

## ESF SET TO BOOST NORTH WEST EMPLOYABILITY

**The employability skills of the North West's workforce are set for a major boost thanks to a new programme of European Social Funding (ESF) that will be introduced this year.**

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Currently under development by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), working with its partners in the North West, the new programme of funding will provide a much greater focus on employment and skills and will link closely to joint work undertaken with Jobcentre Plus, the North West's other major co-financing organisation.

£350 million will be available to the North West between now and 2013 with the aim of helping 300,000 people secure employment and 155,000 individuals to improve their skills.

Consultation events will be held throughout the North West to engage with stakeholders and co-finance organisations about the overall implementation of this new ESF programme in the North West.

As well as raising awareness of the LSC's plans for the procurement and management of ESF activity in the future, the consultation will give local stakeholders the chance to influence and shape the co-finance plan.

The consultations will also aim to align the ESF programme with ongoing activity in the sub regions by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobcentre Plus, City Employment Strategies and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes.

The culmination of the consultation will be the publication of a procurement prospectus in the autumn which will set out the activities that intend to be undertaken from February 2008 onwards.

Paul Holme, Regional Skills Director for the LSC in the North West comments, "The consultation will be a chance for local stakeholders to have a say on how ESF money is best spent in their area. Each local area has specific needs and with the help and guidance of local agencies this funding will be tailored to these needs to boost the skills of local people, help get people back into work and provide innovative programmes of training."

**Ends**

**Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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