualification at Level 3 or notional Level 3 (A or V Qualifications)	£750	300	£225,000
M11	Project Evaluation including Case Studies (evaluations to be submitted February and August and Case Studies May and November) + Final Evaluation at Project End	£0.00		£0
Total				£1,020,000

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

For Information Only

Title: Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area – Meeting Skills Needs of Disadvantaged People in the Workforce	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S29
Aim	
<p>To support employers to develop their workforce through the delivery of training to disadvantaged adults who need training, skills development and support to increase their competence and enable them to sustain and progress in employment.</p> <p>This Tender Specification will provide ESF funding for individuals to undertake a personal development programme or a vocationally relevant NVQ Level 1 if appropriate, to help them to acquire skills that will make them more employable and more likely to progress to NVQ Level 2.</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>This provision is intended for employees who do not already hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent and who need support to a) improve their competence in their current job role and b) if appropriate, enable them to progress to their first NVQ2.</p> <p>Volunteers are also eligible as part of the organisation's workforce, as are self-employed learners.</p> <p>While the expectation is that some participants will progress into Train to Gain it is acknowledged that for many of the beneficiaries this outcome may not be possible.</p> <p>Eligible employees may work in any sector, however the sectors below have been identified as having a relatively low-skilled workforce. Employees within these sectors are more likely to be unqualified and evidence from the National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) shows that these sectors also have above average levels of skills gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail• Hospitality• Food and Drink Manufacturing• Leisure, Travel and tourism• Care• Engineering and Manufacturing• Textiles• Construction• Warehousing <p>In order to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development, successful applicants must either already hold a Train to Gain contract, or work closely with partners who hold Train to Gain contracts.</p> <p>It is envisaged that successful applicants will also work closely with organisations and employers providing supported employment opportunities linked to progression from learning, to provide coherent progression pathways from learning to sustainable employment. Supported employment organisations may be funded by Job Centre Plus, Local Authorities or LSC European Social Funding.</p> <p>The successful provider will be required to:</p>	
Identify participants who could benefit from this programme	

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Applicants should explain how they will market the programme to employers as part of an integrated package of skills solutions and how they will work with Business Link Northwest and with other providers to ensure that employers are referred to this programme.

Applicants should also explain how they would identify potential participants, especially from the target groups identified later in this specification. Where individuals require a lower level of support, the alternative programme Pathway to NVQ2 may be a more appropriate route.

Applications must describe the initial assessment processes they will use to identify each learner's individual needs including a full diagnostic assessment of Skills for Life (SfL) needs (carried out by appropriately qualified staff in line with LLUK specifications). The provider will be expected to agree with each learner, an individual learning plan with milestones to measure progress, including planned progression to NVQ Level 2 where appropriate.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited.

Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Learning programmes

Each learner should have an individual learning plan which builds on the outcome of initial assessment and which outlines activities designed to increase the individual's competence in their job role. Individual learning plans should include timescales and milestones by which to measure progress and should include progression to NVQ Level 2 where appropriate.

Where progression to NVQ2 is unlikely to be achievable for an individual, the individual learning plan should clearly identify the expected outcome of the programme including achievement of NVQL1 and/or units towards NVQ2 if appropriate.

Applicants should be aware that other agencies and providers may already be working with some of the potential participants for this programme, for example Offender Learning and Skills (OLASS) providers, Skills for Jobs providers and Jobcentre Plus.

It is essential that the provision in this tender specification does not duplicate or displace activities supported through other funding streams, for example Skills for Jobs providers are required to provide support for the first 13 weeks after an individual gains employment.

Applicants should therefore explain how they will link with other partners and agencies to ensure that this programme complements and builds on support programmes already in place.

Learning programmes could include vocational knowledge, personal development, communication skills, interpersonal skills, confidence building, working in teams, improving ICT skills, Skills for Life, however this is not intended to be an exhaustive list since each learner's programme should meet their needs. Delivery of learning should be as flexible as possible in order to meet employee and employer needs.

Where it is appropriate for the individual, the learner may choose to undertake an NVQ Level 1 programme. This should be delivered in the workplace unless otherwise agreed with the employer.

Some learners may benefit from working towards units of a vocationally relevant NVQ Level 2,

particularly where it is envisaged that they are likely to progress into Train to Gain.

Skills for Life support

Many learners identified as potential beneficiaries for this provision are likely to also have SfL needs.

It is not intended that this tender specification will fund separate SfL qualifications, as they are already funded through Train to Gain, however it will be important that SfL support is integrated throughout the programme. If the applicant does not hold a contract for provision of SfL, they must explain how they will work with partners to provide this support.

