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**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
NORTHWEST**



Leading learning and skills

ESF CO-FINANCE

**EMPLOYER TENDER
SPECIFICATIONS – DECEMBER 2007**

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For Information Only

Title: Northwest including Merseyside – Pathway to NVQ Level 2	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S12
Aim	
<p>The Learning and Skills Council recognises that some employees, often in low skilled job roles, who do not have an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent, may not be ready to undertake an NVQ Level 2 because they may lack confidence or require personal development or would in some sectors benefit from undertaking an NVQ Level 1 first.</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, which should enable the majority of learners to progress to an NVQ Level 2. It is not intended that this programme will fund separate Skills for Life (SfL) qualifications as they are already funded through Train to Gain and/or the European Social Fund (Skills for Life Plus Tender Specification).</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>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. In some instances learners may have progressed from pre-employability programmes as part of the Skills for Jobs framework and require further support before undertaking their first full NVQ Level 2.</p> <p>Although the employees may work in any sector, 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>Applicants should outline how they would work with partners to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development including Skills for Life (SfL), Pathway to NVQ Level 2, First and Second NVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 3.</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 working with providers that do not deliver sub-NVQ level 2 provision are referred to this programme.</p> <p>Applicants should also demonstrate how they would identify learners for whom this option is</p>	

more suitable than an NVQ Level 2 qualification and how they would carry out initial assessment to ascertain those learners' individual needs including assessment of SfL. The provider will be expected to produce an individual learning plan for each learner with milestones to show progress, which must include planned progression to NVQ Level 2 provision.

Note : If learners have SfL needs they should be met by either integrating SfL within the learning programme, or if appropriate, by the learner undertaking a separate SfL qualification. As indicated earlier it is not intended that this programme will fund separate SfL qualifications. 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.

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 to the next level. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it. Applicants who do not hold Matrix should explain how they will provide an equivalent level of support for example delivery of IAG by partners who are Matrix-accredited.

Provide individualised learning programmes

Each learner must have an individual learning plan which builds on the outcome of initial assessment by outlining the learning programme that will enable the learner to progress to NVQ Level 2 and the associated timescale and milestones by which to measure progress.

Learning programmes could include vocational knowledge, personal development, communication skills, interpersonal skills, confidence building, working in teams, improving ICT skills. Delivery of learning should be as flexible as possible in order to meet employee and employer needs.

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

Individual learning plans must explain how SfL support will be provided and whether it is integrated into the learning programme or delivered as a separate qualification.

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 NVQ Level 2 provision.

Facilitate progression to NVQ Level 2 provision

Applicants must explain how they will facilitate the learners' progression to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2, including 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 inspections grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as New Employer 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 New Employer Standard.

Employer Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)

Successful providers will be required to contact Business Link Northwest 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 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.

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

Support may be given to employees in the public sector however; ESF is not usually available for training individuals who have permanent jobs in the public sector, as the Commission believes that direct training of public employees should be supported by the Member States. However, there are some exceptions to this:

- Training people to allow them to enter the public sector.
- If the public sector contracts our work to provide companies, the contracted company is not considered part of the public sector so training activity will be eligible.
- Support for public sector workers who have either been given or are threatened with redundancy which required them to carry out vocational training to fit them for a new post.
- Lifelong learning for public sector workers employed in traditionally low skilled work who need career development in their current post.
- Training Jobcentre Plus staff working on modernising or providing activity which is additional to normal Jobcentre Plus activity, and
- Funding teachers for activity beyond the standard support available to help the teachers meet the needs of stated ESF client groups.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including the Greater Merseyside phasing-in area.

Indicative sub-regional share of the provision is as follows:

- Cheshire and Warrington - 13% £1,091,927

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- Cumbria - 6.5% £545,963
- Greater Manchester – 52% £4,367,706
- Lancashire – 26% £2,183,583
- Halton – 2.5% £210,256
- Merseyside excluding Halton - £3,852,890

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

- 12,000 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

- 7,200 learners (60%) progressing to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 provision

Other outcomes

- Referrals to SfL provision
- NVQ Level 1 achievements (a minimum of 60% of learners undertaking NVQ Level 1 are expected to achieve their learning aim)

Funding available

A total of £12,252,325 comprised of £8,399,435 for the Northwest excluding Merseyside and £3,852,890 for Merseyside. The split of funds identified within geographic locations is indicative; the exception to this is the allocation for Merseyside excluding Halton which is exclusively available for that 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.

