

Specification: capital funding to support providers to embed technology in the curriculum for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.



Leading learning and skills

The LSC strategy to improve the learning offer for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Learning for Living and Work, announced Investment to Change funding to promote transformational change in the provision of learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The LSC in the North West now has an Investment to Change capital budget of £800,000 to support General Further Education Colleges and 6th Form Colleges to embed technology in the curriculum for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Priorities for Investment to Change funding are to:

- understand need and build capacity
- improve the quality of provision, including through development of the workforce
- increase participation in the economy and our communities through sustainable employment.

Funding will be split between regions to ensure fair and equitable access on the following basis:

£400,000 to be evenly split to allow a base line of £80,000 for each area plus £400,000 split by the proportion of the working age population resident in the area. The allocations to each area are:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Cheshire and Warrington | £131,853 |
| Cumbria | £108,265 |
| Greater Manchester | £230,487 |
| Greater Merseyside | £165,867 |
| Lancashire | £163,528 |
| Total | £800,000 |

The LSC is now requesting eligible institutions submit proposals for funding to embed technology in teaching and learning for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Funding may be used by Colleges to purchase, software, adaptive technology, mobile technology or other appropriate IT equipment that will improve the curriculum for learners with LDD.

We would like to use the potential of this funding to provide opportunities for all of our learners who are within the agenda for learning for living and work. We wish to focus on the **learner** and not the **college**. We want to generate a culture of looking at what is best for each learner and then creating opportunities for that learner and their tutor to access a wider range of resources than might be possible within the college resources. We want to create a more lasting use of these funds for the

benefit of the learner and a legacy of collaboration for learning to live and work within the region.

It is expected that providers will work collaboratively with other providers within boroughs or at cross borough level. In this way providers may begin to develop new, or build on existing, specialisms within an area, which may in the future lead to Centre of Excellence status, whilst at the same time seeking support for more widely used technology across all providers within the partnership. Through providing a partnership approach to these funds we intend to stimulate collaboration and sharing of expertise that exists within the colleges in the North West.

Proposals must demonstrate how funding will be used effectively to meet the priorities outlined above. In particular the focus of provision for this group of learners is increasingly on aligning the curriculum offer to meet individual aspirations, including employment. Preference will therefore be given to proposals that link technology with an employment focussed curriculum and the supported employment model. In line with Learning for Living and Work, the LSC will not support projects that embed technology in work preparation courses that do not include an element of work experience.

Staff coordinating proposals and staff who will be the intended users of equipment will also need advice and guidance on the most effective equipment and on making the full use of any new resources. Regional advice and support is an essential part of this project. The LSC with the Association of Colleges and JISC will therefore hold an event 14 January 2008 to provide advice on the most appropriate and cost effective equipment. Invitations for this will be sent out by JISC.

It is expected that providers will make an in-kind contribution to this funding through

- the provision of appropriate training for staff to ensure that equipment is effectively deployed;
- a final evaluation of the project that identifies how this funding has contributed to achievement of priorities.

Providers should order equipment and have adequate proof of purchase by 31 March 2008. Payment will be via a condition of funding grant.

The Allocation Process

Partnerships are requested to submit proposals which identify the following:-

- technology needs linked to the requirements of specific groups of learners;
- links to the priorities identified;
- links to an employment focussed curriculum;

- how the technology will add value to the learning experience and promote learner progression and how this will be measured;
- how staff and learners will be supported in the appropriate use of the technology;
- how the proposal maps to the LSC regional strategy for Learning for Living and Work;
- a commitment to
 - sharing expensive items of technology where appropriate or no longer needed, to avoid duplication of expenditure;
 - sharing of expertise;
 - staff training;
 - effective evaluation.

Proposals will be assessed and moderated by the LSC. Funding may be moved from areas where no proposals or poor proposal are submitted to areas submitting excellent proposals.

Submission details

The closing date for proposals is **5pm 25 January 2008**. The lead provider in each partnership will be notified of the funding allocated by 4 February 2008. Hard copies of the proposals, using the accompanying proforma, plus an electronic copy on CD or memory stick, should be sent to

Margaret Pritchard
LLDD Manager
The Learning and Skills Council
Arndale House
The Arndale Centre
Manchester
M4 3AQ