



European Union
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**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
 NORTHWEST**



Leading learning and skills

ESF CO-FINANCE

**EMPLOYER TENDER
 SPECIFICATIONS**

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<p>Title: Greater Merseyside including Halton – Inward Investor and Restructuring Large Company Response Programme</p>	<p>Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S01</p>
<p>Aim</p> <p>This programme will act as a rapid response fund for skills development to inward investing, expanding and restructuring large companies in order to gain access to their supply chain OR assist staff back into the labour market following the announcement of redundancies.</p> <p>The programme will also be utilised to extend and incentivise companies to take up the Skills Pledge and facilitate access to Train to Gain provision. The importance of responding to the needs of companies is paramount. Providers are expected to develop a variety of bespoke solutions depending upon the needs identified by the employer.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p>Redundancy Support</p> <p>The successful provider will be required to commit resources when required to companies under going restructuring. The programme will provide employees in companies that are restructuring or have announced redundancies with the skills needed to undertake a new job role. The successful provider will be required to work flexibly alongside Train to Gain providers.</p> <p>This will allow Merseyside and Halton to compete with other regions to attract new employers and ensure existing employers become competitive following restructuring or redundancy. The programme will have a designated liaison as a key point of contact for the inward investors who will bring in other brokers as and when needed in order to ensure consistency of approach and follow up of others from partners.</p> <p>Inward Investment Support</p> <p>The successful provider will be required to commit resources when required to companies committed to expansion or inward investment into Merseyside and Halton. This will involve working with key inward investment support organisations such as The Mersey Partnership and Local Authority Economic Development teams.</p> <p>This programme combines ‘on demand’ training and has been established to stimulate and address demand for workforce development amongst large companies in the Merseyside and Halton area.</p> <p>This programme has been designed to meet the following principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Demand Led – the identification of actual and the stimulation of latent demand so as to increase the number of companies locally actually investing in Workforce Development. B. Comprehensive – covering the full spectrum of demand as it is expressed by companies, including the full range of functional business areas, all training types, levels and delivery methods, specific sectoral needs and complete geographical coverage within Merseyside. C. Effective – ensuring the programme is streamlined and enables maximum impact to be derived from programme investments. D. Timely - capable of meeting company needs rapidly. E. Accessible and Understandable - a straightforward process that enables companies to access support promptly and appropriately. F. Simple - uncomplicated for all users and stakeholders including companies. G. Establishes Clear Relationships – develops a sense of partnership and clarity of role for all partners and company beneficiaries. H. Value for Money – ensures that available resources are focused upon the company. I. Developmental - builds upon established good practice and effective practices and develops both new capacity and capability and a new culture of workforce development across 	

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Merseyside.

J. **Deliverable** - capable of enabling programme targets to be delivered.

K. **Company Choice** - enabling, where possible, companies to have maximum choice and flexibility in the selection of providers and provision (content and delivery).

Brokerage

Providers must be flexible in order that employers receive the most appropriate training solution as quickly as possible. If an employer's needs are immediately clear, the provider must document these needs, pull together an action plan and roll-out the required training. The provider may deliver the training themselves or may choose to use a sub-contractor depending upon which is the most appropriate option. This will facilitate company choice (principle K above). Providers must also work with the Train to Gain brokerage service to allow brokers to identify any further training that may benefit the company, particularly of LSC core programmes.

The provider should maximise referrals to other LSC provision wherever it can meet the employers needs e.g. Train to Gain, Skills for Life and Apprenticeships or Further Education funded courses. Applicants must indicate as part of their tender how they will manage the referral process alongside the Train to Gain broker.

Administrative costs in sub-contracting

It is expected that when sub-contracting the appropriate costs of administrative work should be charged to the company. However these costs must be evidenced and appropriate and proportional to the training delivered. Providers will be required to demonstrate that their administrative costs in sub-contracting are transparent to the employer and LSC.

All other administrative work must be the responsibility of the provider as an integral part of the programme, with the employers time on administration minimised at every opportunity.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (and Sector Skills Passports for individuals)

If employers approach providers without a clear understanding and appreciation of their workforce development needs, early engagement of the Train to Gain brokerage service is essential to allow an organisational needs analysis to be undertaken. Such an analysis will identify training support required and is provided free of charge by the Train to Gain broker. Providers will then deliver the required support directly themselves or via appropriate sub-contracting arrangements.

Should the company require a Training Needs Analysis in greater depth than can be provided by the Train to Gain Brokerage Service then the provider can deliver this service at a cost to the employer which will be included and detailed within an itemised and costed TNA. As part of their tender providers must indicate the average cost of their TNA process and demonstrate value for money.

In an addition to previous programmes providers will be asked to re-visit the Training Needs Analysis or Training Action Plan if a TNA is not in place at a later date with the employer to ensure their original needs have been met and whether any other services can be met working alongside the Train to Gain Skills Broker. Those companies that are referred to the provider may well have already carried out a TNA, and where this is the case, providers must not duplicate this activity. However, where no TNA has been carried out providers should offer TNAs as appropriate.

The programme will also provide funding for appropriate access to the Sector Skills Passports to ensure skills and qualifications gained can be tracked and recorded by the individual and company and become more transferable as a result.

Marketing

Potential providers are asked to note that they are expected to work with LSCGM and a third party marketing company regarding marketing and communication issues. Applicants are required to set

out their experience in working with marketing companies.

Engaging Companies

This involves individual organisations or consortia setting out in detail how they will seek to engage companies and addressing the following issues:

- > Which organisations the providers would work with to develop channels to market, including both traditional and non-traditional routes e.g. The Mersey Partnership, Business Link Greater Merseyside, Banks, Professional Firms, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Unions and other potential channels to market etc.;
- > How providers sector specialisms will be utilised to promote the programme;
- > How companies will be engaged, including those with whom they currently do not have a relationship – or the “hard to reach” companies i.e. those who remain unconvinced about the merits of or do not have a history of investing in Workforce Development;
- > How latent demand will be identified and actualised;
- > What geographical area the provider traditionally covers, and any plans to widen the target market;
- > How the provider might develop employer contacts into longer-term relationships, as it is unlikely that many company needs will be met from short-term interventions;
- > Companies will become clients of successful providers either through direct links with providers, or through referral from approved intermediaries/business support agencies (e.g. Business Link / Train to Gain Brokerage Service, Chambers of Commerce) or through leads generated by other marketing.

The Skills Pledge Commitment

In order to receive support from this programme it is expected that employers will commit to the Skills Pledge. This must be done in co-operation with the Train to Gain Skills broker, details of the Pledge can be found at <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge/>. Applicants should set out within their tender how they will gain companies’ commitment to the pledge.

Responding to Need

This programme places an emphasis upon identifying and meeting the specific needs of companies including the development and delivery of customised training. Therefore the LSC wishes to see organisations providing detail on the following:

- > How they will meet the variety of workforce development needs including function area, training subject, content and level. Function areas of business are thought to include:
 - > General Management;
 - > Sales and Marketing;
 - > Operations;
 - > New Product Development;
 - > Financial and Business Accounting;
 - > Information Computer Technology;
 - > Human Resources;
 - > Health, Safety and the Environment.
- > How they will respond fully to the needs of companies in terms of practical arrangements for delivery of provision e.g. timing and location, so as to minimise disruption to day to day operations, and including an explicit commitment to provide year-round delivery, meeting needs rather than institutional patterns of delivery;

Capacity

The programme has generated substantial, additional demand for workforce development support.

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The LSC believes that the breadth of potential demand cannot be accommodated by any one individual provider, rather it believes that lead providers will need to enter into partnerships or consortia to develop the capacity to meet demand. Organisations, therefore, are required to set out the following:

- > Their existing provision and details of how they would seek to address demand for an increased volume and variety of workforce development support from companies locally;
- > Their experience of working in partnership with other providers (or through sub-contracting arrangements) to meet the needs of individual companies and how they would anticipate working with other local providers within the context of this programme. This explicitly excludes the role of managing agents;
- > The extent to which they are already charging companies for services or their plans for introducing charges for workforce development support;

Capability

This relates to the skills and professional expertise of the organisation or consortium of providers. Providers are required to detail the following:

- > Organisational quality standards and arrangements for ensuring that quality is consistent across the full range of potential sub-contractors or consortium members;
- > Their commitment to or recognition as an Investor in People;
- > Qualifications of individual members of staff e.g. CVs.

Delivery

LSCGM requires assurance that the contracting arrangements it makes for delivery of the programme are robust and effective. It therefore requires organisations to set out clearly:

- > Their ability to offer a whole organisation approach to Workforce Development where need has been identified, either by themselves or through consortium/partnership or sub-contracting arrangements, that provides for the provision of training at all levels of the organisation and to all levels of ability;
- > Delivery, output and financial profiles providing details of the number of clients they would expect to support in total with a further analysis of company numbers by sector;
- > The arrangements for meeting the individual learning needs of employees e.g. childcare when training is offered out of working hours, ensuring that part time and shift workers are not disadvantaged;
- > Aftercare arrangements – providing ongoing support to employer customers;
- > Their understanding of cash flow issues for employers and experience of charging companies for training services.
- > Their Equality of Opportunity policy and Environmental policy.