Applicants must outline their costs for delivering individualised learning programmes to employees for whom NVQ Level 1 is not appropriate. As a guide we would not expect the cost per individual to exceed £1,000. Again, 10% of the unit cost will be payable on confirmation of the learner's progression to Train to Gain NVQ Level 2.

The activities specified in this Tender Specification will be funded by the LSC's Co-finance Plan for the North West of England for the period January 2007 to December 2010. As this Co-finance Plan has yet to be approved the amounts specified in this Tender Specification are subject to change. The final amount of funding available for this Tender Specification will be agreed prior to contract clarification commencing.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2008 and be completed by 31 December 2010.

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. To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £250,000

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over the 3 years.

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.

For Information Only

Title: Northwest including Merseyside – First NVQ Level 2 and Vocationally Relevant Second NVQ Level 2	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S13
Aim <p>To support workforce development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling employees who do not hold a NVQ Level 2 or equivalent to achieve their first full NVQ Level 2* at no cost to their employer, funded through Train to Gain.• Enabling employees who already hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (or higher qualification), to acquire a vocationally relevant NVQ Level 2* at a subsidised cost to the employer, funded through ESF. <p>Note: including NVQ Level 3 “jumpers” where this is appropriate for the learner. Level 3 “jumpers” are those learners whose initial assessment and job role indicates that they would benefit from undertaking an NVQ Level 3 rather than an NVQ Level 2. The funding is the same as that for NVQ Level 2.</p> <p>It is not intended that this programme will fund separate Skills for Life (SfL) qualifications as they are already funded through Train to Gain and the European Social Fund (Skills for Life Plus Tender Specification).</p>	
Service requirement <p>The provider is required to engage employers across all sectors in order to recruit learners either through existing relationships with employers (eg employers already engaged with Train to Gain) or through the engagement of new employers in upskilling their workforce.</p> <p>Applicants should outline how they would work with partners to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development including SfL, Pathway to NVQ Level 2, First and Second NVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 3.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The provider is expected to deliver the NVQ Level 2 in the workplace and to be flexible in meeting learners’ and employers’ needs. As part of the Train to Gain offer, the Assess-Train-Assess model should be utilised to ensure learners receive credit for prior learning.</p> <p>Applicants must demonstrate how they would carry out initial assessment to ascertain the learners’ individual needs, including assessment of 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.</p> <p>If learners have SfL needs they should be met by either integrating SfL within the NVQ or if appropriate, by the learner undertaking a separate SfL qualification. As indicated earlier it is not intended that this programme will fund separate SfL qualifications. If the applicant does not hold a contract for SfL provision, they must explain how they will work with partners to provide this support.</p> <p>Applicants should refer to <i>Requirements for Funding Train to Gain 07-08 version 2</i> available for download at www.lsc.gov.uk for further information about the delivery of NVQ Level 2 provision in the workplace, eligibility criteria and programme parameters. Applicants should</p>	

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also refer to *Train to Gain: A Plan for Growth* available for download at www.lsc.gov.uk for information about the programme flexibilities available through mainstream Train to Gain funding. Applicants are asked to note that these documents are pertinent to activity that is funded via ESF as well as Train to Gain.

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. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it. Applicants who do not hold Matrix should explain how they will provide an equivalent level of support, for example delivery of IAG by partners who are Matrix-accredited.

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 for both Leadership and Management and any area of learning for which they are submitting a tender.
- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. Evidence of inspections grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as New Employer 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 New Employer Standard.
- To be considered for funding 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.

Applicants should ensure that their tender sets out separately the volumes, outputs, results and other outcomes they are proposing to deliver for first and second NVQ Level 2 and for Merseyside ESF if appropriate.

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 (SSC) 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 SSCs and agreed with the LSC for funding.

Employer Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)

Successful providers will be required to contact Business Link Northwest prior to submission of data in order to obtain the employer's URN which must be entered on each learner's Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must 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

First NVQ Level 2 (inc Level 3 jumpers) funded through Train to Gain

Employees across all sectors and in organisations of any size who do not hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent (eg 5 GCSEs grades A-C). In addition, recent flexibilities have been announced to support the full cost of second NVQ level 2 for specified groups of employees (see *Train to Gain: A Plan for Growth*).