Learning difficulties or disabilities

Some beneficiaries may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which could be a barrier to learning. Applicants should explain how they would meet a wide range of learner needs that could include;

- mental ill-health
- sensory impairment
- physical difficulties
- learning difficulties
- specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia
- medical conditions such as epilepsy
- communication disorders, including those that fall in the spectrum of autism
- profound and multiple learning difficulties
- emotional and behavioural difficulties

Applicants should also outline how they would complement and build on support programmes already in place, for example the Jobcentre Plus Access to Work programme.

Additional Learning Support

For a minority of learners, funding for Additional Learning Support (ALS) may be helpful in enabling them to achieve their learning outcome.

ALS has been built into the unit cost for this programme and will be paid as an uplifted rate of £1,350 per learner achieving and progressing to Train to Gain, which is £350 above the rate being offered under the Employer S24 Tender Specification.

Providers must give clear indications of how the ALS element of the programme will be managed, anticipated numbers receiving support from ALS and details of the support to be provided. These details for managing ALS should be clearly defined in the Value for Money section of the ITT application. Provider should note that ALS should only be used to fund additional support **where it is essential to enable the learner to participate in this programme. The LSC cannot provide funding for activities that are part of the learner's usual job role.**

The types of ALS that could be funded may include: One to one support, for example : personal care assistant; mobility assistant; reader; note-taker; communication support worker (for example, Braillist or support for deaf learners) ; transport between sites and to other off-site activities for learners with mobility difficulties.

Progression to NVQ2

Regular progress reviews must be carried out to monitor individual learners' progress. This will be particularly important towards the end of the learner's programme in order to facilitate the

arrangements for their progression to further learning where appropriate.

Applicants must explain how they will facilitate the learners' progression to further learning and how they will ensure a smooth transition for the learner including provision of aftercare.

Where progression entails the learner transferring to another provider, applicants must:

- Demonstrate that they have partnership arrangements in place with other providers or outline plans to put them in place and
- Show how they will ensure a smooth transition for the learner including provision of aftercare.

Quality of provision

Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as the Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.

Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.

Information about the Training Quality Standard may be obtained from <http://www.newstandard.co.uk>.

The Learning and Skills Council will welcome applications that make links between the provision funded under this specification and the emerging Foundation Learning Tier.

Employer Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR) prior to submission of data. Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Target groups & priority

Participants must either be a resident in or work (in either a paid or unpaid capacity) in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification.

There are several potential target groups;

- Employees with learning difficulties or disabilities (whether self-declared or identified during the provider/broker's Training Needs Analysis) who require support to enable them to become more competent in their job role and to progress to their first NVQ2 where appropriate.
- Older employees, who have not undertaken learning for some time and who need support to enable them to progress to their first NVQ Level 2.
- Employees who were previously long term unemployed until their recruitment by the employer within the last 6 months and who need support before they progress to their first or additional NVQ2.
- Ex-offenders released within the last 12 months and offenders serving their sentence in the community, who do not already hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent and who need support to enable them to progress to NVQL2.

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It is not intended to exclude other groups of individuals who might benefit from this programme, however if individuals do not need the level of support offered, it may be more appropriate to refer them to Pathway to NVQ2.

Note : Volunteers are also eligible as part of an organisation's workforce, as are self-employed learners. Providers should note that ESF regulations for Priority 2 stipulate that volunteers may only be supported where they are recruited through targeting a wider employed workforce

Training to support low skilled public sector workers to gain basic skills and level 2 qualifications is eligible. This is because the benefits of training at this level primarily benefit the individuals concerned and promote career development and mobility.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

North West excluding Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 875 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner
- A project evaluation report to be produced every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the programme. The report should outline details of participants ie whether they belong to one of the target groups and if so, which one.

Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 291 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner
- A project evaluation report to be produced every six months during the contract period and a final evaluation report at the end of the programme. The report should outline details of participants ie whether they belong to one of the target groups and if so, which one.

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

North West excluding Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 175 learners (20%) progressing to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision
- NVQ Level 1 achievements (a minimum of 60% of learners undertaking NVQ Level 1 are expected to achieve their learning aim)
- Learners completing their Personal Development Programme

Merseyside Phasing-In Area

- 58 learners (20%) progressing to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision
- NVQ Level 1 achievements (a minimum of 60% of learners undertaking NVQ Level 1 are expected to achieve their learning aim)
- Learners completing their Personal Development Programme

Other outcomes

- Referrals to SfL provision
- Units towards NVQ Level 2

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Successful providers are required to provide a 6 monthly performance and evaluation report.