Target groups & priority

Large Employers and their supply chain or potential supply chain, from any sector, that are inward investing, expanding or re-structuring in Merseyside and Halton.

Large Company eligibility for the purposes of this tender specification are expanding or restructuring employers. Large companies are those employing 250 employees or more in Merseyside and Halton, or inward investors into Merseyside and Halton who propose to employ 250 or more employees. This programme primarily focuses on the training needs of the workforce of large inward investing companies to Merseyside, but can also be used to assist companies impacted upon by redundancies in their supply chain as a result of infrastructure changes.

Where a large company is targeted or enquires about accessing this programme, the successful applicant must contact the Learning and Skills Council's contract manager to ensure, firstly that funds are available, and secondly, that applicants are eligible. Contact with the LSC contract manager must

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take place before any initial meetings with the company and before any Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is conducted.

Geography / area of delivery

In order to benefit from this programme, companies must be located in one of the six Greater Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens, Wirral and Halton.

Outputs

These output assumptions are based on each company accessing £100,000 worth of support (including the employer contribution).

For Merseyside proposals should identify the number of:

Output	Total for programme
Company beneficiaries engaged and committing to the Skills Pledge	A minimum of 40 companies
Employees undertaking non-accredited learning activity	A minimum of 1022 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Employees undertaking externally accredited qualifications (support for employee's in large companies is restricted to below Level 4)	A minimum of 1022 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Company/organisation training needs analysis (TNA) completed	A minimum of 40 companies
Individuals accessing appropriate sector skills passports	A minimum of 100

For Halton:

Output	Total for programme
Company beneficiaries engaged and committing to the Skills Pledge	A minimum of 2 companies
Employees undertaking externally accredited qualifications (support for employee's in large companies is restricted to below Level 4)	A minimum of 33 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Employees undertaking non-accredited learning activity	A minimum of 33 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Company/organisation training needs analysis (TNA) completed	A minimum of 2 companies
Individuals accessing appropriate sector skills passports	A minimum of 10

Results

For Merseyside	
Company/organisation supported i.e. employers receiving training	A minimum of 61 companies
Achievement of externally accredited qualifications	A minimum of 767 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per

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	individual)
Completion of non-accredited learning activity	A minimum of 767 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
For Halton	
Company/organisation supported i.e. employers receiving training	A minimum of 2 companies
Achievement of externally accredited qualifications	A minimum of 25 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Completion of non-accredited learning activity	A minimum of 25 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)

Other outcomes

These outcome assumptions are based on each company accessing £100,000 worth of support (including the employer contribution).

Proposals should identify the number of other outcomes including:

Outcome	Total for programme
Skills for Life referrals	A minimum of 150 referrals
Leadership & Management referrals	A minimum of 20 referrals
Apprenticeship referrals	A minimum of 50 referrals
Train to Gain referrals	A minimum of 100 referrals

Funding available

The programme will provide flexible skills on a demand led basis up to a limit of £90,000 ESF funding per company, with an additional employer contribution as required for State Aid purposes. The delivery process will follow the demand led methodology. The programme will provide funding for customised training needs (up to £90,000 of ESF funding) which cannot be delivered through LSC mainstream delivery. The employer must make a cash contribution to the programme which is in line with the requirements set out in the tables below.

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 following limits to ESF for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the Training Aid 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 will be 'General' as defined below.

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Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	25%	50%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	30%	55%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	35%	70%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	40%	75%

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.

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.

Total ESF funding for this programme is approximately **£3,680,000** for Merseyside and **£120,000** for Halton. The level of support is limited to total costs with any individual company of £90,000 (ESF) from this programme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LSC. The LSC funding is dependent on the company contribution. SMEs companies in the supply chain experiencing redundancy will be able to access £60,000 as an upper limit in line with SkillWorks but will also be dependent on the company making the required percentage contribution.

For successful applicants the contract value may be split equally across the number of months the contract will run. This will enable providers to start the programme promptly and to manage cash flow in the initial stages of the programme. Otherwise a profile of funding and activity will be agreed during contract clarification.

Each month providers will be expected to submit a monitoring claim and performance claim to the Learning and Skills Council. This will, in the early phases of the programme, demonstrate progress against indicative profile, and will result in subsequent cash payments once the initial advance payment has been fully defrayed.

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. The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer financial contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

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.

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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

Projects must not start activity before 1 May 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31st December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities). Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council would expect no more than 2 contracts to deliver this programme.

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.

<p>Title: Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in Area) Marketing and Communications Campaign for the LSCs Holistic Skills Offer to Employers</p>	<p>Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S02</p>
<p>Aim</p> <p>The Learning and Skills Council is seeking to appoint a single organisation or consortium of organisations to develop, and deliver, a marketing and communications strategy that will engage large and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and employer facing intermediaries across the Merseyside sub-region.</p> <p>The aim of the programme is to design and deliver a major marketing campaign with the necessary technical support to raise awareness of, and encourage engagement in, the LSC's skills offer to employers including programmes to provide skills for adults and young people into employment. The successful applicant must also be capable of bringing the employment and skills agenda together within a set of coherent messages. One of the primary mechanisms for achieving this will be through the development of a toolkit for use by intermediaries.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p>	
<p>Service Requirements</p> <p>Successful applicant will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a marketing and communications strategy that promotes a clear suite of LSC ESF Co-financed provision for employers. This should avoid the use of 'clever' marketing language or the use of jargon and which avoids taking a reactive or ad-hoc approach to marketing programmes; • as part of the campaign the development of 3 to 4 clear, memorable and consistent core marketing messages for employers; • a strategy that can build on the good practice of previous approaches to marketing and communicating with employers, and in particular, makes use of sectoral linkages in Merseyside; • the maintenance of an existing website linked to the SkillWorks programme; • the development of a marketing and communications tool kit for intermediaries such as learning and skills brokers, providers and other bodies with access to companies such as property management companies who may have significant business interactions with the large employer and SME target groups, this tool kit must also include sector specific components; • the development of employer networking opportunities with guest speakers likely to attract hard to reach employers and senior members of the organisation; • the production of a quarterly newsletter which informs employers and employer intermediaries of LSC ESF Co-financing opportunities and good practice; • the production of positive case studies and good news stories worthy of local press interest; • the maintenance and use of a Company Information Record database. The successful applicant will be required to maintain, update and manage processes to make this database a positive marketing tool for cross promotion of LSC programmes. • the management of the data held within the Company Information Record database which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ensuring the accuracy of the data held within the database via regular data cleansing; ○ production of monthly management information report for the LSC; ○ production of reports/data as required by the LSC and Government Office; ○ production of state aid information; 	
<p>Requirements</p> <p>In this Tender Specification, the LSC is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced marketing and communications provider to deliver a fully integrated programme of promotional activity to achieve the responsibilities stated above.</p> <p>Applicants are therefore required to prepare a tender which comprehensively covers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fully integrated, balanced and innovative programme of activity, which targets local large 	

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employers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and convinces employers and employees of the need to engage in learning and skills emphasising LSC ESF Co-financed provision. Applicants are expected to outline in their campaign plans the activity that they will roll-out and provide a rationale of why such activity is likely to be successful.

- How the applicants will continue the development of the SkillWorks website (www.theskillworks.co.uk), currently developed and maintained by Quire. The successful applicant will also be required to develop and maintain the SkillWorks brand and manage the handover of the brand or closure of the brand at the end of the programme. The successful applicant may also be required to signpost employers to providers following initial contact following marketing as an integral part of the programme.
- The successful applicant will need to demonstrate an ability to continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign. This will include methods of monitoring the conversion rates of leads generated into successful outcomes, tracking activity throughout the duration of the contract and providing statistical reports to report on the targets agreed between the LSC and provider.
- How they will engage large companies and SMEs generally and, in particular, how they will engage employers in Merseyside's growing sectors. Applicants must demonstrate how they will engage "hard-to-reach" companies with a poor track record of investing in training for their staff. Proposals must also describe how latent demand will be identified and actualised and what specific tactics will be used to ensure that "hard-to-reach" employees are engaged in learning that will benefit themselves and their employer.
- Applicants must outline which organisations they will work with to develop routes to market, including both traditional and non-traditional routes e.g. Business Link, Banks, Professional Firms, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Unions and other potential channels to market and learning and skills brokers, and companies such as local property management organisations.
- Applicants must also set out how they will ensure their campaign will comply with LSC branding guidelines and timings of national LSC promotional campaigns <https://brand.lsc.gov.uk/faq.asp>.
- The applicant must also demonstrate that they have a full appreciation of European and ESF Funding, and in particular, the publicity requirements necessary to satisfy the European Commission and European Court of Auditors.

Capability

Learning and Skills Council requires that potential providers satisfy the following requirements:

- They are able to demonstrate the ability to be flexible in their approach and be able to respond to a rapidly changing learning and development agenda.
- They have a thorough understanding of LSC funded programmes on Merseyside and understand the benefits that each can bring to local businesses
- Have a track record of delivering marketing campaigns at a sub-regional level to the SME and large employers. The successful applicant will be expected to work with LSC funded training providers, ensuring that the marketing and promotional programme is fully understood and embraced by providers. Applicants are therefore asked to set out their experience in working with training providers on Merseyside or elsewhere.
- Possess the technical ability to design and maintain an existing website and manage a major employer database. The successful applicant will manage and maintain a large database of local employers and ensure that positive media relationships (using the best case studies) are maintained and developed. This will involve the timely requesting of information from providers, updating and maintaining the website and positive use of this tool for promotion

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purposes;

Applicant presentations

Applicants who score sufficiently well, as part of the assessment process will be requested to present to LSC and potentially other stakeholder groups. The topic of the presentation will be the providers ability and experience in delivering promotional campaigns such as the one detailed in this invitation to tender. The presentation will be no longer than 30 minutes excluding time for questions. Dates will be clarified with selected providers.