Second NVQ Level 2 (inc Level 3 jumpers) funded through ESF

Employees who fall into these categories:

- 1) Already hold a NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualification (or higher qualification), gained more than 5 years ago and who require a vocationally relevant NVQ2 for their current job role or;
- 2) Already hold a NVQ Level 2 or equivalent qualification (or higher qualification), have changed job role or moved into a new occupational sector for which they require a vocationally relevant NVQ2 ;

And whose employer has already committed or is willing to commit to provision of first NVQ Level 2 for eligible employees.

No employee who is eligible for funding under mainstream Train to Gain NVQ Level 2 funding is eligible for ESF NVQ Level 2 funding.

Support may be given to employees in the public sector however; ESF is not usually available for training individuals who have permanent jobs in the public sector, as the Commission believes that direct training of public employees should be supported by the Member States. However, there are some exceptions to this:

- Training people to allow them to enter the public sector.
- If the public sector contracts our work to provide companies, the contracted company is not considered part of the public sector so training activity will be eligible.
- Support for public sector workers who have either been given or are threatened with redundancy which required them to carry out vocational training to fit them for a new post.
- Lifelong learning for public sector workers employed in traditionally low skilled work who need career development in their current post.
- Training Jobcentre Plus staff working on modernising or providing activity which is additional to normal Jobcentre Plus activity, and
- Funding teachers for activity beyond the standard support available to help the teachers meet the needs of stated ESF client groups.

The following criteria apply to both Train to Gain and ESF funded activity:

Applicants should note that large companies with more than 5000 employees should be directed to the National Employer Service initially.

These individuals 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 Greater

Merseyside.

TtG funded First NVQ Level 2	ESF funded Second NVQ Level 2
Cheshire and Warrington - 10% = £1,316,400	Cheshire and Warrington - 15.5% = £1,727,204
Cumbria - 6% = £789,840	Cumbria - 10% = £1,114,325
Greater Manchester – 40% = £5,265,600	Greater Manchester – 46% = £5,125,895
Lancashire – 21% = £2,764,449	Lancashire – 26% = £2,897,245
Greater Merseyside including Halton – 23% = £3,027,720	Halton – 2.5% = £278,581
	Merseyside excluding Halton - £6,054,541
Total = £13,164,000	Total = £ 17,197,791

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

FIRST NVQ LEVEL 2 (INC LEVEL 3 JUMPERS) FUNDED THROUGH TRAIN TO GAIN

- 10,500 starts on NVQ Level 2 including NVQ Level 3 “jumpers”
- 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 provided to the learners

SECOND NVQ LEVEL 2 (INC LEVEL 3 JUMPERS) FUNDED THROUGH ESF

North West excluding Merseyside

- 14,040 starts on NVQ Level 2 including NVQ Level 3 “jumpers”
- 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 provided to the learners

Merseyside phasing-in area

- 7,620 starts on NVQ Level 2 including NVQ Level 3 “jumpers”
- 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 provided to the learners

Results

As a minimum the results which are required are:

FIRST NVQ LEVEL 2 (INC LEVEL 3 JUMPERS) FUNDED THROUGH TRAIN TO GAIN

- 7,500 (70%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 2 (or NVQ Level 3 for L3 “jumpers”).
- Progression to NVQ Level 3 where this is appropriate for the learner

SECOND NVQ LEVEL 2 (INC LEVEL 3 JUMPERS) FUNDED THROUGH ESF

North West excluding Merseyside

- 9,808 (70%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 2 (or NVQ Level 3 for L3 “jumpers”).
- Progression to NVQ Level 3 where this is appropriate for the learner

Merseyside phasing-in area

- 5,321 (70%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 2 (or NVQ Level 3 for L3 “jumpers”).
- Progression to NVQ Level 3 where this is appropriate for the learner

Other outcomes

- SfL qualifications where appropriate delivered either by the applicant or by partners.
- Individual learners issued with a Skills Passport issued by the relevant Sector Skills Council were the SSC has developed one.

Funding available

First NVQ Level 2 (inc Level 3 jumpers) funded through Train to Gain

A total of £13,164,000 for the Northwest including Merseyside.