Funding available

A total of £1,200,000 comprised of £300,000 for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area and £900,000 for the rest of the Northwest.

Below is an indicative split of funding for the Northwest allocation. The allocation outlined above for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area is exclusively available for that area.

- Cheshire and Warrington - 13%
- Cumbria - 6.5%
- Greater Manchester – 52%
- Lancashire – 26%
- Halton – 2.5%

Funding rates

The unit price for learners undertaking an NVQ Level 1 qualification is £1,350 per learner.

Applicants must outline their costs for delivering Personal Development Programmes. As a guide we would not expect the cost per individual to exceed £1,350.

For those learners who progress to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2, a progression payment of £150 will be payable.

Additional Learning Support (ALS)

Funding of £60,000 has been included within this tender specification for ALS through an uplifted unit cost.

State Aid

Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations. State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through ‘state resources’ that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.

It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial environment (whether for profit or not).

Guidance will be provided on State Aid to the successful applicant(s), however it is important to note the LSC will initially be operating De Minimis. Successful providers will need to ensure that employers have not breached the £138,000 ceiling over 3 fiscal years. If this ceiling is breached then the following limits will be applied for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the State Aid General Block Exemption. Above these limits cash or where agreed with the LSC, in-kind contributions must be sought from the employer.

It should also be noted that the LSC expects that **ALL** training delivered under this Tender Specification to be ‘General’ as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
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Intervention Rate	25%	60%
Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	35%	70%

Definition of General training is: If the training of employees is applicable not only to an employees' present or future position in the enterprise being assisted because the provision of qualifications provides transferable skills that substantially improve the employability of the employee concerned. Where training leads to the award of National Vocational qualifications and Key Skills Qualifications training will be considered to be general in nature

Definition of Specific training is: Where training provided is principally applicable to the employee's present or future position in the assisted enterprise and provides qualifications that are not transferable, the maximum aid intensities for specific training will apply.

Where Deminimis has been limits have been exceeded, providers are required to ensure that each beneficiary company must contribute to the total cost of support provided. Therefore this allocation is conditional on the beneficiary company providing the correct contribution to the cost of training they have received. The company contribution can either be financial or in-kind (unless the LSC instructs that financial or in kind is specifically required). The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

It should be noted that the LSC will be applying for the General Block Exemption to be applied to LSC ESF funded activity for the 07/13 ESF programme, but until this application is approved, Deminimis is the only valid exemption.

Providers will be responsible for securing and evidencing the employer contribution, this evidence must be readily available for audit purposes. No claim against the ESF will be valid until the employer contribution has been received by the provider. The provider will be required to complete company information records and state aid documentation for all companies supported through the programme.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011.

Individuals must not be recruited if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve their learning outcome. The Learning and Skills Council reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. Where providers seek to deliver across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside-Phasing-In Area then 2 contracts will be issued.

To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £200,000 for the period of 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

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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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.

The table below is provided as an example of how a contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Individual learning plan produced	£200.00	1166	£233,200
S4	Learners engaged on Personal Development Programme (learners will commence a Personal Development programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£150.00	583	£87,450
S6	Learner engaged on NVQ Level 1 (learners will commence a Personal Development Programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£150.00	583	£87,450
S21	Beneficiary retention payment (learners will claim 2 retention payments and the overall volumes for these are calculated using a straight line drop off rate)	£300.00	1864	£559,200
A2	Participant completing Personal Development Programme (learners will complete a Personal Development Programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£300.00	349	£104,700
A9	Achievement of qualification at Level 1 (learners will complete a Personal Development Programme or NVQ1 and not both)	£300.00	349	£104,700

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P1	Progression to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision	£100.00	233	£23,300
M4	Project evaluation including case studies	£0.00		
Total				£1,200,000

