

**Adult Safeguarded Learning, Formal First  
Step and Family Learning Impact –  
Requirements for Funding  
2010/11**

**June 2010**

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## 1. Introduction

1. Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) funding and provision managed by the Skills Funding Agency is central to the policy commitments set out in the White Paper *The Learning Revolution*. All of the £210m managed by the Skills Funding Agency is included in the new funding and planning arrangements that are being developed now and are due for implementation in 2011/12. Further information about *The Learning Revolution* can be found at:  
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/howwework/skillssector/sectorinitiatives>
2. This guidance covers the arrangements for ASL delivery in 2010/11 which should be very similar to delivery in 2009/10. It is not expected that there will be any substantial changes to allocations, patterns of delivery or learner numbers in 2010/11.
3. This guidance is intended for providers agreeing ASL, Formal First Step (FFS) and Family Learning Impact Funding (FLIF) provision for 2010/11.
4. ASL provision is funded through negotiation and agreement with providers about the numbers of learners on ASL programmes.
5. It is important to be clear about what must be delivered for the funding in terms of agreed learner numbers.

## 2. Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL)

6. Until 2005 the four elements of ASL together with what was then called First Steps provision made up what was known as Adult and Community Learning or ACL. In 2006/07 the term 'ACL' was replaced by ASL with a separate fund being identified outside the Safeguard for First Steps Learning. An additional three year Department of Education funded programme, also outside the Safeguard, was established in 2008/09 called Family Learning Impact Funding or (FLIF).
7. The working description of ASL is 'learning for personal fulfilment, leisure, family learning and community development' which is achieved via the four programme elements:
  - Personal and community development learning (PCDL)
  - Family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN)
  - Wider family learning (WFL)
  - Neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC);
8. The Government and the Skills Funding Agency have reaffirmed their continuing funding commitment to support learning for its own intrinsic value. This commitment includes supporting a wide range of courses in each geographical area for cultural, leisure, community and personal fulfilment purposes, which may be offered by local authorities, colleges and voluntary and community groups. ASL also aims to foster family learning

and family literacy and numeracy, and to encourage more learners from deprived communities to engage in learning.

9. The ASL budget is to be used to support the design and delivery of a wide range of high quality opportunities in every geographical area. The intention is to widen participation in this type of learning and, in particular, to focus some of the activity specifically on deprived areas and disadvantaged groups.
10. Funding to support ASL in 2010/11 will be distributed by the Skills Funding Agency and is not expected to be allocated on a significantly different basis to that of previous years. There can, though, be more flexibility if needed within the overall budget when planning the mix and balance of provision across each of the four elements of the Safeguard.
11. Within the overarching principles of general access to ASL provision, the aim is to concentrate most of this budget on those who need help most, such as those who did not have positive experiences at school or would not otherwise be able to afford the cost of a course.
12. Providers should ensure that all learners meet the funding eligibility criteria set out in the Skills Funding Agency Funding Guidance on Learner Eligibility which can be found at:  
<http://readingroom.isc.gov.uk/YPLA/Agency-LEG2010-11-Version1aon12-04-2010.pdf>

### **3. Funding Learners and Programmes**

13. ASL and First Steps learners are not formula funded in the same way as Adult Learner Responsive funded learners are. The number of learners, the programmes they attend and where they are delivered must be agreed in advance by the provider and the Skills Funding Agency.
14. The numbers of learners are important as Government policy in this area is to maintain the numbers funded through these programmes. This will involve judgements on the part of the Skills Funding Agency and providers.
15. With a fixed budget for ASL year on year (therefore no inflationary rise) it may be difficult in the normal course of activity to keep to the same levels of learner numbers. Also, for Family Literacy or Numeracy learners working towards qualifications it will be necessary to enrol on longer programmes which will inevitably impact on a provider's ability to maintain the number of learners in the system.
16. Skills Funding Agency policy, particularly for Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) courses, is to ask providers to develop and implement a policy on fee income / charging. They should seek more in fees from those who can afford to pay in order to ensure that the maximum amount of public funding can be focussed on supporting and maximising the number of disadvantaged learners. For example, where appropriate,

providers could consider full cost recovery for repeat learners who register for similar courses over a period of several years.

17. Negotiations about the costs and allocations per learner should be carried out to the same timescales as Adult Learner Responsive provision as set out in the document Skills Funding Agency Guidance Note 1 which can be accessed by Skills Funding Agency managers at the following link:  
<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/funding/allthelatest/guidancenotes/>.

#### **4. Adult Safeguarded Learning – Key Principles for providers**

18. The Skills Funding Agency's aim is to reach as many learners from areas of disadvantage (or families at risk, for example, in the case of Family Programmes Funding). There are a number of other factors in each area which will require consideration such as rurality, demographics and spatial distribution of providers and learners.

19. In considering what is to be delivered in 2010/11, previous years' data should be taken into account, especially Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data. ILR and Allocations data should be examined to inform the year ahead. Skills Funding Agency managers should understand for the previous year:

- Planned numbers of learners
- Allocation and funding
- Numbers of learners recorded on the ILR
- Cost per learner (allocation divided by the number of learners delivered) for each programme

20. Comparing what was planned (and funded) with what was delivered should enable efficient planning.

21. The Skills Funding Agency is committed to a high quality offer and over time performance and quality arrangements should be covered in discussions as well as reference to any relevant inspection data or information available from other sources where applicable.

