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**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL  
NORTHWEST**

**ESF CO-FINANCE**

**YOUTH TENDER SPECIFICATIONS**



Leading learning and skills

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For Information Only

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Title: Greater Manchester – Skills for Jobs – The Employability Skills Routeway into Sustainable Employment for People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities</b>  | <b>Reference: NW/OTHER/S07</b> |
| <b>Aim</b> <p>The overall strategic aim of services sought under this specification is to support the delivery of an integrated employment and skills system.</p> <p>Skills for Jobs aims to tackle worklessness by reducing the number of individuals not in employment through more effective engagement. It aims to move individuals into sustainable jobs through coaching, skills development, ongoing support, and the provision of qualifications. This will be achieved by linking individuals who want to work with employers/sectors where there are opportunities and preparing those individuals to secure and sustain that employment.</p> <p>The target group for this Tender Specification are adults (aged 19+) who are residents of the Greater Manchester area and who are Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (including Mental Health Issues) who are currently engaged in some form of learning (formal or informal).</p> <p>This is a re-release of an Invitation to Tender which was published in November 2007. The aim of the programme remains the same, though some of the wording of this specification has been amended to give greater clarity to potential applicants.</p> |                                |
| <b>Service requirement</b> <p>The LSC has developed three Skills for Jobs Routeways which aim to reduce the number of individuals not in employment (please refer also to the Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs); this specification relates to the first – The Employability Skills Routeway.</p> <p>The LSC is seeking applications that will co-ordinate and deliver this complete Routeway within Greater Manchester; applicants must state clearly in which specific geographical areas the activity will be delivered. A partnership/consortium approach is essential and applications must be submitted by a lead organisation on behalf of the partnership/consortium. The lead applicant should have experience of working with the target group for this programme and must list the membership of the partnership/consortium with whom they will deliver this programme. The application must contain an explanation of the existing capacity of the partnership/consortium and/or how additional capacity will be developed prior to commencing delivery of the project.</p> <p>Applicants must explain how they and their partners will work with a range of</p>                                      |                                |

agencies and organisations to develop a comprehensive menu of support and to ensure smooth transition arrangements that will enable individuals to progress through the Routeway. This must include, as a minimum, voluntary and community sector organisations, Jobcentre Plus (JCP), and the providers of other existing learning, support and employment programmes, including those recently awarded contracts through the LSC's and DWP's (Department of Work and Pensions) ESF Co-financing procurement rounds.

Impartial and wide-ranging Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is critical to the success of Skills for Jobs and should ensure that individuals are able to make informed choices that meet their personal circumstances, skills needs and aspirations and lead to sustainable job outcomes and further learning. It is particularly important that applicants explain how they will make clear links to bespoke IAG services, including the existing Nextstep service and enhanced services recently procured through LSC's and DWP's ESF Co-financing rounds (see weblinks above). Where necessary, protocols should be developed with IAG delivery organisations to ensure a smooth transition for individuals; this must include provision for the sharing of data and avoidance of double-counting of outputs.

The objective of this Employability Skills Routeway is to enhance existing learning provision by navigating eligible individuals from their current programme into sustained employment. This will be done by identifying suitable employment opportunities and supporting individuals' transition from welfare to workforce and further skills development, ideally to level 2 via Train to Gain/further appropriate learning.

This Routeway will exclusively support Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (including Mental Health Issues) who are currently engaged in either formal or informal learning. Provision must include the following:

- Establishing links between organisations providing supported employment opportunities and formal/informal learning providers;
- Working with employers to identify and deliver new supported employment places for those learners who are not eligible for existing local authority or JC+ supported employment provision;
- Developing and delivering new models of supported employment that facilitate progression to sustained employment.

### **Routeway Activity Stages**

The Routeway must include the following 5 stages and these must be considered from the perspectives of both the employer and the individual.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Stages 1 and 2:</b> | - <b>Learner and Employer Engagement</b> |
| <b>Stage 3:</b>        | - <b>The Pre Employment Phase</b>        |
| <b>Stage 4:</b>        | - <b>The Entry to Employment Phase</b>   |

**Stage 5:**

**- The Post Employment Phase**

Within each of these stages we have identified a range of interventions which must form part of the Routeway and these are described in the Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs document<sup>1</sup>. These are identified as examples of the types of activities which should be included and additional appropriate activities can also be included as necessary to achieve the programme objective.

Applicants must explain how they will identify and engage individuals from groups recognised as being most detached from or under-represented in the labour market. This will include the use of positive action programmes where appropriate.

