



Leading learning and skills

Learning and Skills Council Kent and Medway

“Neighbourhood Action for Communities”

**Prospectus for bidding under the Neighbourhood
Learning in Deprived Communities Fund (NLDCF)
2008/09**

Guidance for Applications

Contents

	Page Number
Introductory Statement	3
Why the fund was set up	3
What is the Budget available	4
How the funds will be allocated	4
- Capital and Revenue funding	5
- Capital funding	5
- Match funding	6
General funding criteria	6
Target Groups	7
Priorities for the use of NLDC	7
What types of project will be funded	8
- Revenue funded activities	8
- Capital funded activities	9
Organisations that can apply for funding	9
- Types of organisations	9
- Other criteria	10
The next steps	10
What will be required of successful projects	11
- Payment schedules	11
- Keeping on track	12
Annex 1 – Timetable of Commissioning and Contracting	13
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1 - Partnership Proposal	
Appendix 2 - Partnership Area Specifications	
Appendix 3 - Partnership Area Map	
Appendix 4 - Annual Delivery Plan for Funding	

Introductory Statement

1 The Learning and Skills Council is inviting new proposals for funding under the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund in Kent and Medway in 2008-9. For the first time, a two step approach is to be taken in this funding round:

Phase 1	May - June 2008	Development and Selection of 4-5 Area Delivery Partnerships
Phase 2	July 2008	Commissioning of Annual Delivery Plan
Phase 3	August 2008	Delivery Starts

2 The Fund is aimed at organisations, especially those from the voluntary and community sector, which provide learning opportunities in the poorest neighbourhoods. Some of these organisations already do innovative work and are able to engage people whom more mainstream funding and educational providers find hard to reach.

3 As the main government funder for learning for people over 16, the LSC has responsibilities which the Fund will help us meet, including:

- widening participation – attracting ‘hard to reach’ learners;
- ensuring that learning provision addresses local needs;
- improving skills for employment;
- improving skills for regenerating communities;
- delivering numeracy and literacy in the broadest range of settings;
- promoting equality and diversity
- helping to align local plans and funding for vulnerable adults.

4 Please continue reading this prospectus to see if your organisation and your project could be eligible for NLDCF funding.

For questions about the guidance and the specifications contact either Julie Elsadany on 01732 876824, email: julie.elsadany@lsc.gov.uk or Debbie Lloyd on 01732 876814, email: debbie.lloyd@lsc.gov.uk

Why the fund was set up

5 The Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund (NLDCF) has been set up to help local voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver and support learning opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

6 It is part of a wider plan, (called the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal) launched by the government in 2001, to reduce worklessness and

crime in the poorest neighbourhoods in the country, and to improve their health, housing and physical environment.

7 The Fund recognises that:

- for this to happen there need to be more opportunities for learning, accessible within these communities and relevant to the needs and concerns of local people;
- organisations in the voluntary and community sector should be supported to provide some of this learning, as they are so well placed to identify real need and have the credibility to involve people who may otherwise be disadvantaged or marginalized;
- many organisations in the voluntary and community sector have a track record of innovative and successful learning provision, and are also close to the social and economic issues which affect work, crime, health, housing and environment;
- some of these organisations could make a more significant and consistent contribution if they had resources to develop aspects of their provision;
- mainstream funding is not always well adapted to the needs of small organisations, and we need a more flexible, responsive funding regime for this type of work.
- To gain access to limited LSC mainstream funds, it is desirable for effective and long lasting partnerships to be established between LSC providers and the voluntary and community sector

What is the Budget available?

8 The total fund for England is divided into capital and recurrent (revenue) funding, which is distributed by local Learning and Skills Council Area Offices (LLSCs). Budgets are not expected to be confirmed until mid April/May but the total revenue allocation for Kent and Medway available for new activity from August 2008 to July 2009 is expected to be in the region of £567,000.

9 It is not yet certain whether capital funds will be allocated to local areas or whether this will have to be used by bidding to a regional budget.

How the Funds Will Be Allocated

10 In 2008/9, the LSC will allocate funding once it has selected a delivery Partnership for one of four or five geographical areas – East Kent, South Kent, West Kent and Maidstone, North Kent including Medway – the composition of which are set out in the outline specifications published with this Prospectus.