Target groups & priority

The main focus of this programme are large employers and Small and Medium Enterprises, who are eligible for support from LSC Co-financing programme and other LSC funded activity as a by product.

Geography / area of delivery

The marketing and promotional campaign will cover the Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens and only companies in these boroughs may be targeted. Individual employees in these companies may be supported, regardless of the location of their home address.

Outputs

Proposals should identify delivery of the following outputs:

Output	Total for programme
key marketing and communications core messages developed and delivered	3 to 4 key messages (reviewed annually)
ry toolkit developed and produced including sectoral components	300

Results

- Annual marketing plan completed. Production of a costed marketing & promotional plan covering all activities cited in "Activities to be Supported" above and delivery of the plan;
- Promotional events organised and delivered - 15

Other outcomes

- Maintenance of the company database and referral of information to Government Office North West, providers and other on behalf of LSC;
- Monthly reports to LSC detailing progress against the campaign and contract.
- Production of a quarterly newsletter to a minimum of 17,500 businesses each quarter which informs employers and employer intermediaries of opportunities and good practice;
- Awareness raising of the LSC ESF Co-financing portfolio of opportunities for to 7,500 companies during the lifetime of the contract;
- 2,000 company referrals to LSC ESF Co-financing programmes;
- 1,000 company commitments to Skills Pledge;
- Production of 40 new good news case studies;
- 10 intermediaries using / applying the toolkit.
- The attraction of hard to reach SMEs into learning and skills;
- Higher levels of employer investment in learning and skills;

Funding available

amount of funding available for this invitation to tender is £1,500,000. Payments will be made on a monthly basis in accordance with a profile agreed between the LSC and the provider.

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-

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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

Projects must not start activity before 1 June 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31st December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities). The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council would expect no more than 1 contract to deliver this programme.

Applicants should therefore be clear in their application whether they are bidding for one or both strands.

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.

For Information Only

Title: Greater Merseyside – SkillWorks	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S03
<p>Aim</p> <p>This programme has been established to stimulate and address demand for workforce development amongst Small and Medium sized companies (SMEs) in Merseyside specifically. The programme builds on the success of the SkillWorks programme and provides additionality to Train to Gain provision locally.</p> <p>The programme will also be utilised to extend and incentivise companies to take up the Skills Pledge and facilitate access to Train to Gain provision. The importance of responding to the needs of small and medium enterprises is paramount. Providers are expected to develop a variety of bespoke solutions depending upon the needs identified by the employer.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p>This programme combines ‘on demand’ training and has been established to stimulate and address demand for workforce development amongst Small and Medium sized companies (SMEs) in the Merseyside area.</p> <p>SkillWorks has been designed to meet the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L. Demand Led – the identification of actual and the stimulation of latent demand so as to increase the number of SMEs locally actually investing in Workforce Development. M. Comprehensive – covering the full spectrum of demand as it is expressed by SMEs, including the full range of functional business areas, all training types, levels and delivery methods, specific sectoral needs and complete geographical coverage within Merseyside. N. Effective – ensuring the programme is streamlined and enables maximum impact to be derived from programme investments. O. Timely - capable of meeting SME needs rapidly. P. Accessible and Understandable - a straightforward process that enables SMEs to access support promptly and appropriately. Q. Simple - uncomplicated for all users and stakeholders including SMEs. R. Establishes Clear Relationships – develops a sense of partnership and clarity of role for all partners and SME beneficiaries. S. Value for Money – ensures that available resources are focused upon the SME. T. Developmental - builds upon established good practice and effective practices and develops both new capacity and capability and a new culture of workforce development across Merseyside. U. Deliverable - capable of enabling programme targets to be delivered. V. SME Choice - enabling, where possible, SMEs to have maximum choice and flexibility in the selection of providers and provision (content and delivery). <p>Brokerage</p> <p>SkillWorks providers must be flexible in order that employers receive the most appropriate training solution as quickly as possible. If an employers needs are immediately clear, the SkillWorks provider should document these needs, pull together an action plan and roll-out the required training. The provider may deliver the training themselves or may choose to use a sub-contractor depending upon which is the most appropriate option. This will facilitate SME choice (principle K above). Providers must also work with the Train to Gain brokerage service to allow brokers to identify any further training that may benefit the company, particularly of LSC core programmes.</p> <p>The provider must maximise referrals to other LSC provision wherever it can meet the employers needs e.g. Train to Gain, Skills for Life and Apprenticeships or Further Education funded courses. Applicants must indicate as part of their tender how they will manage the referral process alongside the Train to Gain broker.</p> <p>Administrative costs in sub-contracting</p>	

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It is expected that when sub-contracting the appropriate costs of administrative work should be charged to the company. However these costs must be evidenced and appropriate and proportional to the training delivered. Providers will be required to demonstrate that their administrative costs in sub-contracting are transparent to the employer and LSC.

All other administrative work must be the responsibility of the provider as an integral part of the programme, with the employers time on administration minimised at every opportunity.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA) (and Sector Skills Passports for individuals)

If employers approach SkillWorks providers without a clear understanding and appreciation of their workforce development needs, early engagement of the Train to Gain brokerage service is essential to allow an organisational needs analysis to be undertaken. Such an analysis will identify training support required and is provided free of charge by the Train to Gain broker. Providers will then deliver the required SkillWorks support directly themselves or via appropriate sub-contracting arrangements.

Should the company require a Training Needs Analysis in greater depth than can be provided by the Train to Gain Brokerage Service then the provider can deliver this service at a cost to the employer which will be included and detailed within an itemised and costed TNA. As part of their tender providers should indicate the average cost of their TNA process and demonstrate value for money.

In an addition to previous programmes providers will be asked to re-visit the Training Needs Analysis or Training Action Plan if a TNA is not in place at a later date with the employer to ensure their original needs have been met and whether any other services can be met working alongside the Train to Gain Skills Broker. Those SMEs that are referred to the provider may well have already carried out a TNA, and where this is the case, providers should not duplicate this activity. However, where no TNA has been carried out providers should offer TNAs as appropriate.

The programme will also provide funding for appropriate access to the Sector Skills Passports to ensure skills and qualifications gained can be tracked and recorded by the individual and company and become more transferable as a result.

Marketing

Potential providers are asked to note that they are expected to work with LSCGM and a third party marketing company regarding marketing and communication issues. Applicants are required to set out their experience in working with marketing companies.

Engaging SMEs

This involves individual organisations or consortia setting out in detail how they would seek to engage SMEs and addressing the following issues:

- > Which organisations the providers will work with to develop channels to market, including both traditional and non-traditional routes e.g. Business Link Greater Merseyside, Banks, Professional Firms, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Unions and other potential channels to market etc.;
- > How providers sector specialisms will be utilised to promote the programme;
- > How SMEs will be engaged, including those with whom they currently do not have a relationship – or the “hard to reach” SME i.e. those who remain unconvinced about the merits of or do not have a history of investing in Workforce Development;
- > How latent demand will be identified and actualised;
- > What geographical area the provider traditionally covers, and any plans to widen the target market;
- > How the provider might develop SME contacts into longer-term relationships, as it is unlikely that many SME needs will be met from short-term interventions;
- > SMEs will become clients of successful providers either through direct links with providers, or through referral from approved intermediaries/business support agencies (e.g. Business Link / Train to Gain Brokerage Service, Chambers of Commerce) or through leads generated by other

marketing.

The Skills Pledge commitment

In order to receive support from this programme it is expected that employers will commit to the Skills Pledge. This should be done in co-operation with the Train to Gain Skills broker, details of the pledge can be found at <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge/>. Applicants should set out within their tender how they will gain SMEs' commitment to the pledge.

Responding to Need

This programme places an emphasis upon identifying and meeting the specific needs of SMEs including the development and delivery of customised training. Therefore the LSC wishes to see organisations providing detail on the following:

- > How they will meet the variety of workforce development needs including function area, training subject, content and level. Function areas of business are thought to include:
 - > General Management;
 - > Sales and Marketing;
 - > Operations;
 - > New Product Development;
 - > Financial and Business Accounting;
 - > Information Computer Technology;
 - > Human Resources;
 - > Health, Safety and the Environment.