The Skills for Job framework includes a requirement to make best use of existing programmes and services by knitting them together with new activities to create a seamless programme of support and progression for individual workless people. It is therefore expected that some of the activities identified in the guidance document (or added by the applicant) will be provision that will already be funded by the LSC, JCP or other agencies, e.g. local authorities. Applicants must explain how best value will be achieved by maximising the use of such provision and how they have, or will develop, relationships with the appropriate providers to ensure that such provision can be accessed by individuals on the Routeway.

In addition to using provision that is already funded, applicants will identify a need for other support to be developed to meet specific gaps noted in the range of activities identified in the guidance document or added by the applicant. This additional support should be provided by the applicant partnership/consortium and the costs of this should be included in the application form submitted. Applicants must explain what type of support they anticipate will be required, however, the LSC recognises that this might change according to the individual requirements of those on the Routeway. Any such support must align with and add value to existing activities and under no circumstances must it duplicate it.

Skills for Jobs activity must support existing priorities including those identified in local area agreements and the Greater Manchester City Strategy Business Plan. Skills for Jobs activity must also support emerging Local Employment Partnership activity, and complement achievement of the Skills and Jobs pledges as appropriate.

**Formative Evaluation**

As Skills for Jobs is a new approach, successful applicants must agree to participate in evaluation activity as required by the LSC. Initially, they will be asked to articulate their baseline position so that the distance of travel can be measured. Please see the Introduction and Guidance to Skills for Jobs for more details.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/NorthWest/SfJ\\_Introduction\\_and\\_Guidance.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/NorthWest/SfJ_Introduction_and_Guidance.pdf)

### Target groups & priority

Skills for Jobs is intended to improve the engagement of disadvantaged adults who are economically inactive and/or on benefits, and who need additional training and support to prepare them for employment and subsequent in-work training to ensure that employment is sustainable and to support further progression.

The target group for this Tender Specification are adults (aged 19+) who are:

- residents of the Greater Manchester area; *and*
- who have Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (including Mental Health Issues); *and*
- who are currently engaged in either formal or informal learning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- time spent on work-related government programmes such as New Deal
- where people are considered to form part of the workforce;
- days for which Statutory Sick Pay or Statutory Maternity Pay have been claimed;

- time spent in compulsory education; and
- time spent on training or education courses that last longer than four weeks.

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

For ESF purposes, people who are economically inactive are:

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

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

Applicants must also note that the normal eligibility criteria will apply to existing provision which may form part of the Routeway. For mainstream LSC provision these criteria can be found at: [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/Furthereducation/Funding\\_Guidance\\_for\\_Further\\_Education\\_in\\_200708.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/Furthereducation/Funding_Guidance_for_Further_Education_in_200708.htm)

For provision funded by other agencies, applicants should contact those agencies to obtain their eligibility criteria.

### **Geography / area of delivery**

All individuals supported by this tender specification must be residents of Greater Manchester. Applicants must, in particular, target individuals living in areas where economic inactivity is particularly concentrated; these are identified in the Greater Manchester City Strategy Business Plan which can be found at [www.manchester-enterprises.com](http://www.manchester-enterprises.com).

### **Outputs**

The following outputs must be delivered by successful applicants:

- 500 Individuals who have completed a Skills for Jobs Action Plan
- A maximum of three Skills for Jobs action plan main Stage Progressions per participant (i.e. progression from stage 1 engagement, to stage 3, to stage 4 and then stage 5). Stage 5 support is limited to a maximum of 6 months per individual

### **Results**

The following results must be delivered by successful applicants:

- 200 individuals on the Routeway who progress to employment with further training and or support when they leave the project
- Of which 165 individuals remain in that employment for at least 13 weeks

- And 130 individuals remain in that employment for at least 6 months

#### Other outcomes

In addition to the outputs and results listed above, applicants are asked to specify any other outcomes, including 'soft' outcomes that their project will deliver.

#### Funding available

**The maximum amount of funding available for this tender specification is: £250,000.**

Applicants may not apply for more than this maximum level of funding.

#### Start and end dates

**Successful applicants must not start project activity before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 and must complete all activity by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities).**

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

#### Contracting details

LSC Greater Manchester would expect to let no more than 5 contracts against this tender specification and applications covering more than a single local authority area are particularly welcome.

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.

