

## European Social Fund (ESF)

TRAIN TO GAIN FACTSHEET	
<b>Summary</b>	The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union (EU) and so help raise standards of living. It aims to help people fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.
<b>Location</b>	England
<b>Timing</b>	The 2007 - 2013 ESF programme for England was launched on 29 October 2007.
<b>Why</b>	The 2007 -2013 ESF programme has two primary objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Convergence Objective – aims to develop areas where economic performance is less than 75% of the EU average – Only Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly benefit from ESF funding under the Convergence Objective in England.</li> <li>○ Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective – covers all of the areas in England not eligible for funding under the Convergence objective. Within this objective, Merseyside and South Yorkshire benefit from transitional funding as former Objective One regions in 2000 – 2006.</li> </ul>
<b>How</b>	ESF seeks to reduce differences in prosperity across the EU and enhance economic and social cohesion. Since 2000, the ESF has been a key part of the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. It supports the EU's goal of increasing employment by giving unemployed and disadvantaged people the training and support they need to enter jobs.
<b>Key contact</b>	Les Wyatt - Partnership Adviser ESF <a href="mailto:les.wyatt@lsc.gov.uk">les.wyatt@lsc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.esf.gov.uk">www.esf.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/esf">www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/esf</a>

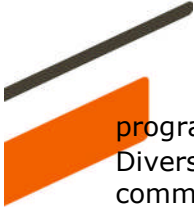
### Key messages

Over the 7 years from 2000 to 2006 ESF has helped over 4 million people across England. In 2007 the EU launched a new ESF programme for the following 7 years to 2013.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has overall responsibility for ESF funds in England. At a regional level, ESF funds are distributed through public agencies such as the LSC and DWP which are known as 'Co-financing Organisations'. Their role is to bring together ESF and domestic funding for employment and skills so that ESF compliments domestic programmes. The co-financing organisations contract with the organisations or providers that deliver ESF projects on the ground.

Each of the ESF 2007-13 programme's primary objectives have two priorities (numbered 4 & 5 for Convergence and 1 & 2 for Competitiveness). All priorities focus ESF spending on specific activities designed to reach people in most need of support. Priorities 1 & 4 support projects which tackle the barriers to work faced by unemployed and disadvantaged people and priorities 2 & 5 support projects which train people who do not have the basic skills and qualifications needed in the workplace. The LSC has commissioned activity in all priorities across a wide range of provision from Basic Skills to Full NVQ Levels 2 and 3 by complementing and extending mainstream programmes such as Skills for Life entitlements, the Skills for Jobs programme and Train to Gain.

In tackling barriers to work the range of activities under priority 4 of the Convergence programme include support for NEETS, Apprenticeships and Curriculum Development, Enterprise / Entrepreneurial Culture and Work Related programmes, Vocational and Higher Education Routeways and Learner Support, support for the VCS sector and a Community Grants

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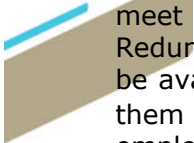
programme offering individual amounts of funding up to £12,000. Specialist Equality and Diversity funding has also been provided as a support fund for disadvantaged minority communities.

Priority 5 of the Convergence programme supports the development of the workforce. It supports a varied range of activities in key sectors including rural land based work, the children's workforce and also provides support for the regional clusters initiative. Innovative ways of achieving business growth are supported by bringing together businesses in seven high growth sectors in cross-sector networking and also to address the environmental management needs of all businesses. A significant Skills for Life / Key Skills programme is funded together with interventions in Higher Education. Capacity building in the VCS sector is funded and a number of activities support family focused learning provision and a positive action Equality and Diversity programme. This priority also supports the Digital Inclusion initiative delivering innovative ways of improving ICT skills.

Within the Competitiveness and Employment programme, activities to tackle barriers to employment under priority 1 include supporting NEETs and those with learning / physical or mental health disabilities. A Skills for Jobs programme is funded as is an initiative for Ambassadors in the care sector and the Gloucester Employment Plan is tied to a significant infrastructure investment by SWRDA. There is a programme of Routes to Employment for AUR offenders, a Recruit and Train initiative for the West of England area and this priority also includes a Community Grants programme offering individual amounts of funding up to £12,000.

In addition to general Workforce Development programmes in the South West, priority 2 of the Competitiveness programme supports a number of area initiatives for developing the workforce such as Leadership and Management training for SMEs in Wiltshire, Swindon and Gloucestershire, Level 2 / 3 qualifications for career changers in the West of England and projects to complement the regeneration of Gloucester and contribute to its Employment Plan. The West of England also hosts an ESOL in the Workplace programme, numeracy in vocational programmes and a Post-Employment programme. Sustainable development is a key theme with key qualifications being developed to enable a greater move into environmental technologies and support provided for SMEs to implement environmental improvement initiatives within their companies.

## **Response to Redundancy**

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In addition to the main ESF 2007-13 programme additional ESF funds have been set aside to meet the employment challenges of the global economic downturn. The National Response to Redundancy programme will give much needed help to people who lose their jobs. Funding will be available for people who are currently facing redundancy and those looking for work to help them retrain and develop their skills so that they can quickly move back into sustainable employment.

The LSC has £100m to support workers affected by redundancy which is comprised of £50m of ESF funds and £50m of Train to Gain funding tied together in a single offer. The approach will ensure that adults aged 18 and over are provided with the high quality training and education support that they need to either continue in, enter or re-enter sustainable employment. Delivery of provision began in May 2009 and continues until December 2010 with monitoring through until June 2011. Both the Convergence and Competitiveness programmes seek to secure provision that delivers a combination of core pre-employment / pre-redundancy support in addition to activity focussed on professionals and executives with higher level skills needs. Funds have also been made available in the Convergence programme for a Digital Inclusion initiative to complement the existing provision.

For more information please see the LSC web site at [www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/esf/](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/regions/SouthWest/esf/)