- > How they will respond fully to the needs of SMEs in terms of practical arrangements for delivery of provision e.g. timing and location, so as to minimise disruption to day to day operations, and including an explicit commitment to provide year-round delivery, meeting SME needs rather than institutional patterns of delivery;

Capacity

The programme has generated substantial, additional demand for workforce development support. The LSC believes that the breadth of potential demand cannot be accommodated by any one individual provider, rather it believes that lead providers will need to enter into partnerships or consortia to develop the capacity to meet demand. Organisations, therefore, are required to set out the following:

- > Their existing provision and details of how they would seek to address demand for an increased volume and variety of workforce development support from SMEs locally;
- > Their experience of working in partnership with other providers (or through sub-contracting arrangements) to meet the needs of individual SMEs and how they would anticipate working with other local providers within the context of this programme. This explicitly excludes the role of managing agents;
- > The extent to which they are already charging SMEs for services or their plans for introducing charges for workforce development support;

Capability

This relates to the skills and professional expertise of the organisation or consortium of providers. Providers are required to detail the following:

- > Organisational quality standards and arrangements for ensuring that quality is consistent across the full range of potential sub-contractors or consortium members;
- > Their commitment to or recognition as an Investor in People;
- > Qualifications of individual members of staff e.g. CVs.

Delivery

LSCGM requires assurance that the contracting arrangements it makes for delivery of the SkillWorks programme are robust and effective. It therefore requires organisations to set out clearly:

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- > Their ability to offer a whole organisation approach to Workforce Development where need has been identified, either by themselves or through consortium/partnership or sub-contracting arrangements, that provides for the provision of training at all levels of the organisation and to all levels of ability;
- > Delivery, output and financial profiles providing details of the number of clients they would expect to support in total with a further analysis of company numbers by sector;
- > The arrangements for meeting the individual learning needs of employees e.g. childcare when training is offered out of working hours, ensuring that part time and shift workers are not disadvantaged;
- > Aftercare arrangements – providing ongoing support to SME customers;
- > Their understanding of cash flow issues for employers and experience of charging SMEs for training services.
- > Their Equality of Opportunity policy and Environmental policy.

Target groups & priority

The programme targets Small and Medium sized employers based in the geographic locations identified and their employees with targeted support.

This programme is designed to promote the uptake of workforce development opportunities by SMEs, particularly those who have not previously participated in Workforce Development activity and who need support to articulate their training needs.

For ESF purposes 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.
- They also must be independently owned with less than 25% ownership or control by a large company.

Geography / area of delivery

In order to benefit from this programme, SMEs must be located in one of the five Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens or Wirral.

Outputs

SkillWorks

These output assumptions are based on each company accessing £60,000 worth of support (including the 40% employer contribution), however providers should be aware that the average total training accessed by companies is expected to circa £10,000 and LSC would hope for much higher outputs than the minimum suggested below.

Proposals should identify the number of:

Output	Total for programme
SME beneficiaries engaged and committing to the Skills Pledge (delivery ref: 45);	A minimum of 283 companies
Employees undertaking externally accredited qualifications	A minimum of 3400 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Employees undertaking non-accredited learning activity	A minimum of 3400 (based on a on assumption of an average cost of £3000 per individual)
Company/organisation training needs analysis (TNA) completed	A minimum of 283 companies

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Individuals accessing appropriate sector skills passports	A minimum of 340 (based on an assumption of 5% of)
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Results

- Company/organisation supported i.e. employers receiving training– a minimum of 283 companies
- Completion of non-accredited learning activity – a minimum of 2550
- Achievement of externally accredited learning qualifications – a minimum of 2550

Other outcomes

These outcome assumptions are based on each company accessing £60,000 worth of support, however providers should be aware that the average total training accessed by each company is expected to be circa £10,000 and LSC would hope for much higher outputs than the minimum suggested below.

Proposals should identify the number of other outcomes including:

Outcome	Total for programme
Skills for Life referrals	A minimum of 50 referrals
Leadership & Management referrals	A minimum of 20 referrals
Apprenticeship referrals	A minimum of 50 referrals
Train to Gain referrals	A minimum of 100 referrals

Funding available

Total ESF funding for this programme is approximately **£10,200,000**. The total budget for SkillWorks including the employer 40% contribution will be **£17,000,000**. The level of support is limited to total costs with any individual SME of £60,000 (ESF) from this new SkillWorks programme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the LSC.

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 following limits to ESF for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the Training Aid 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 will be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	25%	50%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	30%	55%

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Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	35%	70%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	40%	75%

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.

Under Structural Fund Regulations the LSC is required to ensure that SkillWorks 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, SkillWorks would be unable to pay for the Gas Fitter training, or any associated assessment or registration fees required by statutory legislation.

For successful applicants the contract value may be split equally across the number of months the contract will run. This will enable providers to start the programme promptly and to manage cash flow in the initial stages of the programme. Otherwise a profile of funding and activity will be agreed during contract clarification.

Each month providers will be expected to submit a monitoring claim and performance claim to the Learning and Skills Council. This will, in the early phases of the programme, demonstrate progress against indicative profile, and will result in subsequent cash payments once the initial advance payment has been fully defrayed.

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. The employer contribution may change in future years. All evidence of employer financial contributions must be readily available for audit purposes.

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.

Start and end dates

Projects must not start activity before 1 May 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31st December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities). Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council would expect no more than 5 contracts to deliver this programme.

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

<p>Title: Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in Area) - Capital of Culture Badged Apprenticeship Programme for the Retail, Tourism and Hospitality, and Sport and Leisure Sectors.</p>	<p>Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S04</p>
<p>Aim</p> <p>This programme will seek to add value to the current Apprenticeship Programmes by providing a cultural learning element linked to Capital of Culture 2008.</p> <p>Young people from across Merseyside currently undertaking, or wishing to undertake, an apprenticeship programme within the key related sectors of retail, tourism and hospitality and leisure sectors will have access to an enhanced menu of themed learning and skills activities/experiences relating to the European Capital of Culture.</p> <p>LSCGM is seeking an applicant to develop and submit proposals for, and manage, the co-ordination and delivery of, a programme of high quality opportunities for young people that are focussed on Capital of Culture and its associated themed years and planned activities.</p> <p>These activities may be delivered as an additional element to their existing programme of learning and/or as an innovative but integrated part of their apprenticeship framework. Individuals will receive a Liverpool Capital of Culture 08 Badged Certificate to evidence completion of a cultural element to their programme; this may be issued in advance or alongside any certificates issued for completion and achievement of their main apprenticeship framework.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with the Liverpool Culture Company (and in particular the LSC secondee) , providers, local arts and cultural, sport and creative industries organisations to develop and broker additional added value cultural learning opportunities for the participants and building on existing good practice; • Act as the principal managing agent to co-ordinate/ manage the delivery of these opportunities; • The production of an individualised costed Cultural Learning Plan for the required number of apprentices that will sit alongside their apprenticeship Individual Learning Plan. As a guide, we would expect that each individual undertakes in the region of 6 activities; • In addition to the main cohort for whom the costed Cultural Learning Plan will be produced, the successful applicant will co-ordinate and manage the delivery of a number of ‘one- off’ cultural activities for an additional number of young people currently participating on the apprenticeship programme and for whom a ‘commemorative participation certificate’ will be produced; • The on-going monitoring and review of this costed action plan working with the apprentice, the learning provider and the employer; • Work with the Connexions service to promote the ‘Badged Apprenticeship programme’ to prospective apprenticeship candidates; • Work in partnership with the Liverpool Culture Company, the Merseyside Provider Federation and other relevant organisations to develop and deliver a Marketing Strategy that promotes the programme to young people and employers (particularly those that are not engaged currently in the apprenticeship programme), and puts in place activities for the ongoing ‘showcasing’ of the programme and which can be used to generate further ‘Cultural Opportunities’ for participants; • Due and appropriate consideration is given to health and safety issues, supervision and the completion of Criminal Records Bureau checks; • Deliver a single ‘Graduation Showcase’ event for those who have followed the ‘Badged Apprenticeship’ Route (including past participants), at which certificates and other commemorative items will be presented 	
<p>Target groups & priority</p> <p>Young people who are currently on the apprenticeship programme within the following sectors and/ or</p>	

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following these sector subject/ framework areas: Retail, Tourism and Hospitality, and Sport and Leisure Sectors.

Geography / area of delivery

This programme will be delivered in the Merseyside Phasing-in Area.

Outputs

The minimum outputs required are:

- 35 beneficiaries and Costed Cultural Learning Plans
- On going review and evaluation (including final evaluation) of delivery of the Cultural Learning Plans
- 100 additional culturally themed interventions
- 1 Marketing and Communication Strategy

Results

The minimum results required are:

- 35 beneficiaries achieving the Liverpool Capital of Culture Badged Apprenticeship
- 100 individuals achieving cultural intervention certificates
- 1 Showcase Graduation event

Other outcomes

Not applicable

Funding available

The total amount of funding available is £150,000.

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

- Average cost per participant assisted £4,285

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

The project must not start activity before 1st July 2008 and must complete all activity by 31st March 2009 (including dissemination and evaluation activities). The project 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

1 contract to be awarded for this tender.

