

NORTH WEST



Leading learning and skills

APPLICATION TO ACCESS REGIONAL RESPONSE FUNDS

1. INSTRUCTIONS & GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

(FOR PROVIDERS WHO DO NOT HOLD AN APPRENTICESHIP CONTRACT)

2007/08

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Section 1 - Instructions and Information on Application Procedure

1. General

- 1.1 These instructions are designed to ensure that all applications are given fair and equal consideration. **It is important therefore that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.** If you have any doubts as to what is required or you have difficulty in providing the information requested, please contact the LSC in the region where you wish to deliver.
- 1.2 References to the 'Council' throughout this document mean The Learning and Skills Council and the provision of training services will be referred to as the "Service".
- 1.3 Applicant organisations are advised that nothing in this document or its appendices and any other communication made between the Council, and any part thereof, shall be taken as constituting a contract, agreement or representation between the Council and any party (save for the award of a contract made by the Council) nor shall it be taken as constituting a contract, agreement or representation that any contract shall be offered in accordance herewith or at all.

2. Application Procedure

- 2.1 Applications for Regional Response funding will only be considered where a training need has been identified which is not funded through commissioned provision or where an employer specifically requests training from a particular provider. Providers must provide details of the training need and how it was identified. The Skills Broker will engage with such employers to confirm the need.
- 2.2 Providers who already have a contract(s) with the Council for provision other than Apprenticeships do not need to complete all of the Application. The Application documents describe which providers should complete which section. The provider Application types are separated into:
 - a) Providers who hold other (non-Apprenticeship) contracts with the LSC
 - b) Providers who hold no contracts at all with the LSC i.e. "new providers".
- 2.3 Completed Applications should be returned to the regional contact in the region where the training is to take place. (See Regional Contacts details in Section 2 Paragraph 8 below)

3. Acceptance of Applications

- 3.1 The Council reserves the right to accept a portion of any application unless the bidder expressly stipulates otherwise in their application.

4. Costs and Expenses

- 4.1 The applicant organisation is not entitled to claim from the Council any costs or expenses which may be incurred in the preparation of the application.

5. Debriefing

- 5.1 Following the award of a contract, feedback to unsuccessful applicants will be available following the decisions on the award of an agreement.

6. Freedom of Information

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Under the provision of the FOIA the Council is required to provide information it holds in response to a request made in Applicants accordance with the FOIA. This includes information about third parties. Applicants are referred to the Guidance on the Learning and Skills Council's Policy for Access to Information on the LSC website at:
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2006/internaladmin/inforequest/nat-freedomofinformation-ps-june2006.pdf>

7. Assessment of Applications -

- 7.1 Applications will be assessed according to national guidance which is designed to ensure agreements are only awarded to providers who have demonstrated they can deliver high quality, flexible and responsive provision.
- 7.2 An Assessment Panel will consider each application. The Assessment Panel will be formed from key regional staff from the Council and will assess the applications and make a recommendation to the Regional Director.
- 7.3 The decision of the Regional Director will be final and there will be no appeals process.

8. Contract Award

- 8.1 Only applicant organisations that state acceptance of the Council's terms and conditions for the basis of any contract will be considered.
- 8.2 The Council reserves the right to add or substitute conditions that are more consistent with the offer or are otherwise more acceptable to the parties to any contract.
- 8.3 The Council will agree the Service Specification [Schedule1], the Finance, Volume and Performance Schedule [Schedule 2], and any Special Conditions of Contract with the accepted provider[s]. These, once agreed, will form part of the contract between the Council and the Provider.

9. The Learning and Skills Council Terms and Conditions of Contract

- 9.1 Tendering organisations are required to accept the Council Terms and Conditions of Contract (issued to all organisations without a current LSC contract) and are asked to indicate this in their response.