11 North Kent Area may include Medway, or this can be a separate Partnership Area. The LSC is not willing to contract with more than five Partnerships or different area groupings, but would prefer sub-regional partners

and delivery arrangements to be included within a larger partnership proposal.

12 If a Partnership wishes to cover more than one Partnership Area, separate Partnership Proposals must be submitted for each area. Partnership proposals must be made in accordance with the Area boundaries described.

13 Consideration will be given to the range of activities, target groups and communities proposed by the successful Partnership, based on the outline specifications. A 12-month Annual Delivery Plan will then be agreed, setting out the costs, volumes and outcomes expected.

14 The amount of funding per Partnership will not be confirmed in advance, but a working assumption could be made that Partnerships could expect from £100,000 to £140,000 per area. Two-thirds of this allocation should be profiled to be spent by the end of March 2009.

15 Revenue funding operates on an annual basis under allocations that are made for one academic year (1 August – 31 July) at a time. However, spending must also take into account the financial year, which runs from April to March. Funds that have not been spent by 31st March, will not be able to be transferred or carried forward beyond this period. Capital funding operates on a financial year basis.

16 In 2007 the LSC Area Office consulted a range of planning and funding partners on their priorities for use of the fund in their areas, covering priority areas of deprivation, priority target groups and examples of the types of activity they would like to see supported.

17 This feedback was reflected into separate specifications for funding by area – see Appendix 2. The range of activities and target areas in these specifications will be used as the basis for future NLDC delivery plans with the addition of new priorities which will be confirmed at the commissioning stage in the summer.

Capital and Revenue Funding

18 The LSC can allocate funds for both capital and revenue expenditure, subject to the availability of local budgets, and future delivery plans can either take advantage of both types of grant or, comprise mainly one or the other.

19 A **capital** application can be made if an organisation needs to improve its premises to make them more suitable for learning or for the use of a particular group of learners, to buy equipment for teaching and learning – including computers – or to make other purchases to support learning. Capital items are normally those which will still exist after the project is over, and as a guide we

would not normally allocate capital funding for items costing less than £500. All assets with a value of £2,500 or more (including VAT) will be added to the LSC's Assets Register and agreement will be needed before they are sold or changed in use.

20 If an organisation needs funding for activities, staffing, and consumables (eg stationery, travel, childcare, room use etc) it will form part of a revenue funding contract. Small pieces of equipment, costing less than £500, can also be included in revenue funding proposals.

Match Funding

21 There is no requirement for you to have match funding for your project, but it will be helpful to show how the project fits in with your other activities, or the priorities of local strategic funding bodies. You may be able to use the Fund for match funding for income from other sources.

General Funding Criteria

22 There are some general criteria for the Fund. All funded projects *must*:

- **work in deprived communities.** See the map at Appendix 3. Projects will also be considered from areas outside of the areas of deprivation detailed, dependent on need, as we appreciate that there are pockets of deprivation in most wards.
- **involve local people.** The emphasis should be on working *with* people rather than providing *for* them, so the more the learners who benefit from your project participate in planning and managing their learning the better. Learners may be from specific deprived localities or groups, or be volunteers, staff working in voluntary or community organisations, or community tutors or potential tutors;
- **deliver learning directly**, including informal learning which might not be eligible for mainstream funding; *or* facilitate direct delivery of learning, for example by outreach work, developing your organisation, or improvements to resources used for learning;
- **succeed in engaging people** who are disadvantaged or marginalized, for whom mainstream provision has not succeeded – we expect most learners to be people from these groups. Young people under 19 may be included in family learning projects, *but not otherwise*.

- **help participants plan and move on** to further learning, community activity or paid work in future.

Target Groups

23 The priority target group is low skilled adults aged 19 +, not currently in employment, but who want to work. Within this broad category, meeting the needs of local disadvantaged communities and individuals facing specific barriers and significant disadvantages are a priority. These barriers include being disabled, being from an ethnic minority, being over 50, being a lone parent.