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

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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

<p>Title: Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in Area) – Higher Education Enterprise Skills Routeway</p>	<p>Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S05</p>
<p>Aim</p> <p>To procure a customised learning programme that offers students within Higher Education (College and Universities) relevant business skills and business planning (and in particular support them during their ‘gap year’/ ‘year out’ or where timescales allow, during the summer break), to start their own businesses, or experience an entrepreneurial work placement as part of their studies. As a guiding principle, participation must support the student to experience the benefits of self employment enabling them to complete their programme of studies and make informed choices re their future employment route.</p> <p>This opportunity consists of a routeway, ultimately, into self employment.</p> <p>Through this programme, the LSC would wish for any proposals submitted to be aligned with and adding value to, existing enterprise activity of this type. The deliverer must be able to work with student intermediaries- such as Careers Advisers, Personal Tutors, Student Unions and Connexions.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p>This programme will be delivered on a flexible basis and can also help individuals who would not normally have been able to participate in this kind of programme. Features of similar programmes have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location in managed workspace support; • A small expenses budget to reimburse costs of using public transport or using childcare; • Assistance with finding and completing short enterprise related education courses; • Support with training to support new product development; • Sign language interpreters for hearing impaired scholars; • Large print materials available for visually impaired scholars; • Saturday sessions. <p>The programme will overcome difficulties by providing a comprehensive package of support, mentoring and funding in order to encourage and support the start-up and growth of new businesses. All reasonable business ideas will be considered for support, and University or College spin out company ideas are particularly welcome.</p> <p>As an example, a student following a creative media studies course, with product or service ideas could take these forward via their own business start-up upon graduation. During the ‘Gap Year’/ ‘Year out’, or even summer break (subject to timescales) the proposed programme of support could be used to develop their product ideas and support the development/ establishment of their own business.</p> <p>The successful applicant will design and deliver a range of customised training which offers a range of practical skills such as strategic and creative thinking, finance, business growth, funding and investment, marketing and presentational skills.</p> <p>The programme will train and support students in developing business ideas and developing their entrepreneurial skills. Beneficiaries will go on to either develop their own business or work for a company where enterprise and innovation are valued.</p> <p>Activity Stages</p>	

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Activities will, in the main, follow five stages. Providers will identify a streamlined continuum of support through each stage of the process; the stages must be 'tailored' to or made relevant for, the target groups as appropriate.

Stage 1:

This focuses on engagement, information, advice and guidance and initial assessment. This stage will provide a guide to starting a business and a start in business creation and unlocking the value of a business idea. This stage will explore how activities could add value to the students' primary programme of study.

Stage 2:

This will focus on pre-enterprise development training and any core skills development needed to make individuals ready for business start up. This activity may involve some short targeted specific skills development, including an Enterprise qualification, confidence building or addressing social barriers or any additional problems the beneficiary may be experiencing. Training towards a certificate must be encouraged and designed to continue and be built upon once in self-employment. This training may include: commercial awareness, creativity, ideas generation, leadership and project management. This stage will develop creative thinking skills and challenging assumptions, how to build ideas, use of simple business tools including profit and loss sheets.

Stage 3:

This stage will support the beneficiary in their business planning and business readiness and any support they may require in order to be offered a contract and successfully gain support for their business idea from others. This will include the value of networks, including analysis and mapping of the public sector support available to establish a business.

Stage 4:

Once in business it is thought that the beneficiary will need additional support to sustain their company and some specific development activity related to training and skills rather than any business support that can be accessed through Business Link NW either continuing or enhancing the training they commenced in Stage 2.

Stage 5:

Advice and information linked to accessing skills to enable their business to progress and become more sustainable should be available for beneficiaries. This must include, where appropriate, continuation of business related training.

Bursary

It is recognised that individuals may require access to additional financial support that is currently not widely available for this group of learners. Individuals may require financial support to cover costs such as: minor capital investment, help with premises (e.g Room Hire), Franchise Purchase or related costs, further personal development training/ support or even patenting costs.

To support students in this process, the LSC would wish to offer a £3,000 bursary. Up to 50 per cent will be initially made available upon commencement on the programme to cover the costs associated with taking forward activities within the proposed stages (1-3), paid directly to the appointed deliverer to manage on behalf of the individual. The remainder of the funds would be paid upon the individual starting their own business and commencing trading (i.e. Stage 4 above).

Activities in all stages should be both relevant to, and supportive of, the students' programme of study.

Marketing and Engagement Strategy

The successful applicant(s) will be required to produce and subsequently deliver a Marketing and Communications Strategy that clearly sets out how potential participants will be engaged and

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progressed, and how they plan to work with the Colleges and Universities to ensure complementarity with the requirements of the curriculum and the career aspirations of the individual.

Target groups & priority

Students currently undertaking Higher Education Programmes of study within Colleges and Universities in one of the five Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens or Wirral and who are residents in Merseyside.

Geography / area of delivery

The project should deliver across the five Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens or Wirral.

Outputs

The following outputs are required:

- 150 Individuals engaged on the programme and Individual Learning Action Plans produced
- 120 individuals achieving modules in entrepreneurialism management and leadership
- 120 individuals producing a business plan
- Production of 1 Marketing and Engagement Strategy
- 150 Bursaries approved

Results

The following results are required:

- 80% or 120 individuals completing the programme of learning

Other outcomes

- 50% or 75 beneficiaries accessing further business start- up support
- 20 Businesses commence trading

Funding available

The total funding available for this tender specification is £900,000.

As part of this programme the LSC wishes to offer a £3,000 bursary, however, applicants are required to note that ESF places a limit of £1,000 per item of capital equipment.

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

- Average cost per participant assisted £6,000

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

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

The Learning and Skills Council expect that no more than 2 contracts would be issued to deliver this programme.

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: North West – Employee Engagement	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S06
Aim <p>The LSC recognises the benefits of stimulating skills development in the workplace by engaging directly with employees. This may be skills directly associated with the contribution to the business but may also include those economically valuable skills to enable employees to secure work elsewhere.</p> <p>These funds will deliver a range of projects which stimulate employees to develop their skills, working through existing peer group support mechanisms such as Union Learning Representatives and the development of a network of Learning Advocates (Learning Advocates are essentially learning reps in non unionised workplaces).</p>	
Service requirement <p>Recent policy documents such as the Leitch Implementation Plan and statements from Government Ministers highlight the vital role played by Union Learning Representatives to encourage people back into training.</p> <p>‘Union Learning Representatives play vital role in helping employees to develop skills and gain new qualifications’. We want to develop their role to promote Skills for Life and to focus more on numeracy and level 2. <i>Leitch Implementation Plan.</i></p> <p>Furthermore, there is recognition of the role Union Learning Representatives can play to support advice and guidance in the workplace in advance of the Adult Careers Service and it is also proposed that Unions continue to promote the Skills Pledge.</p> <p>To be successful organisations funded under this Tender Specification need to demonstrate linkage with the key LSC employer facing programme Train to Gain.</p> <p>The LSC anticipate two key strands to this Tender Specification:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Working with employees in companies where Unions and Union Learner Representatives are established2 Working in non-unionised organisations to encourage the creation of learning advocates. <p>This Tender Specification therefore seeks to find innovative ways to encourage those least qualified in the workforce to develop their skills.</p> Strand 1 <p>The preference is for tenderers to deliver projects through the establishment of a fund into which Unions in conjunction with local Union Learning Representatives can bid. This is to enable economies of scale in administration and overheads, as it is anticipated that many of the individual projects will be less than £15,000 and also to enable shared project support to be given to the Union Learning Representatives and others in the project partnerships.</p> <p>The fund will support projects which increase participation in learning and raise the skill and confidence level of adults in the workplace. They will contribute directly to the delivery of Skills for Life, Level 2, Apprenticeship and level 3 Targets and through partnership with employers to promote Train to Gain and take up of the Skills Pledge.</p> <p>For example, the fund may support projects to stimulate learning that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address the needs of employees wishing to improve their literacy, language, numeracy and information technology skills through identification of need and enabling access to study.• Address barriers to learning faced by individuals and disadvantaged groups, especially those without qualifications who are at present least likely to be offered training in the workplace and	

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who often need to regain confidence in the learning process.

- Offer opportunities for employees to develop their potential in work to help them access Level 2 or Level 3 qualifications to address specific skills shortages.
- Increase employee involvement in learning, including collective learning funds by developing cooperation between unions and training departments when planning and promoting learning provision and by developing policies, practices and facilities to support an active learning culture in the workplace.
- Build the capacity of unions to respond to members' learning needs by increasing the number, and promoting the role, of ULRs
- Encourage employers to take up the Skills Pledge and agree to a referral to Train to Gain to identify how this service could support learning opportunities in the workplace.
- Identify approaches and opportunities to support higher level learners in the workplace.
- Increase opportunities for learning and support amongst BME employees.
- Improve and increase the advice and guidance given to employees about learning opportunities in conjunction with current IAG providers
- Projects which encourage recruitment from hard to reach groups and subsequent learning support in the workplace

Strand 2

The preference will be to develop a system which can identify and train learning advocates in non unionised organisations to offer the same service as Union Learning Reps and to develop a process to support and manage a pilot programme of projects to secure referrals to Skills for Life, level 2 and level 3 provision. (See Strand 1 for types of projects)

Applicants will need to demonstrate:

- That they have good access to employee representatives throughout the North West, either through the Union network or through direct access to employers in non unionised workplaces.
- That they have the administrative capability and/or track record and robust quality systems to manage and run a fund as described above (Strand 1). In particular how projects and beneficiaries will be tracked including how learners will be referred into programmes and how specific outcomes are to be measured, or
- That they have the administrative capacity to establish and manage a system to recruit and support a network of Learning Advocates (Strand 2)
- How they will evaluate progress
- Have a clear understanding of the relevant policies affecting employee learning
- How they will work with key partners including employers, FE and workbased providers, Information, Advice and Guidance services, Train to Gain brokers etc to enable stimulation of learning and effective referrals for Skills for Life, Level 2, Apprenticeships and Level 3.