Rates for first NVQ Level 2 for the academic year 2007/08 will be those contained in *Requirements for Funding Train to Gain 07-08 version 2* and may be revised in subsequent years. A full list of the rates is included in the Learner Aims Database that is available on the LSC's website at www.lsc.gov.uk.

Second NVQ Level 2 (in Level 3 jumpers) funded through ESF

A total of £17,197,791 comprised of £11,143,250 for the Northwest including Halton and £6,054,541 for the Merseyside phasing-in area.

Although ESF is funding this activity, the payment methodology will be based on the Employer Responsive model, ie 75% paid monthly following the learner start and the remainder when the learner achieves their NVQ.

Rates for second NVQ Level 2, below, reflect an assumed employer contribution of 42.5% for calendar year 1, increasing to 47.5% in year 2 and 50% in year 3.

Sector	Unit Rate payable in Year 1 (June 2008 to 31 December 2008)
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	£1,040
Business, administration and law	£725
Construction, planning and the built environment	£1,355
Education and training	£1,040
Engineering and manufacturing technologies including "food and drink" and "textiles".	£1,355
Health, public services and care	£1,040
Information and Communication technology	£725
Leisure, travel and tourism	£725
Retail and commercial enterprise	£725
Transportation	£1,355
Hair and Beauty	£1,040
Hospitality	£725

The Learning and Skills Council reserve the right to;

- Revise the rates in future years to align with mainstream funding
- Switch funding for Second NVQ Level 2 to mainstream TtG in response to changes in policy eg broadening of eligibility criteria for Train to Gain

The ESF funded activities specified in this Tender Specification will be funded by the LSC's Co-finance Plan for the North West of England for the period January 2007 to December 2010. As this Co-finance Plan has yet to be approved the amounts specified in this Tender Specification are subject to change. The final amount of funding available for this Tender Specification will be agreed prior to contract clarification commencing.

Start and end dates

First NVQ Level 2 (inc Level 3 jumpers) funded through Train to Gain

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2008 and will initially be until 31 July 2010.

Second NVQ Level 2 (inc Level 3 jumpers) funded through ESF

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2008 and be completed by 31 December 2010.

Individuals must not be recruited for second NVQ Level 2 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

Applicants may tender for either or both first and second Level 2. There will be separate contracts for Train to Gain and ESF.

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £100,000 for each year of the contract.

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.

Title: Northwest including Merseyside – Skills for Life Plus	Reference : NW/EMPLOYER/S14
Aim <p>To ensure that the offer of Skills for Life supports all eligible employees to progress towards achieving a first full NVQ Level 2 or NVQ Level 3 and to develop provider capacity to meet the expansion of Skills for Life (SfL) programmes particularly for Numeracy. This provision will be funded partly through Train to Gain and partly through ESF, as set out later in this tender specification.</p>	
Service requirement <p>The provider is required to engage employers across all sectors in order to recruit learners either through existing relationships with employers (eg employers already engaged with Train to Gain) or through the engagement of new employers in upskilling their workforce.</p> <p>This provision should complement the Skills for Jobs framework, as described in ESF Priority 1, so that those adults entering work can continue to receive support for literacy and numeracy, regardless of level of need.</p> <p>Applicants should outline how they would work with partners to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for workforce development including SfL, Pathway to NVQ Level 2, First and Second NVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 3.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Activities to be supported are below:</p> Skills for Life funded through Train to Gain <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SfL provision (ESOL, Literacy and Numeracy) at Levels 1 and 2 for individuals who do not hold an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent. This can be delivered concurrently with an NVQ Level 2 or as a “stand alone” qualification.• Applicants should refer to <i>Requirements for Funding Train to Gain 07-08 version 2</i> available for download at www.lsc.gov.uk for further information about the delivery of Skills for Life provision in the workplace, eligibility criteria and programme parameters. Applicants should also refer to <i>Train to Gain: A Plan for Growth</i> available for download at www.lsc.gov.uk for information about the programme flexibilities available through mainstream Train to Gain funding. Skills for Life funded through ESF <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SfL Entry level 3 provision (Literacy and Numeracy only) particularly Numeracy. Employees at entry level 1 and 2 would not be excluded from support however there would be an expectation that they would progress to Entry level 3.• Beneficiaries must follow approved literacy and numeracy programmes (mapped to the core curricula), leading where applicable to achievement of a Certificate in Adult Literacy or Numeracy at Entry level 3.	