Section 2 - Apprenticeships in the North West

1. Aim

- 1.1 The recently published [World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All](#) clearly outlined the Government's commitment to expanding and strengthening the Apprenticeships programme, significantly increasing 16-18 Apprenticeship numbers by 2013; supporting the entitlements for every individual aged 19–25 to receive funding to achieve a first full Level 2 or 3 qualification, with much of the new entitlement to Level 3 learning for 19- to 25-year-olds being delivered through Advanced Apprenticeships; and aiming for significant growth in Apprenticeships for those aged 25 or over.
- 1.2 This commitment builds on the renaissance in Apprenticeships that the country has experienced over the past decade, and recognises the potential growth in demand for Apprenticeships from employers, young people and adults.
- 1.3 The aim of this process is to expand the provision of Apprenticeships in the **North West** region in response to the needs of employers.

2. Service requirement

- 2.1 An Apprenticeship is a form of vocational training based on a mixture of work-based and theoretical learning. For the Government to count training as an Apprenticeship and to be able to provide the relevant funds, an Apprentice must have spent a period of time as an employee during the Apprenticeship, and be employed at the time of completion.
- 2.2 An Apprenticeship is not necessarily a qualification in itself, but it contains the following mandatory elements.
- A knowledge-based element (the theoretical knowledge underpinning a job in a certain occupation and industry, (typically certified via a Technical Certificate).
 - A competence-based element (the ability to discharge the functions of a certain occupation, typically certified via work-based assessed (Normally a national vocational qualification (NVQs)).
 - Transferable or 'key skills' (literacy and numeracy plus wider key skills as designated by the relevant SSC).
 - Employment rights and responsibilities.
- 2.3 For the purpose of this document the term **Apprenticeship** covers Employer-led Apprenticeships (Level 2) and Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3).

- 2.4 From Autumn 2008 all providers delivering Apprenticeships will be expected to record vacancies for apprentices on the national vacancy matching system. Agreement to do so is a pre-condition of being awarded a contract.
- 2.5 Apprenticeships provision must be delivered in accordance with the LSC requirements as published at <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/Workbasedlearning/>

3. Capacity & Track Record

- 3.1 Applicants should clearly demonstrate that they have the training infrastructure and staff capacity to deliver high quality training for the **full framework**.

3.2 Existing Apprenticeship Providers – Outside the North West

For each apprenticeship framework to be supported, LSC providers will provide evidence of framework starts and success rates measured using New Methods of Success – Overall methodology for two prior years. In addition for the delivery of frameworks which they have previously not been contracted for, a narrative should be provided detailing how they will develop the training infrastructure and staff capacity to deliver high quality training for the full framework, providing clear milestones and timescales.

3.3 New Providers

New providers, who can offer high quality are encouraged to apply. They will need to provide a narrative detailing their track record in terms of the number of learners and success / completion rates in delivering comparable activity over the past two years. New providers will also need to demonstrate an understanding of the data and contract management requirements associated with Apprenticeships delivery including provision of Individualised Learner Record data as specified by the Information Agency. Further details can be found at: <http://www.theia.org.uk/>

4. Target groups

- 4.1 Apprenticeship funding is available for all ages. Providers should indicate if they are targeting any specific age group as detailed below.
- 4.2 Provision will be targeted at the 16-18, 19-24 and 25+ age groups.
- 4.3 Young People - 16-18
Providing entry and progression routes into Apprenticeships for school-leavers, Young Apprentices, learners in Entry to Employment provision and supporting 16-18 year-olds to move from being NEET or in employment without training.

4.4 Adults - 19-24

To increase the skills of those that have already completed their compulsory education, and to meet increasing demand for Advanced Apprenticeships over the next decade, including those working within sectors that have been identified as local, regional or national priorities, who have existing skills or knowledge gaps and whom lack formal qualifications for those skills.

- 4.5 Providing entry and progression routes into Apprenticeships for FE College-leavers; learners previously in Entry to Employment provision; learners progressing from provision delivered under the Train to Gain service; or supporting 19-24 year-olds in employment without training or changing career paths, or without employment, including those on incapacity benefit, who are seeking to train or retrain in order to enter long term employment.