Target groups & priority

The focus of this project will be on working with the employed workforce particularly those without Skills for Life or a Level 2. Priority should be given to individuals working in the Train to Gain target group of 'hard to reach' employers where there are significant numbers of low skilled employees both unionised and non-unionised.

Hard to reach employers are defined as those without Investors in People recognition and who have not accessed substantial vocational training leading to a qualification within the last 12 months.

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 Status. 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.

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- 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 service should be available across the whole of the North West including Greater Merseyside.

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

- Cheshire and Warrington - £188,035
- Cumbria - £97,559
- Greater Manchester – £495,524
- Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in Area) - £452,422
- Halton £7,083
- Lancashire – £285,058

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

- 80 projects which stimulate employees to develop their skills

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

Strand 1

- Establishment of a fund to deliver a range of employee based learning projects
- 3375 Skills for Life referrals, of which 2025 start on course
- 2250 Level 2 referrals, of which 1350 start on course
- 225 Level 3 referrals of which 135 start on course
- 562 Union Learner Reps recruited and trained

Strand 2

- Development of a structure to support the creation and on going development of a North West network of learning advocates
- At least 5 pilot projects
- 20 Learning Advocates recruited and trained
- 50 Skills for Life referrals
- 20 Level 2 referrals

Other outcomes

The outcomes which are required are detailed below:

- Promotion and referrals to Train to Gain
- Promotion and support for the Skills Pledge
- At least 20% match funding /leverage from partners including unions, employers, providers to be achieved
- Promotion of Apprenticeships

Funding available

A total of £1,525,683 comprised of £1,073,261 for the North West excluding Merseyside and £452,422 for Merseyside. (Indicative allocations are expected to be Total Strand 1 - £1,300,000, Strand 2 - £225,683).

Providers should detail in their proposals their costs for administering the fund and for developing a network of Learning Advocates.

It is expected that approximately 60% of funds available via Strand 1 should be allocated to fund the delivery of the individual projects which stimulate employees to develop their skills.

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 following limits to ESF for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the Training Aid 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 will be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	25%	50%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	30%	55%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	35%	70%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	40%	75%

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.

ESF can only support activity over and above that necessary to meet statutory requirements. You must show how the activity is additional to statutory requirements.

The activities specified in this Tender Specification will be funded by the LSC's Co-finance

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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

The project should commence on 1 May 2008 and be completed by 31 December 2010. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

Contracts will be awarded for the whole of the North West; however the Learning and Skills Council will consider awarding separate contracts for Strand 1 and Strand 2.

Applicants should therefore be clear in their application whether they are bidding for one or both strands.

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.

Title: North West & Greater Merseyside - Train the Trainer	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S07															
Aim																
<p>The aim of this project is 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 through to 2010.</p>																
Service requirement																
<p>The requirement is for the delivery of industry relevant trainer development, recognised teaching and training qualifications and Assessor and Verifier qualifications. Tenders must describe how the delivery will take place and should detail the provider's track record in delivery of these qualifications.</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="151 790 456 864">New Unit Reference</th> <th data-bbox="456 790 746 864">Old Unit Reference</th> <th data-bbox="746 790 1294 864">Unit Title</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="151 864 456 931">A1</td> <td data-bbox="456 864 746 931">D32 and D33</td> <td data-bbox="746 864 1294 931">Assess candidates using a range of methods</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="151 931 456 999">A2</td> <td data-bbox="456 931 746 999">D32</td> <td data-bbox="746 931 1294 999">Assess candidates performance through observation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="151 999 456 1039">V1</td> <td data-bbox="456 999 746 1039">D34</td> <td data-bbox="746 999 1294 1039">Internal verification</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="151 1039 456 1111">V2</td> <td data-bbox="456 1039 746 1111">D35</td> <td data-bbox="746 1039 1294 1111">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
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A1	D32 and D33	Assess candidates using a range of methods														
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V1	D34	Internal verification														
V2	D35	External verification														
Flexibility in delivery																
<p>In order to ensure delivery of skills which meets the needs of working individuals, tenders must describe how delivery will be flexible around learner's working hours or dependant support activity (i.e. children or carer activity) and with the full permission and co-operation of employers where applicable.</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. The tender must outline how this will be achieved.</p>																
Target groups & priority																
<p>The target groups for this tender specification are all either:</p>																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents of the geographical locations identified; or • Employed in organisations which are located in the geographical locations identified. 																
<p>In addition participants will also be:</p>																

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- Employees in any sector (including the public and third sector) and in any size of organisation, who do not already hold the qualifications or teaching and training skills described above.

(Note: assessors and verifiers already holding the former D units do not need to re-qualify).

Geography / area of delivery

The LSC seeks proposals which will support participants who either reside or are employed in organisations located in the geographical areas identified below:

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

- Cheshire and Warrington – 17.5% (of NW funding) or £250,427
- Cumbria - 9% (of NW funding) or £128,791
- Greater Manchester – 46% (of NW funding) or £658,267
- Halton – 1% (of NW funding) or £14,311
- Lancashire – 26.5% or £379,219
- Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in area) - £351,653

Outputs

The minimum outputs which are required are detailed below:

- 792 Learners engaged, of which 156 must be from Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in area)

Results

The minimum results which are required are detailed below:

- 475 learners achieving A or V qualifications (or industry relevant programmes), of which 94 must be from the Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in area)

Other outcomes

Successful applicants will be required to provide a quarterly report providing volumes of learners and achievers by sector.

Funding available

The overall funding available for this Tender Specification is £1,782,668. This funding is split as follows:

- Northwest (including Halton) - £1,431,015
- Greater Merseyside (Merseyside phasing-in area) - £351,653

The following unit costs have been calculated for 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 - £2,250
- Average unit cost of qualifications achieved - £3,752

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).

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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 Training Aid 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 will be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	25%	50%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	30%	55%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	35%	70%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	40%	75%

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 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

The project should commence on 1 May 2008 and be completed by 31 December 2010. 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. To reduce administrative costs there will be a minimum contract value of £250,000 over the 3 years.

Where providers choose to deliver in a particular sub-region, they will be required to ensure that they only support companies or individuals in that sub-region.

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

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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 Halton - Skills Pledge Plus	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S08
Aim	
<p>The project is intended to stimulate and address demand for workforce development amongst employers across the region (excluding the Merseyside phasing-in area) through commitment to the Skills Pledge. The funds will be used to incentivise employers to sign the Skills Pledge by providing funded additional learning and skills provision not accessible through other routes eg Train to Gain.</p>	
Service requirement	
<p>The Skills Pledge is a voluntary, public commitment by the leadership of a company or organisation to support all its employees to develop their basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, and work towards relevant, valuable qualifications to at least Level 2 (equivalent to 5 good GCSEs). The purpose is to ensure that all staff are skilled, competent and able to make a full contribution to the success of the company/organisation.</p>	
<p>The requirement is for a third party to manage a fund from which employers may receive up to £1000 funding support for customised training needs and which cannot be delivered through LSC mainstream delivery and are not accessible as part of The Train to Gain offer. The funding is conditional on the employer signing the Skills Pledge. The funding support cannot be used towards L4 or L5 qualifications for employee's in large companies.</p>	
<p>It is a requirement that the successful contractor will need to work closely with the skills brokerage service (Business Link North West) and other Skills Pledge agents, the contractor will identify potential eligible employers who could benefit from Skills Pledge Plus. Therefore applicants must outline existing relationships with the brokerage service or should detail how effective working relationships will be developed. Tenders should clearly detail how the contractor proposes to market Skills Pledge Plus to employers.</p>	
<p>Providers are also invited to propose innovative ways of maximising take up of the Skills Pledge that could be funded from the contract allocation. This could include; awareness raising activities eg workshops and events organised on a geographical or sectoral basis; capacity building of providers to enable them to manage employers through the pledge process; development of North West case studies and dissemination through employer forums.</p>	
<p>Tenders must clearly demonstrate the rationale for the proposed activities and explain how they will promote the Skills Pledge.</p>	
<p>When the employer has reached the commitment stage of the Skills Pledge they will be eligible to receive free training to the value of £1000, which does not have to lead to qualifications. The training may be either sourced by the Skills brokerage service or by the Skills Pledge Plus provider.</p>	
<p>Providers will need to ensure that this funding does not displace other mainstream funding. Skills Pledge Plus funding should not be used to fund activities that can be funded through Train to Gain or Leadership and Management funding, for example.</p>	
<p>The contractor will be required to process invoices from providers of training and to produce comprehensive accounts for the Learning and Skills Council detailing the employers who have benefited from the funding. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have the administrative capability and/or track record and quality systems to manage a Fund as described above.</p>	
<p>Skills Pledge Plus providers will provide a positive example for workforce development, will be recognised or currently committed to Investors in People (IiP) and will act as ambassadors in promoting the IiP and Train to Gain to SME beneficiaries.</p>	
<p>Potential Skills Pledge Plus providers do not necessarily need to be based within the region, but will</p>	

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need to be able to demonstrate that they can effectively deliver to employers within the North West.