24 **National guidance on use of NLDC funding now requires that up to 75% of the fund be used to prepare workless adults from disadvantaged areas to enter sustainable employment to contribute to the LSC's Skills for Jobs agenda.**

Priorities for the use of NLDC

25 The LSC wishes to use the funds to maximum strategic effect. This will mean identifying projects for support, which are eligible for NLDC funding and which will, as far as possible, meet the requirements of the Specifications at Appendix 2 and fulfil the following criteria:

- Make the greatest contribution to social and economic regeneration through development of the skills of adults in deprived communities in each specified District;
- Contribute to the LSC's regional Action for Communities strategy and the LSC Kent and Medway Annual Plan priorities , see http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/SouthEast/Kent_Medway_Annual_Plan_-_Final_Version.pdf particularly in terms of enabling vulnerable learners to participate in learning and the progression of workless adults to higher skills and employment;
- Network with other local services and projects to improve pathways to employment and qualifications for vulnerable and hard to reach adults;
- Either have access to few alternative funding options or are able to attract other public private investment as a result of the NLDC funding which contributes significantly to the above priorities
- Offer maximum sustainability of activity – for example by:

- a) improving the capacity to deliver activities in future through self generated income or easier access to “mainstream”¹ LSC or other sources of funds as a result of partnership with a funded provider
- b) demonstrating a successful new approach that can be adopted in mainstream funding
- c) providing a permanent addition to learning facilities in the area

What types of project activity will be funded?

26 The Specifications indicate what type of activity would be favoured in the areas concerned. However the fund can be used for a wide range of activities such as:

Revenue Funded Activities

- enabling VCS Consortia to deliver training and education opportunities in their communities with a particular focus on workless people wanting to improve their skills and return to work;
- offering pre-employment support and training to prepare adults for employment;
- encouraging innovative, accessible ‘first step’ learning in local communities (e.g. by extending successful outreach activities from neighbourhood, civil renewal and active citizenship skills, knowledge and behaviours);
- training or retraining local people to develop roles in community leadership or as “community champions”;
- building local expertise and supporting those individuals working or willing to work as community tutors in gaining a range of relevant qualifications, e.g. as teachers or assessors;
- supporting the development of voluntary and community sector training providers through a capacity building programme to enable them to meet the LSC provider assessment criteria (this includes providing volunteer staff training);
- providing staff development, including secondments to, for example, Learning Partnerships;
- developing new ways of delivering relevant curricula to attract excluded and under-represented groups into learning, including working with target groups to develop meaningful and engaging learner contexts; and
- mapping existing neighbourhood centres to ensure good coverage of local learning opportunities at appropriate venues – the mapping should use the

¹ Eg funds provided to Further Education Colleges, Adult Education and Work Based Learning providers

template available from DfES in the document *Neighbourhood Learning in Disadvantaged Communities- Guidance for Practitioners*

Capital Funded Activities:

- assisting and supporting the direct delivery of learning, for example, equipment to support training or teaching, *it should not be spent on learning delivery costs, i.e. staff;*
- refurbishing and enhancing existing premises, e.g. improving health and safety arrangements, minor works and adaptations to meet the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements;
- complementing other funds secured by applicant organisations or partnerships, i.e. in order to establish a new learning centre or VCS Learning and Skills Consortia in areas where none previously existed; and
- securing ICT provision e.g. PCs, licences, connectivity costs and for the development/purchase of MIS, software and data management systems for the NLDC fund.

27 *These are just suggestions and a broad outline of how the funds can be used. We are interested in projects which can complement or supplement, rather than duplicate, activities funded by the LSC and Job Centre Plus through FE College, Adult Education and work based learning providers.*

28 Proposals can include some areas, priority groups or relevant activities and outputs which are not listed under each specification but the main thrust of the project should be to work in the priority areas with the specified target groups and activities.

Organisations that can apply for funding

Types of organisation

29 The main types of organisation eligible to receive funding are:

- Voluntary and Community Organisations;

30 Other organisations that are eligible include:

- Local Education Authorities
- Further Education Colleges
- Learndirect Centres
- UK Online Centres
- Schools.

31 To be eligible, these other organisations must be working in this project to support voluntary and community sector partners.