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- SfL support (Literacy and Numeracy only) for those with an NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualification already but who still have literacy and numeracy needs at level 1 or 2.
- Beneficiaries who already have an NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualification and who have literacy or numeracy needs should work towards achievement of a Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy at Entry level 3, level 1 or level 2.

Initial Assessment

All employees whether on Train to Gain or ESF funded SfL must undergo an initial assessment followed by a diagnostic assessment carried out by suitably qualified staff. Results of these assessments should then be used to develop an individual learning plan.

Delivery of SfL provision should be in the workplace and as flexible as possible to meet the employer's and employees' needs, for example responding to shift patterns and part-time hours of employees.

The ultimate goal should be for learners to progress to achieve a full first NVQ level 2 or NVQ level 3, applicants should outline how they would facilitate progression either to their own provision or through links with other providers.

Information, Advice and Guidance

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. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it. Applicants who do not hold Matrix should explain how they will provide an equivalent level of support, for example delivery of IAG by partners who are Matrix-accredited.

Quality of Provision

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 for both Leadership and Management and any area of learning for which they are submitting a tender.
- 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 New Employer 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 New Employer Standard.
- To be considered for funding, providers will need to show appropriate completion rates for SfL. Previous and planned completion rates will be an important aspect in the assessment of bids.

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Applicants should ensure that their tender sets out separately the volumes, outputs, results and other outcomes they are proposing to deliver for Skills for Life funded through Train to Gain and ESF and for Merseyside if appropriate.

The North West would encourage activity to take place within priority sectors. These are; Health and Social Care, Logistics, Retail, Construction, Engineering, Food and Drink, Tourism and Land-based, however this list is not exhaustive.

Employer Unique Reference Numbers (URNs)

Successful providers will be required to contact Business Link Northwest 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 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.

Capacity building (funded through ESF)

LSC Northwest recognises that some providers may not have had support in the past to develop their capacity to deliver Skills for Life provision, however many have the potential to do so in the future. Therefore an amount of ESF funding has been set aside to support those very providers. The LSC would not expect FE Colleges who have received funding over a number of years to support their delivery capacity to make a claim for this additional support.

This Tender Specification also invites providers to bid for ESF funding to support capacity building activity for their staff, **especially numeracy practitioners**, in line with the qualifications framework developed through Lifelong Learning UK.

(http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org/nrp/workforcedev/sfl_workforce_dev.html)

Applicants should outline in their tender, the results of a Training Needs Analysis of their SfL delivery staff which must clearly identify the numbers of those who are currently qualified, or already working towards qualifications and the numbers who require a qualification as described below.

- Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)
- Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS)
- Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS)

Allocation of capacity building will be dependent on level of need and number of SfL outcomes delivered.

Target groups & priority

Skills for Life funded through Train to Gain

- All employees who do not have an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent and whose SfL needs are at Level 1 or 2

Skills for Life funded through ESF

- All employees who do not have an NVQ Level 2 or equivalent with literacy and numeracy needs at Entry level 3 (and below)
- All employees with an NVQ level 2 or equivalent who still require SfL support in order to progress

Capacity building (funded through ESF)

- Individuals delivering SfL provision funded through Train to Gain or ESF.

The following criteria applies to all 3 areas of activity (SfL delivery funded via Train to Gain, SfL delivery funded via ESF and Capacity Building funded via ESF).

- All individuals 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 Greater Merseyside. The following sub-regional allocations are indicative only.

TtG funded Skills for Life	ESF funded Skills for Life
Cheshire and Warrington - 10% = £183,600	Cheshire and Warrington - 13% = £261,505
Cumbria - 6% = £110,160	Cumbria - 6.5% = £130,752
Greater Manchester – 40% = £734,400	Greater Manchester – 52% = £1,046,023
Lancashire – 21% =£385,560	Lancashire – 26% = £523,011
Greater Merseyside including Halton – 23% = £422,280	Halton – 2.5% = £50,289
	Merseyside excluding Halton - £663,371
Total = £1,836,000	Total = £ 2,674,954

Capacity building (funded through ESF)

A total of £697,500 comprised of £418,500 for the North West and £279,000 for the Merseyside phasing-in area.