For Information Only

Title: Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area - Supporting the growth in Apprenticeships for Adults	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S30
Aim	
<p>The recently published World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All clearly outlined the Government's commitment to expanding and strengthening the Apprenticeships programme including significant growth in Apprenticeships for those aged 25 or over.</p> <p>The aim of this tender specification is to support the growth in Apprenticeships for Adults in the North West region by providing funding for the Technical Certificate, Employment Rights and Functional Skills elements of apprenticeship frameworks where a provider has exhausted all other funding streams. The NVQ element should be funded through the Train to Gain route in order to complete full Apprenticeship frameworks.</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>An Apprenticeship is not necessarily a qualification in itself, but it contains the following mandatory elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A knowledge-based element (the theoretical knowledge underpinning a job in a certain occupation and industry, (typically certified via a Technical Certificate).• A competence-based element (the ability to discharge the functions of a certain occupation, typically certified via work-based assessed (Normally a national vocational qualification (NVQs)).• Transferable or 'functional skills' (literacy and numeracy plus wider key skills as designated by the relevant SSC).• Employment rights and responsibilities. <p>This tender specification is for the delivery of the knowledge based element, the transferable or 'functional skills' element and the employment rights and responsibilities element only. This is not a specification for the delivery of full Apprenticeship frameworks. It is, however a requirement of the specification that applicants must have access to Train to Gain funding in order to support learners in the attainment of full Apprenticeship (level 2) or Advanced Apprenticeship (level 3) frameworks if the NVQ element has not already been completed. In order to meet the requirements of this specification, learners must be employed status at the time of enrolment. Potential learners may have already completed the required NVQ and wish to undertake the Technical Certificate and other elements in order to complete a full Apprenticeship. Alternatively, the Technical Certificate may be completed first followed by the NVQ (funded through Train to Gain) later to complete the framework.</p> <p>Applications are welcomed from providers who do not currently hold an Apprenticeship contract as well as those who do. Successful providers must already hold Train to Gain contracts or work closely with partners that do. Providers must also explain how they would work in partnership with other providers (where necessary) to ensure that funding is only used where a provider has exhausted their existing Apprenticeship provision.</p>	
Employer engagement	
<p>Successful providers will need to both generate their own employer leads for the delivery of this activity and to work with Business Link North West to meet the needs of employers who have accessed Train to Gain via the Brokerage Service. Applicants should explain how they will engage employers, whether through existing relationships with employers or through the engagement of new employers.</p>	

Quality

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the LSC is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.
- Providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for each sector in which they wish to deliver. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

Employer Unique Reference Number (URN)

Successful providers will be required to access the Employer Data Service (EDS) database to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must also ensure that they have appropriate management information systems in place to collect and submit data to the Learning and Skills Council on a monthly basis.

Target groups and priority sectors

This tender specification seeks to provide entry and progression routes into Apprenticeships for employed adults aged 25+ progressing from Train to Gain provision or other work-based vocational learning, or changing career paths. It also seeks to support the delivery of the knowledge based elements of Apprenticeship frameworks where a provider has access to Train to Gain funding and can deliver the NVQ element separately. Participants must either be a resident of, or employed in an organisation based in the geographical locations identified for this Tender Specification.

There is a need to deliver Technical Certificates to support the attainment of Apprenticeships in **all** sectors, with an increase in progressions from stand-alone NVQ Level 2 and 3 onto an Apprenticeship where appropriate. The sectors highlighted as being of specific strategic importance within the **North West** region are identified in the **North West Regional Commissioning Plan 2008-09** and are a priority for increasing the availability and uptake of Apprenticeships. In addition, it is also anticipated that demand for adult apprentices in some sectors may be driven by barriers to entry for 16 – 18 year olds (E.G. Legislative requirements for those employed in the 'outdoors' sub-sector of Sport & Active Leisure or driving roles in Transport & Logistics).

However, applications that will be given the strongest consideration will be those that provide clear evidence of demand from employers.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-In Area (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral).

Providers should identify the proposed volumes of starts for each Technical Certificate and sub-region.

Outputs

Published for information purposes only. Speculative Proposals will not be accepted.

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

Outputs	Northwest	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Total
No. of participants <u>receiving</u> training for technical certificates at level 2 which forms part of an Apprenticeship framework	980	315	1295
No. of participants <u>receiving</u> training for technical certificates at level 3 which forms part of an Apprenticeship framework	420	135	555

In addition, the following should be delivered:

- Key Skills and Employment Rights and Responsibilities elements delivered as required
- Initial assessment including identification of SfL needs where appropriate
- Production of an individual learning plan for each learner reflecting the outcome of information, advice and guidance.

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

Results	Northwest	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Total
No. of participants completing a technical certificate at level 2	595	175	770
No. of participants completing a technical certificate at level 3	255	75	330

Other Outcomes

The minimum outcomes which are required detailed below:

Outcome	Northwest	Merseyside Phasing-In Area	Total
Number of Additional Train to Gain Starts	375	125	500

Providers will be required to produce a 6 monthly performance and evaluation report. In addition to details about the delivery of Technical certificate, Key Skills and Employment Rights and Responsibilities, the report should also detail the progression of learners onto Train to Gain and the delivery of NVQs, thereby completing full Apprenticeship frameworks.

Funding available

There is a total of £1,876,000 available for this programme, of which £1,407,000 is available for the North West and £469,000 is available for the Merseyside Phasing-In Area.