Providers will be expected to work within the emerging delivery framework of the LSC's employer offer and to make referrals as appropriate to employer needs. As a minimum providers will have a thorough knowledge of:

- Investors in People;
- Apprenticeships;
- Entry to Employment (E2E);
- Train to Gain for first Level 2 delivery;
- Skills for Life;
- Other LSC programmes.

Providers should ensure Skills Pledge activities are closely aligned with The Local Employer Partnerships (LEP) and Jobcentre Plus. A Jobs Pledge is a significant element of The LEP Framework and we are working closely with Jobcentre Plus to ensure maximum integration between the two offers ; reduction of duplication and minimising confusion for employers. Employers who recruit Jobcentre Plus customers will access Train to Gain and The Skills Pledge to ensure all eligible employees progress to a first Level 2 and undertake Skills for Life qualifications where appropriate.

For further information about the Skills pledge please refer to www.traintogain.gov.uk

Target groups & priority

The primary target group for this Tender Specification are employers who are categorised as small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). For ESF purposes 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.

However, in exceptional circumstances, large companies including public sector organisations may be supported. Please note that 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.

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

- Central Government.
- Local authorities.
- The armed forces.
- NHS trusts.
- GP fundholders.
- Grant maintained schools.

Geography / area of delivery

The fund should be available to employers across the whole of the North West excluding Merseyside. Indicative sub-regional share of the provision is as follows:

- Cheshire and Warrington - £236,250
- Cumbria - £121,500
- Greater Manchester – £621,000
- Lancashire – £358,425
- Halton – £12,825

Outputs

- Not applicable

Results

The following results must be delivered:

- 1,000 employers completing Stage 4 of the Skills Pledge.

Other outcomes

The LSC is also seeking the delivery of the following outcomes:

- An annual evaluation report which identifies the volumes of potential learner starts on Skills for Life, Level 2 and Level 3 programmes and any other LSC funded programmes eg Apprenticeships.
- Innovative proposals for maximising the take up of the Skills Pledge.

Funding available

A total of £1,350,000 is available over three years. No more than £100,000 of this funding may be used on management and administration costs and up to £250,000 may be used to fund innovative activities which seek to maximise the take up of the Skills Pledge.

The free training offer is triggered when the employer reaches the commitment stage (stage 4) of the Skills Pledge process.

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 following limits to ESF for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the Training Aid 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 will be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	25%	50%

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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.

Start and end dates

The project should commence on 1 May 2008 and be completed by 31 December 2010. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The preferred option is for one contract to be issued for the administration of the fund across the North West excluding Merseyside.

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.

Title: Northwest (including Merseyside Phasing-in Area) Skills for Life Capacity Building	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S09
Aim	
To co-ordinate Skills for Life professional development (particularly numeracy) in the region, working with providers and signposting individuals/organisations.	
Service requirement	
This Tender Specification will support an organisation to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Map the Skills for Life tutor training provision in the region and ascertain whether it is adequate to meet the needs of providers and signposters. By adequate we mean a sufficient spread of high quality provision across all five sub-regions for the delivery of all Skills for Life subject areas; literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy.• Support those providers delivering tutor training by facilitating good practice networks to develop excellence.• Develop capacity building activities to meet identified need within their own context – eg tailor bespoke awareness raising sessions to meet the needs of those delivering to offenders in the community.• Support organisations to adopt a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life, identifying their training needs as appropriate in line with Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) Framework for Initial Teacher Training ie. Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTTLS), Diploma to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTTLS) and Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTTLS).• Develop flexible approaches to the delivery of the new Skills for Life professional development qualifications in order to encourage engagement and achievement, e.g. residentials, blended learning, e-learning.• Develop the capacity of the Skills for Life workforce to deliver numeracy (making links with the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics and the emerging numeracy for employability strategy and the Maths4Life initiative.)• Develop the capacity of the Skills for Life workforce to deliver in the workplace, e.g. through Train to Gain.• Communicate and disseminate information and details of initiatives and events to regional intermediaries and deliverers.	
<p>This project will not support the actual delivery of Skills for Life tutor training qualifications as this will be eligible through mainstream funding. It will however support referral activities to tutor training qualifications, the on-going monitoring to ensure tutors attend and achieve and the delivery of any bespoke or contextualised models of training.</p>	
<p>All activity should embrace existing National initiatives and materials, for example the Skills for Life Improvement Programme and the QIA support programme for Train to Gain. The successful bidder should also have strong links to LLUK.</p>	
<p>Applicants should demonstrate previous experience in delivery of Skills for Life capacity building projects and be able to demonstrate their ability to share good practice in Professional Development for Skills for Life.</p>	
<p>The emphasis is on engagement of intermediaries and deliverers of Skills for Life Professional Development opportunities, in particular numeracy, which will impact on employability and workforce skills.</p>	
<p>The successful organisation will be required to maintain and support the existing website community hosted by www.skillsforlifeforum.com working in partnership with Resolve.</p>	

Target groups & priority

This tender is aimed at providers who deliver Skills for Life provision directly to learners and those intermediary organisations who may come into contact with Skills for Life learners or support them through other activities including; nextsteps and Connexions advisors, Jobcentre Plus advisors, union learning reps, Train to Gain brokers, probation and prison staff, voluntary and community organisations.

Geography / area of delivery

The service must be available to providers and those intermediary organisations specified in target groups section who are based in the Northwest including the Merseyside Phasing-in Area.

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

- Cheshire and Warrington (13% of NW funding) or £48,065
- Cumbria (6.5% of NW funding) or £24,032
- Greater Manchester (52% of NW funding) or £192,259
- Lancashire (26% of NW funding) or £96,129
- Halton (2.5% of NW funding) or £9,244
- Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in Area) £158,455

Outputs

- Establish Skills for Life tutor training networks to support delivery of new LLUK qualifications
- Development and delivery of bespoke programmes and cascade models for Skills for Life

Results

The minimum results required are:

- 30 organisations to develop a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life and training plans as appropriate.
- 200 individuals commencing CTLLS and DTLLS Skills for Life programmes.
- 50 individuals commencing PTLLS Skills for Life programmes.
- 50 numeracy tutors referred to providers and commencing programmes of learning.

Other outcomes

- Produce a directory of tutor training opportunities available within the North West region and publicise through the www.skillsforlifeforlife.com website
- Produce a quarterly report showing mapping of Skills for Life tutor training provision in the region together with identification of gaps and recommendations for action.
- Promotion of Skills for Life Professional Development opportunities.
- Flexible delivery of Skills for Life capacity building opportunities including blended learning, e-learning.

Funding available

Total funding available is £528,184.

This funding is split as follows:

- Northwest (including Halton) - £369,729
- Greater Merseyside (Merseyside phasing-in area) - £158,455

The following unit costs have been calculated for 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 company supported - £17,606.

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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 following limits to ESF for SME and Large Enterprises that are benefiting from State Aid (training resulting from this Tender Specification) under the Training Aid 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 will be 'General' as defined below.

Large Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	25%	50%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	30%	55%

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	Specific Training	General Training
Outside an assisted area	35%	70%
Assisted area (Art 87(3) (c))	40%	75%

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 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

This contract should start on 1 May 2008 and end 31 December 2010. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The North West LSC would prefer one organisation to deliver this lead facilitation role, however we

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would expect that it would work with partners across the five sub-regions.
The LSC would wish to encourage collaborative bids which will address all facets of this ITT.

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 (excluding the Merseyside Phasing-in Area) – Accelerated Programme Led Pathway Support	Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S10
<p>Aim</p> <p>To work with Accelerated Programme Led Pathway (APLP) providers to ensure that they are able to learn from existing, or quickly develop excellent practices in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the transition from Programme-led into Employed status Apprenticeships, • Engaging employers to employ Apprentices on completion of the Programme-led phase; • Ensuring the APLP programme results a corresponding headline increase in Employed-status Apprenticeships 	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p><u>Background</u></p> <p>The Learning and Skills Council has issued an Accelerated Programme-led Pathway (APLP) tender specification utilising programme funds and calling for a substantial increase in Programme-led provision leading to Employed-status Apprenticeships. This represents a significant increase in the resources available for Programme-led provision in the North West, with the potential for new providers or partnerships accessing 16-18 funding.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Tender Specification Ref rfq27948 will support the introduction of additional Programme-led provision, aimed at engaging with a greater number of employers that may be interested in recruiting individuals to complete an Apprenticeship Programme</i></p> <p><i>Funding will be available for a Pilot Phase (from January 2008 to July 2008), and an Embedded Phase (from August 2008 to July 2009), with the long term aim of achieving a significant increase in the recruitment to and delivery of vocational provision that offers a seamless link from Programme-led into Employed-status Apprenticeships.</i></p> </div> <p>The Operational Programme identifies that 'providers should be encouraged to engage employers to ensure that provision both match the skills needs of business and enable individuals to make progress in the labour market' and supports the development of 'activities to support access to and provision of apprenticeships'.</p> <p>Whilst the release of the APLP tender supports the Learning & Skills Council's intention to increase the overall number of young people moving into employment with an Employed-status Apprenticeship, there will also be an urgent need to ensure the successful APLP providers are able to learn from existing, or quickly develop excellent practices in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the transition from Programme-led into Employed status Apprenticeships, • Engaging employers to employ Apprentices on completion of the Programme-led phase; • Ensuring the APLP programme results a corresponding headline increase in Employed-status Apprenticeships <p>This tender specification calls for applicants that can deliver a coherent package of support, to markedly and rapidly enhance the provider network's capacity to support the access to and provision of programmes, that equip young people to progress into employment with an Apprenticeship and engage employers to increase the availability of Apprenticeships.</p> <p>This will require the successful applicant to work with the LSC and providers to establish baselines of Apprenticeship provision, seek out and disseminate best practice in partnership working and employer engagement, and evaluate the impact of the APLP programme. The successful applicant will work with the LSC and providers during the period June 2008 to July 2009.</p> <p>The success of the project will be measured by the degree to which embedded APLP provision contributes to a headline increase in young people entering employment with an Employed-status Apprenticeship.</p> <p>The successful applicant(s) will:</p>	