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

SfL funded through Train to Gain

- 3,000 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme

SfL funded through ESF (North West)

- 2,625 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme

SfL funded through ESF (Merseyside)

- 855 learners starting on the programme
- An Individual Learning Plan produced for every learner on the programme

Capacity building (funded through ESF)

- 115 SfL professionals enrolling on the qualifications outlined in the Results section below.
- Evaluation report to be produced annually to demonstrate impact of this funding.

Results

SfL funded through Train to Gain

- 2,100 certificates in Adult Literacy or Numeracy – level 1 and 2

SfL funded through ESF (North West)

- 1,242 Certificates in Adult Literacy or Numeracy – Entry level 3
- 595 Certificates in Adult Numeracy or Literacy – Level 1 or level 2

SfL funded through ESF (Merseyside)

- 409 Certificates in Adult Literacy or Numeracy – Entry level 3
- 189 Certificates in Adult Numeracy or Literacy – Level 1 or level 2

Capacity building (funded through ESF)

- 50 Preparing to Teach in Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) qualification
- 25 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) qualification (numeracy)
15 Subject Specific numeracy programmes (L5)
- 15 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualification (literacy)
- 10 Subject Specific literacy programmes (L5)

Other outcomes

Referrals to partner organisations for progression to higher level qualifications eg first full NVQ level 2.

Funding available

SFL FUNDED THROUGH TRAIN TO GAIN

A total of £1,836,000 for the North West including Merseyside. The rate payable for the 2007-08 academic year is £738 per learner in line with the current rate for SfL contained in *Requirements for Funding Train to Gain 07-08 version 2* and is subject to change for subsequent years.

SFL FUNDED THROUGH ESF

North West excluding Merseyside - £2,011,583

- Entry level 3 @ £1,000 per beneficiary (note, this rate will also apply to entry level 1 and 2)
- Level 1 and 2 @ £7380 per beneficiary

Merseyside phasing-in area - £663,371

- Entry 3 @ £1,000 per beneficiary (note, this rate will also apply to entry level 1 and 2)
- Level 1 and 2 @ £738 per beneficiary

Capacity building (funded through ESF)

A total of £697,500 comprised of £418,500 for the North West and £279,000 for Merseyside phasing-in area.

- 50 Preparing to Teach in Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) qualification at £2,000 each

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- 25 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) qualification (numeracy) at £12,000 each
- 15 Subject Specific numeracy programmes (L5) at £7,500 each
- 15 Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector qualification (literacy) at £9,000 each
- 10 Subject Specific literacy programmes (L5) at £5,000 each

Start and end dates

Skills for Life funded through Train to Gain

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2008 and will initially be until 31 July 2010.

Skills for Life funded through ESF

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2008 and be completed by 31 December 2010.

Individuals must not be recruited for Skills for Life funded through ESF 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

Applicants may tender for either or both SfL funded through Train to Gain and ESF. There will be separate contracts for Train to Gain and ESF.

Contracts may be awarded on a sub-regional basis or alternatively for the whole of the North West. To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £100,000 for each year of the contract.

The Learning and Skills Council intends to contract the ESF 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.

Title: Northwest including Merseyside – NVQ Level 3	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S15
Aim <p>This activity which is entirely funded via Train to Gain monies, aims to support workforce development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling employees who do not hold a NVQ Level 3 or equivalent to achieve their first full NVQ Level 3, at a subsidised cost to the employer• Enabling employees who already hold an NVQ Level 3 or equivalent (or higher qualification), to acquire a vocationally relevant NVQ Level 3 at a subsidised cost to the employer <p>Note : Including NVQ Level 4 “jumpers” where this is appropriate for the learner. Level 4 “jumpers” are those learners whose initial assessment and job role indicates that they would benefit from undertaking an NVQ Level 4 rather than an NVQ Level 3. The funding is the same as that for NVQ Level 3.</p>	
Service requirement <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sectors The provider is required to engage employers across all sectors in order to recruit learners either through existing relationships with employers (e.g. employers already engaged with Train to Gain) or through the engagement of new employers in upskilling their workforce.2. The Workforce Development Offer Applicants should outline how they would work with partners to ensure employers receive a comprehensive offer for Workforce Development including Skills for Life, Pathway to NVQ Level 2, First and Second NVQ Level 2 and NVQ Level 3.3. Skills Brokerage Service Successful providers will be required to work closely with the skills brokerage service (Business Link North West) to identify employers who could potentially benefit from this provision. Successful providers will be required to contact Business Link North West prior to submission of data in order to obtain the employer’s URN which must be entered on each learner’s Individual Learner Record (ILR). Providers must 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.4. Workplace Delivery The provider is expected to deliver the NVQ Level 3 in the workplace and to be flexible in meeting learners’ and employers’ needs. As part of the Train to Gain offer, the Assess-Train-Assess model should be utilised to ensure learners receive credit for prior learning.5. Planned Learning 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.	