Identified below is a split of funding for the Northwest area, this split is indicative; the exception to this is the allocation for Merseyside Phasing-In Area which is exclusively available for that area.

Cheshire & Warrington – 17.5%

Cumbria - 9%

Greater Manchester – 46%

Halton – 1%

Lancashire – 26.5%

Contracts that are awarded under this Tender Specification will have to follow State Aid regulations. State Aid is defined as any aid to a commercial under taking through 'state resources' that distorts or threatens to distort competition within the European Union. In practice this means that any co-financed (ESF) funding support given to enterprises that could be construed as giving them a competitive advantage over other enterprises in the European Union will fall under European rules regarding State Aid.

It is important to note that State Aid can apply to public and private sector organisations and also charities if they are producing or selling products or services that can compete in a commercial environment (whether for profit or not).

Guidance will be provided on State Aid to the successful applicant(s), however it is important to note the LSC will initially be operating De Minimis. Successful providers will need to ensure that employers have not breached the £138,000 ceiling over 3 fiscal years. If this ceiling is breached then the following limits will be applied for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the State Aid General Block Exemption. Above these limits cash or where agreed with the LSC, in-kind contributions must be sought from the employer.

It should also be noted that the LSC expects that **ALL** training delivered under this Tender Specification to be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	25%	60%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Intervention Rate	35%	70%

Definition of General training is: If the training of employees is applicable not only to an employees' present or future position in the enterprise being assisted because the provision of qualifications provides transferable skills that substantially improve the employability of the employee concerned. Where training leads to the award of National Vocational qualifications and Key Skills Qualifications training will be considered to be general in nature

Definition of Specific training is: Where training provided is principally applicable to the employee's present or future position in the assisted enterprise and provides qualifications that are not transferable, the maximum aid intensities for specific training will apply.

State Aid requirements dictate that each beneficiary company must contribute to the total cost of support provided. Therefore this allocation is conditional on the beneficiary company providing the correct financial contribution to the cost of training by each benefiting company. The company contribution must be financial and cannot be made in-kind (unless under exceptional circumstances and when specifically agreed with the LSC in writing and in advance). The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer financial contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

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Providers will be responsible for securing and evidencing the employer contribution, this evidence must be readily available for audit purposes. No claim against the ESF will be valid until the employer contribution has been received by the provider. The provider will be required to complete company information records and state aid documentation for all companies supported through the programme.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2009 and be completed by 31 July 2011.

Individuals must not be recruited if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve their learning outcomes. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West.

Where applicants seek to deliver activity across the North West and Merseyside Phasing-In Area then the LSC would need to issue 2 contracts.

The Learning and Skills Council intends to contract the activity within this tender specification against a set of deliverables, such as starts, qualifications, 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.

Providers' responses to the tender should indicate the maximum amount of funding expected to be drawn down between 1 June 2009 and 31 July 2011. Initial contracts may be small in size, but will have the potential to be increased subject to performance and budget availability. Contract increases will be both financial and for a proportionate level of volumes. Providers are asked to identify any issues regarding the scaling back of provision.

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.

The below table is provided as an example of how a full contract award for the full allocation of funding and associated deliverables would look. Providers should use these deliverables to profile their delivery. These deliverables will be used to identify the contribution providers are making to the delivery of the outputs and results required for this Tender Specification.

Deliverable ID	Deliverable Name	Unit Cost	Volume	Payment
S2	Participant Assessment, Planning and Support	£50	1850	£92,500
S7	Participants undertaking qualification at Level 2 or Notional Level 2	£200	1295	£259,000
S8	Participants undertaking qualification at Level 3 or Notional Level 3	£300	555	£166,500

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S21	Beneficiary retention payment (learners will claim 2 retention payments and the overall volumes for these are calculated using a straight line drop off rate)	£300	2950	£885,000
A9	Full achievement of a Qualification at Level 2 or notional Level 2	£400	770	£308,000
A10	Full achievement of a Qualification at Level 3 or notional Level 3	£500	330	£165,000
M11	Project Evaluation including Case Studies (evaluations to be submitted February and August and Case Studies May and November) + Final Evaluation at Project End	£0.00		
Total				£1,876,000

Subcontracting

If the Contractor wishes to work with a sub-contractor that is not named in the original bid and the value of the sub-contracting arrangement exceeds £10,000, the activity must be competitively tendered for. Where only one provider is available then permission must be sought from the LSC before the sub-contract is agreed. Where the value is £10,000 or below, then, providing they can demonstrate value for money, the Contractor can source specialist providers directly to sub-contract with, without the need for tendering.