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- Identify, document and disseminate to all APLP providers existing models of excellent practice in managing the transition from Programme-led to Employed-status Apprenticeship provision.
- In consultation with APLP providers, develop additional support material to support a consistent level of embedded best practice in APLP programme management across the network.
- Engage APLP providers to share additional development resources and costs in developing new employer engagement models to remove duplication, and build a sustainable best practice network.
- Engage sector and employer stakeholders to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and APLP providers to reduce duplication of effort.
- Independently map the baseline of Employed-status Apprenticeships in areas benefiting from APLP provision.
- Evaluate the relative impact of APLP provision on Employed-status provision within and across sectors.
- Evaluate the efficacy of partnership and single-entity APLP provider models.
- Carry out a cost / benefit analysis of APLP provision for providers and employers.

Target groups & priority

This Tender Specification is aimed at providers who delivering APLP provision in the Northwest (excluding Merseyside phasing-in area). The LSC is currently procuring this activity, however for planning purposes their will be circa 10 contracts/providers delivering APLP provision.

Geography / area of delivery

The activities specified in this Tender Specification service must be available to providers delivering APLP provision in the Northwest.

Outputs

Not applicable.

Results

Not applicable.

Other outcomes

- Baseline of Employed-status Apprenticeship by Framework and location
- Identification of best practice and production and dissemination of best practice case studies and provider support manual.
- Collaborative APLP provider networks established in each sub-region and development of new employer engagement models
- Interim and Final Evaluation reports setting out the impact which APLP is having on employer engagement, increased apprenticeship volumes.

Funding available

The total funding available for this Tender Specification is £75,000.

The activities specified in this Tender Specification will be funded by the LSC's Co-finance

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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

Projects must not start activity before 1 June 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31 July 2009. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

It is anticipated that the LSC will let a single contract for the delivery of the services described within 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.

For Information Only

<p>Title: Greater Merseyside (Merseyside Phasing-in Area) – Employer Pool and Integrated Career Development Mentoring Programme</p>	<p>Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S11</p>
<p>Aim</p> <p>The Learning and Skills Council is seeking to appoint a single organisation or consortium of organisations to develop, and deliver an innovative method of providing Apprentices with real work opportunities on a portfolio basis.</p> <p>This programme aims to increase participation and achievement on the Apprenticeship programme by young people, whilst also providing opportunities for employers to meet workforce development needs. Evidence (through employer feedback) suggests that for some employers, and in particular, for employers within specific sectors e.g. retail, construction, there are several factors that prevent them from engaging fully in the Apprenticeship programme. For example, for smaller employers an apprenticeship opportunity can only be offered on a part time basis.</p> <p>Whilst much progress has been made working with employers to generate apprenticeship opportunities locally, there remains considerable work to be done to increase the company penetration rate in terms of the numbers offering apprenticeship places.</p>	
<p>Service requirement</p> <p>The Learning and Skills Council is seeking to run a pilot programme to test out different delivery models. A key aspect of the delivery models will be the generation, co-ordination and collaboration of apprenticeship opportunities within a number of different sectors and with several employers. This method of Apprentice delivery has the potential to offer employers and individuals the chance to access a wider range of employment/ apprentice opportunities by pooling part –time opportunities to create a full time apprenticeship opportunity.</p>	
<p>A key requirement of the programme will be regular on going evaluation; the views of employers, participants and providers should form part of the evaluation and will also form part of the final report.</p>	
<p>Identification of Apprentices</p> <p>The successful applicant will work with employers/sectors to generate opportunities for Apprentices and will broker across employers a collaborative delivery model to create a full time opportunity. The applicant will then work with providers and with Connexions to identify and match up suitable candidates with employers.</p>	
<p>Apprenticeship provision</p> <p>This programme will not replace or provide monies for Apprenticeship qualification delivery. The successful applicant as part of their consortium or from within their own organisation will work with a provider or range of Apprenticeship providers.</p>	
<p>Responsibilities</p> <p>Successful applicant will be responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of an evaluation framework as an integral part of the programme; • the establishment of an ‘Employer Pool’ and its working parameters; • the logistics of Apprentice travel between work placements; • the development of a unitised portfolio approach to the completion of the individuals framework working with an established Apprenticeship provider; • managing or providing a ‘host ‘organisation that would employ the individual Apprentices within the pool of talent available for the employer pool to hire; • a ‘host’ or co-ordinating body who would have the capacity and capability to carefully monitor 	

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the agreed activities and work with the apprenticeship provider so that the needs of both the employer and individual are met fully within an agreed activity plan or career progression pathway;

- a Career Management and Mentoring Programme that is integrated within this offer to programme participants, which will assist the individual to understand the next steps in career development and progression, and which links into appropriate Information, Advice and Guidance working with Connexions;
- the provision of opportunities for the employer to have a trial period with the individual to see how they fit into their company or organisation;
- the requirement that the successful applicant works closely within the new local marketing strategy to employers, making use of the proposed new toolkit where appropriate, and identifying opportunities for employers within the Employer Pool to access further LSC funded provision (such as the holistic Train to Gain offer).

Companies making up the employer pool

believes these employer needs can be addressed through greater innovation and flexibility. Whilst smaller employers are an obvious example for a potential employer pool, this scenario may also be relevant to other sectors such as the public sector.

The provider will be responsible for investigating whether employers need to be provided with incentives to become a member of the 'employer' pool. This element of the programme will be treated as action research and will be considered in consultation with the LSC should demand for the programme not be immediately apparent.

Additionally, there may exist a group of businesses or organisations who, whilst being in a position to provide full-time apprenticeship opportunities (including facilitation of the full framework completion) may be receptive to providing a number of shorter opportunities to a greater number of apprenticeship participants who could then complete their framework (and perhaps with more than one business or organisation).

Company Engagement

Applicants will demonstrate their ability to meet the part time employment needs of small employers and how they will be engaged.

The successful applicant must also be capable of bringing together Apprentices and employers to mutual benefit. One of the primary mechanisms for employer engagement will be through intermediaries such as Business Link Greater Merseyside, Banks, Professional Firms, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Unions and other potential channels to market.

Requirements

In this Tender Specification, the LSC is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced Apprenticeship or similar training provider with experience for young people delivery and to deliver a fully integrated programme of promotional activity to achieve the responsibilities stated above.

The Learning and Skills Council requires that potential providers satisfy the following requirements:

- Be able to demonstrate the ability to be flexible in their approach and be able to respond to employer needs within a rapidly changing employment/ learning and development agenda;
- Be able to demonstrate their ability to work across and engage with apprenticeship providers across Merseyside;
- Have a thorough understanding of LSC funded Apprentice programmes on Merseyside and understand the benefits that each can bring to local businesses;
- Have a track record of delivering and co-ordinating collaborative projects across employers, individuals and stakeholders;

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- Possess the technical ability to design and maintain a management information system to track and report on progress of individual apprentices.

Target groups & priority

The main focus of this programme are Small and Medium Enterprises (although large employers are not excluded) who have workforce needs, possibly on a part time basis, that could benefit an Apprentice portfolio. Individual apprentice participants do not have to be resident in Merseyside however the beneficiary companies must be located in one of the five boroughs.

For ESF purposes 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.

Geography / area of delivery

This programme will cover the Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens.

Outputs

Proposals must identify delivery of the following outputs:

Output	Total for programme
Employer Pool Network	1
Co-ordinated activity plans for apprentices produced and agreed	275
Employer referrals to Train to Gain Service	550

Results

Proposals must identify delivery of the following results:

- Employers recruited as part of the employer pool – 550
- Individuals supported through the employer pool - 275

Other outcomes

This programme should generate the following results:

- Increased penetration rate of hard to reach SMEs into apprenticeships;
- More employers accessing LSC services such as Apprenticeships and Train to Gain;
- Promotional materials and awareness raising activities targeted at 17,500 businesses which informs employers and employer intermediaries of opportunities and good practice;
- 550 company commitments to Skills Pledge;
- Production of 40 new good news case studies;
- 10 intermediaries using / applying the toolkit.

Funding available

Amount of funding available for this invitation to tender is £1,500,000.

will be made on a monthly basis in accordance with a profile agreed between the LSC and the provider.

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

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Specification. Applicants are required to identify, as required in the questionnaire, the average unit cost of their activity based on their proposed actual costs.

- Average cost per participant assisted £5,454
- Average cost per company assisted £2,727

ties 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

Projects must not start activity before 1 May 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31st December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities). Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

The Learning and Skills Council would expect no more than 1 contract to deliver this programme.

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.