



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

AND

CO-FINANCING



Leading learning and skills

If you have been given this leaflet this means that the course or activity that you are undertaking is being partly financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), through a programme called co-financing, more specifically through LSC North West's ESF Co-financing Plan 2007-10. This leaflet aims to explain what the European Social Fund (ESF) is and how it affects the support you are receiving.

What is the European Social Fund?

The ESF was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfill their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects. As one of the EU's Structural Funds, ESF seeks to reduce differences in prosperity across the EU and enhance economic and social cohesion. So although ESF funding is spread across the EU, most money goes to those countries and regions where economic development is less advanced.

Since 2000, the ESF has supported the EU's goal of increasing employment by giving unemployed and disadvantaged people the training and support they need to enter jobs. By focusing on those most in need of help, it contributes to policies to reduce inequality and build a fairer society. ESF also equips the workforce with the skills needed by business in a competitive global economy.

During 2007-2013 the new ESF programme will invest £4 billion in 2007-2013 of which £2 billion will come from the ESF and £2 billion will be national funding.

What is Co-Financing?

Co-financing is a method of administering ESF money which brings together European funding and other public funding to provide complete packages of funding for providers delivering activity that aim to:

- Extend employment opportunities
- Develop a skilled and adaptable workforce

What can Co-Financing do and how does it affect me?

ESF money is used to help deliver the types of activity shown above and provides funding for actions over and above what existing funding can support (this is called 'added value'). Particular focus is given to those individuals who are at a distinct disadvantage either through financial, cultural or physical difficulties.

There are many different ways of showing added value and, therefore, many different types of activity which can be funded. These could range from providing: extra hours of support for people to enable them to achieve a qualification; funding complete training programmes to increase the number of people receiving training; and providing financial support to companies to enable employees to participate in a training programme.

Being part of a co-financed project might mean that you are receiving additional support direct from ESF (as in the examples above) or it could mean that you are supported through another publicly funded programme that forms part of the larger co-financing package. This means that without including you and other people in similar circumstances in the overall co-financing package, additional benefits would not be available to any individuals as ESF has to be matched with appropriate funding from other public sources.

The fact that you have taken part in a project that was supported in this way does not affect any benefits or other entitlements you receive, nor do you have to declare it to anyone else.

If you would like to know more about ESF programmes and how they work go to: www.esf.gov.uk