4.6 25+

Providing entry and progression routes into Apprenticeships for adults aged 25+ progressing from Train to Gain provision or other work-based vocational learning, or changing career paths; or without employment, including those on incapacity benefit, who are seeking to train or retrain in order to enter long term employment.

5. Equality & Diversity

- 5.1 The 2005 Apprenticeships pay survey found a 40% average pay differential between male and female Apprentices.
- 5.2 The Labour Research Department's Workplace Report of 2006 also found that 70% of Apprentices at the advanced level were male, and that they received just over twice as much training time per week as females.
- 5.3 The sectors that pay Apprentices the highest wages provide the most hours of training. The best prospects of progression are those that are overwhelmingly male-dominated.
- 5.4 Black and minority ethnic (BME) young people are underrepresented in Apprenticeships compared with their numbers in the population as a whole. They are underrepresented in the 'traditional' craft-based sectors, and particularly in some of the more 'modern' frameworks, such as customer service (6%) and hospitality (3%). In fact, of all the frameworks for which we had data on a significant number of Apprentices in 2006, only four – the two sporting excellence frameworks, community justice and IT services and development – had 10% or more BME Apprentices.
- 5.5 Providers will need to demonstrate that they will seek to recruit apprentices with equality and diversity for all.

6. Outputs

- 6.1 Apprenticeships **starts** in the **North West** will need to grow from **29,000 in 2006/07** (Young People 16,700 and adults 12,300) to **36,000 by 2013**, if the region is to fulfil its Apprenticeship Entitlement and the aspirations set out in the Leitch review of skills:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index

Such growth represents additional **1,800 starts year-on-year** across all age ranges with 16-18s **starts** in particular needing to increase by approximately **15 per cent by 2013**.

7. Results

- 7.1 Framework achievement rates (the percentage of learners that have completed a full framework) have been improving year-on-year from 24% in 2001 to 63% in 2007. Poorly performing provision is removed by the LSC when the success rate falls below the Minimum Levels of Performance (MLP). The MLP has been set at 40% in 2006/07 and 45% in 2007/08. **The LSC will not normally contract with providers with achievements rates, at framework level, below MLP.**
- 7.2 The North West is committed to being significantly ahead of Minimum Level of Performance for Apprenticeships. For the 2007/08 year this is set at 45 per cent and will rise year-on-year. In the same year the North West produced a New Measures of Success - Overall Success Rate of: 61 per cent, 1 per cent ahead of the national skills task forces recommendation for minimum Apprenticeship Framework achievement.
- 7.3 Applicants should indicate their forecast success rate for each Framework. For new provision / new providers an explanation of the measures that will be taken to ensure the forecast success rate is achieved will be required.

8. Supporting documents

- 8.1 The following documents and links are recommended.

Our Statement of Priorities, Better Skills, Better jobs, better Lives

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-statementofpriorities-nov07.pdf>

LSC internet: Funding Policy - Work based learning

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/funding-policy/Workbasedlearning/>

World Class Apprenticeships: Unlocking Talent, Building Skills for All (DIUS 2008)

http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/world_class_apprenticeships.pdf

Measuring Success in the Learning and Skills Sector

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/pre2005/research/consultation/measuring-success-in-the-learning-and-skills-sector-december-2003.pdf>

Learning Aims Database

<http://providers.lsc.gov.uk/LAD/aims/searchcriteria.asp>

9. Performance Management

- 9.1 Successful providers will be subject to regular performance reviews with the Council.
- 9.2 Providers will be required to collect data and produce reports to the Council which show progress towards the targets and milestones outlined in the agreed Development and Delivery Plan. In addition the Council will review starts, learner progress, achievements and achievement rates, and funding usage on a regular basis.
- 9.3 Detailed performance management arrangement will be agreed between the Applicant and Council at regional level.
- 9.4 Where performance falls below targets and expected levels the Council reserves the right to terminate the contact.

10. Contacts Team

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