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <b>Title: Cheshire &amp; Warrington, Cumbria and Lancashire - Routeways to Work</b>   | <b>Reference: NW/OTHER/S08</b> |
| <b>Aim</b> <p>The aim of this project is for the Further Education system to develop a positive learning culture linked to the developing economy, which inspires and empowers people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to be economically independent.</p> <p>The activity secured will provide employability skills to young people and adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities, (LDD), enabling access to sustainable employment for those ready and able to work. It is expected that the project will support people who have already completed periods of study within the FE system and are ready to move to supported employment.</p>  |                                |
| <b>Service requirement</b> <p>Many young people and adults with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD) are at a very significant disadvantage in the employment market. In particular, young people and adults with learning difficulties, mental health issues or sensory impairment are much less likely than the general population to be in employment. There is also a growing number of young people and adults on the autistic disorder spectrum who may require support to enter employment.</p> <p>Some young people with LDD need longer to learn and need to access Work Based Learning following a period of learning elsewhere in the FE system. The LSC is aware that some of these young people, for reasons related to their potential to achieve a level 2 qualification, either at all or within in a limited timescale, are unable to access Work Based Learning.</p> <p>The LSC would therefore like to commission provision that would provide Routeways to Work for young people with LDD, aged 16-18 and 19-25 to provide the skills, experience and the support that they need to progress from learning to employment. . The objective of Routeways to Work is to enhance existing LSC provision by supporting eligible individuals with LDD from their programme of learning into sustainable employment. This will be done by identifying suitable employment opportunities and supporting individuals' transition from learning to the workforce. Ideally participants will continue to be supported post programme through Train to Gain or other appropriate in-work training. The project will build on good practice developed by learning providers, in partnership with supported employment agencies</p> <b>Definitions</b> <p>Within the FE system the term learning difficulties and/or disabilities is deliberately wide, and includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ mental ill-health</li><li>➤ sensory impairment</li><li>➤ physical difficulties</li><li>➤ learning difficulties</li></ul> |                                |

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

Many of these learners will not require significant support to obtain employment in the open employment market. Others are at a disadvantage in the employment market, compared to their peers, and will require a range of support to enter and sustain employment, depending on their learning difficulty/disability. For the purposes of this project it is expected that the successful provider will identify those at a disadvantage in the labour market locally, and focus provision on those groups of learners. Providers should cite sources of research to underpin their proposals to support specific groups of learners.

The successful, provider will work in close collaboration with key stakeholders to offer a person-centred service that ensures that young people and adults are suitably matched with and into sustainable employment.

It is expected that this project will complement existing supported employment activities commissioned by Job Centre Plus and Local Authorities.

### **The Distinctive Offer**

Routeways Activity Stages.

The concept of “Routeways to work” implies five stages of support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

These stages are:

#### **Stage 1**

Engagement, information advice and guidance, (IAG) and initial assessment. It is particularly important that applicants specify how they will make clear links to IAG, including Connexions and Nexstep provision and the enhanced services procured through LSC and DWP ESF Co-financing. Impartial IAG is critical to the success of this project and should ensure that individuals are able to make informed choices.

Where necessary protocols should be developed with providers of IAG to ensure a smooth transition for individuals. This must include arrangements for sharing of data and avoiding double-counting of outputs.

#### **Stage 2**

Preparation of learners for work through development of appropriate programmes. This activity should not duplicate learning or work experience already undertaken, but should deliver an enhancement or bolt on programme

of job-related learning that will facilitate progression to supported employment. This may involve some short specific skills, for example interview skills, confidence building travel or route training and work experience. For those that can achieve them, it is expected that units of vocational qualifications will be part of the package.

### **Stage 3**

Place and train learners with employers, providing the right level of support for individuals to enable successful transfer to employment. This may include job coaching or mentoring and/or the continuation of the training commenced at stage 2. It is expected that this support will diminish over time as the learner grows in confidence and competence. Such support should be available for an average of six months and no more than 12 months. It is envisaged that in terms of the overall programme, learners will spend the largest proportion of time on this stage. Support and advice should be available for the employer.

### **Stage 4**

At the end of the programme, advice and guidance on progression to sustainable open employment should be available to participants. This should include, where appropriate continuation of development through mainstream provision, e.g. Train to Gain. Participants should also be sign-posted to other sources of post-programme support.

### **Stage 5**

Advice to employers to ensure that the individual may remain in employment post programme; this may include signposting to sources of advice and guidance orientated to employers of individuals with learning difficulties/disabilities.

Tenders should show how the activities will be sustained after the project funding ceases.

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### **Essential elements**

The LSC does not expect its learning providers to develop the skills sets necessary to deliver supported employment and expects that the project will draw on the expertise of existing organisations in this field. It is expected that provision will include the following:

#### **Partnership Working**

A partnership/consortium approach, including the Third Sector, where appropriate, is key and applications must be submitted by a lead applicant on behalf of the partnership/consortium. The applicant must list the membership of the partnership/consortium and explain the existing capacity of the partnership and/or how additional capacity will be developed.

Partnerships/Consortia must establish or build on links between FE providers and supported employment organisations.