6. Skills for Life

If learners have SfL needs they should be met by either integrating SfL within the NVQ or if appropriate, by the learner undertaking a separate SfL qualification. If the applicant does not hold a contract for SfL provision, they must explain how they will work with partners to provide this support.

7. IAG

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. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it. Applicants who do not hold Matrix should explain how they will provide an equivalent level of support, for example delivery of IAG by partners who are Matrix-accredited.

8. Quality

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 for both Leadership and Management and any area of learning for which they are submitting a tender.
- Providers who are not currently in receipt of funding will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to employers and employees. External quality assurance such as awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' application.
- To be considered for Train to Gain funding 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.

Notes

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 (SSC) 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 SSCs and agreed with the LSC for funding.

Applicants should refer to *Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Level 3 Trials 07-08 version 2.7* available for download at www.lsc.gov.uk for further information about the delivery of NVQ Level 3 provision in the workplace, eligibility criteria and programme parameters.

Applicants should also refer to *Train to Gain: A Plan for Growth* available for download at www.lsc.gov.uk for information about the programme flexibilities available through mainstream Train to Gain funding.

Target groups & priority

First NVQ Level 3

Employees across all sectors and in organisations of any size who do not already hold an NVQ Level 3 or equivalent

These individuals must either be a resident of or work in an organisation which is based in the geographic locations identified for this Tender Specification

Applicants should note that large companies with more than 5000 employees should be directed to the National Employer Service initially.

Second NVQ Level 3

Employees who already hold an already hold an NVQ Level 3 or equivalent qualification (or higher qualification), have changed job role or moved into a new occupational sector for which they require a vocationally relevant NVQ3.

The Learning and Skills Council reserves the right to amend the eligibility criteria for NVQ Level 3 in response to changes in national policy.

Geography / area of delivery

The provision should be available across the whole of the Northwest including Greater Merseyside.

Cheshire and Warrington - 10% - £1,097,520

Cumbria - 6% - £658,512

Greater Manchester – 40% - £ 4,390,080

Lancashire – 21% - £2,304,792

Greater Merseyside including Halton – 23% - £2,524,296

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

- 8,000 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 provided to the learners
- Required contribution obtained from the employer

Results

As a minimum the results which are required are:

- 5,600 (70%) of learners achieving an NVQ Level 3
- All employers making the required contribution to the cost of training

Other outcomes

SfL qualifications where appropriate delivered either by the applicant or by partners

Funding available

A total of £10,975,200 for the Northwest including Merseyside.

The rates for the academic year 2007-08 in the table below reflect an employer contribution of 37.5% which will increase in subsequent years. Further information about current rates may be found in *Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Level 3 Trials 07-08 version 2.7*.

Sector Subject Area	LSC Contribution	Employer Contribution (07/08: 37.5%)	Total Funding
Health, Public Services and Care	£1,614	£692	£2,306
Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	£1,614	£692	£2,306
Engineering and Manufacturing	£2,076	£692	£2,768

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Technologies			
Construction, Planning and the Built Environment	£2,076	£692	£2,768
Information and Communication Technology	£1,153	£692	£1,845
Retail and Commercial Enterprise	£1,153	£692	£1,845
Transportation	£2,076	£692	£2,768
Hair and Beauty	£1,614	£692	£2,306
Hospitality	£1,153	£692	£1,845
Leisure, Travel and Tourism	£1,153	£692	£1,845
Business, Administration and Law	£1,153	£692	£1,845
Other sector subject areas	£1,153	£692	£1,845

Applicants should note that the employer contribution **must** be collected before the LSC can pay the provider.

Start and end dates

Delivery should commence on 1 June 2008 and will initially be until 31 July 2010. 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. To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £100,000 for each year of the contract. 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 date.