

Skills for Jobs and Sustainable Employment Programme (SEP)

Summary of Changes made to the Introduction and Guidance document in March 2009

Priority Groups (updates to para 4.3.1)

The age range for the Skills for Jobs element of the programme has been lowered from 19+ to 18+ to bring the provision into line with Job Centre Plus (JCP) client groups. All Skills for Jobs contracts will require contract variations to enact this change.

The definition of 'Priority Groups' has been clarified to mean that for Skills for Jobs contracts eligible participants are those who are unemployed or economically inactive, with a focus of particular priority groups – but contracts are not restricted to only work with these priority groups. Provider should feel free to recruit from the wider 'unemployed/economically inactive' group, where a provider feels their contract is more restrictive than this general guidance they should contact their partnership team to consider a contract variation.

LLDD Routeways and Skills for Jobs for Offenders remain focused on the relevant groups rather than the above broader cohort.

A condition of SEP contracts is that all participants must be referred from JCP, the guidance has been updated to include providers directly recruiting participants from the eligible groups, but in this instance the participant must still be referred back to JCP and confirmation obtained from JCP that the participant is a JCP customer.

The focus for Skills for Jobs and SEP must however remain on the hardest to help and long term unemployed.

Sectors (updates to para 4.3.2)

Sectors should be considered in their widest definition. The guide has been updated with a logistics example whereby participants may go into the logistical operations of any company (i.e. the warehousing or distribution functions of Tesco) and not just logistics specific companies.

Where a participant fails to secure employment in the chosen sector the Skills for Jobs provider may still support the participant into a vacancy in any sector as long as the provider retains an audit trail showing the initial sector vacancy that the participant went for.

Where a provider is finding demand outside sectors for which they are contracted to deliver in, they should contact the LSC partnership team to discuss this demand. Providers may be asked for a business case for the

LSC to consider, providers should not deliver in any sector they are not contracted for until a contract variation is agreed. Providers should be aware that not all cases will be approved as contract awards were often made on a basis of sector focus, as a means of differentiating provision and this may need to be maintained.

Job Outcomes (updates to para 4.5 stage 4)

Skills for Jobs and SEP provision is a job focused programme and is about getting participants off benefits and into paid employment.

A job can include agency, temporary, contract or seasonal work, however the employment should be reasonable substantial and likely to lead to a permanent position. Where a participant leaves employment before the 13 week trigger point a provider cannot claim a sustained job outcome, however if they support the participant into a different job (a second job outcome cannot be claimed) and the participant remains in that job for 13 weeks then the provider may claim the sustained job outcome at 13 weeks. Providers should retain an audit trail where this occurs.

There is a requirement for the job to be for a minimum of 8 hours per week for those on incapacity benefits or otherwise 16 hours per week. The LSC recognises that in certain sectors (retail for example) it may be common practice to offer employees low numbers of contracted hours per week, but that the actual hours being worked equates to more than the minimum required levels quoted above. In this instance the Contractor should liaise with the LSC to ensure that appropriate evidence is obtained and if necessary, the contract varied to reflect this. Appropriate evidence is deemed as a contract of employment or letter from employer and wage slip showing actuals hours worked (being in excess of 8 or 16 hours as required) in week one and week 13.

Jobs with Training (updates to para 4.9 outcomes)

The training must start during the first 13 weeks of employment, however the participant does not have to be 'in training' at either the job entry or 13 week trigger points.

The focus for the post employment training should be Train to Gain or other LSC funded provision, however it can include ESF provision, Learndirect, or employer led training funded or supported through Skills for Jobs

Training can be employer led, however this is not peer training or a one day course, this is about training that will directly lead to sustained employment, so either a robust employer training programme or third party delivered training solution. If in doubt, consult the LSC – but make sure it is substantial training that will lead to sustained employment. And where it is employer led, the expectation is that the person will still look to enter Train to Gain etc after this in the future and links should be made for this.

SEP – JCP Referral (updates to para 4.3.1)

A condition of SEP contracts is that all participants must be referred from JCP. Providers may directly recruit participants from the eligible groups, but in this instance the participant must be referred back to JCP and confirmation obtained from JCP that the participant is a JCP customer.

In terms of evidence the JCP referral, if a REF2 form can be obtained from JCP this should be used. Otherwise the provider should agree with JCP alternative evidence.