32 Whatever type of organisation, you must be *either* directly delivering learning in deprived communities *or* working in partnership with others to deliver that learning, for example by outreach, or by hosting community learning.

Other criteria

33 We understand that smaller organisations may not have the capacity to meet complex bureaucratic requirements, and that the kind of work envisaged by the Fund contains some level of risk. **To enable smaller organisations to participate whilst maximising the impact of the fund, the LSC wishes to contract with one accountable body who has met the LSC's standards of provider capability though acceptance in a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire process. They are expected to lead a partnership of smaller, mainly voluntary sector, providers to deliver a range of activities in a designated geographical partnership area .**

34 The LSC is interested in supporting partnerships that will continue the work of the “Laying the Foundations Networks” that have been established in the Thames Gateway, East Kent, Channel Corridor and West Kent through the ESF project led by Kent County Council and the Kent and Medway Learning Partnerships.

The next steps

35 First of all, read this guidance document carefully and check that your organisation and your project meet all the basic requirements. Remember, if you are not sure about any of the organisational requirements, or whether your proposed project fits the criteria, please contact the LSC contacts named on page 3. Then contact other organisations in your preferred area of delivery to discuss who should be the accountable body and what activities you could contribute to the partnership and meet the needs of a specific deprived community

36 Once all the elements of the partnership project have been finalised then complete the NLDC Partnership Proposal Form at Appendix 1, available on the LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk/kentandmedway

37 Following this assessment, each proposal will be reviewed against the following criteria by a Panel of LSC staff and impartial external organisations, to select those which will be requested to develop a full proposal for funding:

- Quality of partnership and potential contribution to the NLDC specification criteria
- Added Value and strategic impact
- Delivery capability

- Sustainability

38 Make sure that you and colleagues give yourself plenty of time to write out your proposal which, in some organisations, may require approval by a management committee before it can be submitted.

39 Should your Partnerships Proposal be successful, you will be asked to meet with an LSC representative to discuss proposals for delivery of a range of activities and volumes in line with a budget that will be confirmed at that time. In some cases, this may include suggestions on extending the range of partners, and/or linking with another project or activity for a more cost effective approach.

40 A timetable outlining the planned timings for this NLDC commissioning and contracting process is attached at Annex 1.

What will be required of successful projects?

41 Once we have allocated funding, our main aim is to ensure that projects are successful and make a real contribution to their neighbourhoods.

Payment Schedules

42 Once the delivery plan has been agreed and a contract has been negotiated, your LSC Contracts Manager will confirm details of how you are to be paid. For revenue items, this will normally be through a profiled payments schedule that ensures you and partner organisations can meet cash-flow needs, for example to pay project staff salaries or cover specific set-up costs.

43 Your LSC Contracts Manager will meet with your lead partner regularly to review progress. He or she will require the accountable body to:

- keep records of all money spent and received;
- review how things are going on the project with all concerned – participants, staff, volunteers and partners. There is no set timetable for review, you will need to set up a process that suits the project and ensures you are fully aware of how it is going, producing interim and final reports, if asked to do so;
- consult the LSC Contract Manager before making any significant changes in direction or in the activities that will get you there. We understand that plans can change when a group gets under way, but you *must* talk this over with us first;
- record what people have been learning and/or how they have put their learning to use – this could be a written report or could include photographs, video, audio tapes, case studies or working files;
- record what you know about what people may have moved on to, including further learning, voluntary work, community work or paid work;

- be prepared to take part in any evaluation, including allowing access to evaluators.
- Promote and disseminate the results to others, including acknowledgement of the LSC's funding

Keeping on track

44 Partnerships will be expected to keep accounts of how the Fund has been spent. Because the LSC is interested in encouraging innovation, we understand that there is an element of risk and that a very small proportion of projects may fail to run as planned. Provided the Partnership has used the Fund as agreed, and kept good records of the expenditure, you will not be penalised if you unfortunately fail in this way. We *will* expect early notice from you that things are not going according to plan, and may be able to offer some support to help the project recover. We will also want to explore with you what has gone wrong, so that both you and we can learn to avoid the same thing happening again.

Annex 1

TIMETABLE OF COMMISSIONING AND CONTRACTING