This project will develop

- collaboration between a range of agencies to facilitate individual progress from learning to supported employment. This partnership is based on all contributing to the process which enables a learner to obtain employment.
- effective communication; a mechanism should be in place to ensure that all partners communicate regularly and effectively, with each other and with individuals and their mentors/job coaches and carers. It is essential that there are clearly understood responsibilities, setting out which partner does what and by when.
- shared professional development to promote collaboration and understanding of each partner's roles and responsibilities.

### **Partnership with Employers**

- the development of a sophisticated analysis of employment opportunities and the application of that analysis to programme development which will lead to positive transition to employment opportunities for this group of learners.
- development and running of appropriate programmes for pathways to work, including the development of appropriate sector specific pathways.
- development and operation of employer based information and support processes whilst the learners is supported and sign-posting employers to appropriate sources of advice and support, post programme.
- access and progression to Train to Gain, where applicable once in employment.
- access to existing LSC and Job Centre Plus provision and programmes, e.g. Skills for Life, Access to Employment.

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate

- Positive recent experience in relation to routeways to work for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Expert knowledge of policy content and the strategic environment
- Understanding of local and regional networks
- The geographical impact of their proposal

### **Other Elements**

The LSC is willing to consider:

- one pilot in one of the designated geographical areas,
- one pilot in each of the three designated geographical areas
- one pilot in all three geographical areas focussing on learners with a specific low incidence learning difficulty or disability

Volumes within proposals should reflect the needs of the identified groups of learners in the geographical area(s) of delivery.

It is likely that most providers will wish to work with both the 16-18 and 19-25 age group, but the LSC is willing to consider projects focussing on either.

### **Target groups & priority**

Skills for Jobs is intended to improve the engagement of disadvantaged adults who are economically inactive and/or on benefits, and who need additional training and support to prepare them for employment and subsequent in-work training to ensure that employment is sustainable and to support further progression.

The target groups are:

- Young people aged 16-18 with LDD, including those who are NEET or at risk of unemployment,
- Young people aged 19 -25 with LDD who are at risk of unemployment.

Applicants should identify priority target groups with specific learning difficulties/and or disabilities and provide evidence

- of local need
- that these groups are at a greater disadvantage in the labour market than their peers without disabilities.
- how they propose to monitor and manage the balance of people with certain types of disability

Applicants should clearly cite sources of evidence to support the analysis of need.

### **Geography / area of delivery**

The LSC would like to commission pilot activity in at least one of the following areas:

- Lancashire
- Cheshire and Warrington
- Cumbria.

### **Outputs**

107 young people with LLDD aged 16-18 receiving training and support into employment

57 young people with LLDD aged 19-25 receiving training and support into employment

### **Results**

60 young people with LDD aged 16-18 entering employment

35 young people with LDD aged 19-25 entering employment

50 Employers engaged in the programme

30 young people age 16-18 in employment 6 months after entering employment.

20 young people age 19-25 in employment 6 months after entering employment

60 programmes developed to embed sustainability of employment.

**Other outcomes**

The project will:

1. Develop a model of achieving routeways to work, including sector routeways, for people with LDD.
2. Identify key partners who need to work effectively together to achieve the employment outcome for individuals.
3. Identify the ways in which employer support can be engendered and maintained in providing pathways to work.
4. Create local links which, will endure in development of routeways to work for individuals with LDD.

The project will identify evaluation criteria that will enable as a minimum effective evaluation of;

1. the model(s) of pathways to employment developed;
2. a variety of successful models of work with employers;
3. sector routeways
4. key success criteria.

**Funding available**

A total of £574,550 is available comprised of £374,550 for young people aged 16-18 and £200,000 for adults aged 19-25.

LSC co-financed ESF provision is now considered valid for the purposes of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), where this provision is in scope for OFSTED inspection and is of at least 12 guided learning hours per week and for a minimum of 10 weeks.

EMA is a weekly payment of up to £30 that is paid directly to eligible young people aged 16 to 19, following household income assessment (see below).

| Household income in the tax year 2006-07            | Weekly rates to be paid                         |
|---|---|
| Up to £20,817                                       | £30   |
| More than £20,817 but less than or equal to £25,521 | £20   |
| More than £25,521 but less than or equal to £30,810 | £10   |
| More than £30,810                                   | Not eligible for EMA (weekly or bonus payments) |

Your tender should reflect how you propose to assist young people with their applications for EMA as part of this project.

Where the provider is not eligible for EMA, it is anticipated that payment of a training allowance will be paid to learners. Any training allowance payment would be from the overall budget for this programme and providers must build this in to their costings.

For full details of EMA and the eligibility criteria please visit the EMA website ([www.direct.gov.uk/ema](http://www.direct.gov.uk/ema))

#### **Start and end dates**

The contract will start no later than 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008 and subject to a satisfactory annual review of performance end on 31<sup>st</sup> 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 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.