22. Use of ASL, FFS and FLIF for each year is certified on a return made to the Skills Funding Agency by the Chief Finance Officer in each local authority. Managers should ensure that they receive a copy of each provider's Use of Funds return and be involved in decisions about how any under spends should be returned to the Skills Funding Agency. The 2010/11 Use of Funds Circular will be put on the Skills Funding Agency website by the end of June 2010 at:

<http://208.51.44.80/lscold/providers/pfm/financial-assurance/Audit+of+Funding.htm>

#### **5. Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)**

23. PCDL covers such a broad array of leisure programmes that it cannot easily be summarised in a list. This provision covers both a wide range of

established and bespoke courses that can be put on according to local need or demand. Examples of the range of PCDL courses include Yoga, Digital Photography, Spanish for Beginners, Ancestry, Reflexology and Basic Computer Skills (see paragraphs 57 to 59 for information about the new online basics modules).

24. PCDL is described as learning for personal and community development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and for enjoyment. Learning can help local residents and other learners to build their skills, knowledge and understanding for social and community action. There is no requirement that learners must necessarily progress to other learning or achieve accredited outcomes, but providers should have systems in place to signpost learners to further learning as appropriate.
25. There is considerable evidence to show that, although PCDL may not have the more obviously quantifiable impact of vocational programmes, its value can be no less significant to the wider economy.
26. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Skills Investment Strategy. The link to the Skills Investment Strategy can be found at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/Policies/further-education-skills/funding/skills-investment-strategy>.

## **6. Personal and Community Development Learning in Further Education (PCDL in FE)**

27. Over 150 Colleges (some are Sixth Form Colleges and some are General FE Colleges) receive PCDL funding from the Safeguard and this is referred to as PCDL in FE funding. This funding should only be used to deliver PCDL activity.
28. Colleges should agree learner numbers and adhere to the same process outlined in the paragraphs above. It is crucial that:
  - PCDL in FE funding delivers PCDL programmes only and is **not** used for courses that should be funded through Adult Learner Responsive or Employer Responsive funding
  - Learners on PCDL programmes are accurately recorded in each college's ILR return
  - The college's auditors include in their reports a section on PCDL provision including how much of the funding was applied to this type of learning

## **7. Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN)**

29. FLLN is provision designed for those with Skills for Life needs and aims to improve:
  - The literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents

- Parents' ability to help their children
- Children's acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy skills

30. It is important to get an appropriate mix and balance of provision (shorter and longer programmes) but the emphasis for parents must be on progression and achieving a Skills for Life qualification. A Skills for Life qualification is usually only achieved by completion of a longer programme of up to 72 hours.

31. The types of programmes that can be delivered using FLLN funding are set out in the Family Programmes Guidance 2010/11.

## **8. Wider Family Learning (WFL)**

32. WFL is provision specially designed to enable adults and children to learn together and / or enable parents / carers to learn how to support their children's learning by:

- Developing the skills or knowledge of both the adult and child participants
- Helping parents / carers to be more active in the support of their children's learning and development and to understand the impact of that support.

33. This is engagement activity and learners will often progress to FLLN or PCDL provision. WFL Programmes should contain the following elements:

- Some assessment of learner level and need so that the programme can meet his / her needs
- Both a commitment and a system to signpost a learner to Skills for Life or FLLN provision if the assessment reveals a need
- An individual learning plan for the adult and child
- Regular reviews and a measure of progression for adults and the child
- Access to accreditation
- Some evaluation.

The content of the course should include for both adult and child:

- Some learning specific to the subject area (eg football, healthy eating, dance)
- Some development of personal and social skills (eg communication, concentration, resilience, persistence).

And for the adult only:

- Learning how children learn (specifically what their child is learning) and the value a family can add by supporting that learning.

## 9. Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC)

34. NLDC funding should support local Voluntary and Community Service organisations in developing their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
35. NLDC helps to make a full contribution to the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal and civil renewal through community-based (often informal) learning. Additionally, it also helps to build the capacity of communities to respond to this renewal agenda through local third sector learning and skills consortia or other mechanisms.

NLDC Programmes should:

- Broaden and improve the quality of the learning provider base. This includes the development of small and / or voluntary community and faith organisations.
  - Improve the local environment through the provision of learning in programmes to promote both neighbourhood and civil renewal and active citizenship skills.
  - Deliver pre-employment support and training to enable adults to move into sustained employment.
36. Up to 75 per cent of NLDC funding may be focused on 'Skills for Jobs' activity within the target group. Skills for Jobs is an umbrella term for a range of different Skills Funding Agency activities that aim to link skills development to sustained employment.
37. More information on the types of activity that can be funded from the NLDC allocation to a provider can be found in the NLDC Guidance.

## 10. Adult Safeguarded Learning Data

38. The ILR data returns timetable for 2010/11 is set out in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

<b>Return Number (file extension)</b>	<b>Reference date</b>	<b>Return date</b>	<b>Year of return</b>	<b>Type of return</b>
ILR SL01- or Paper Return	01 November 2010	01 December 2010	2010/11	ASL format ILR up to 01 November
ILR SL02	01 February 2011	21 February 2011	2010/11	ASL format ILR – up to 01 February
ILR SL03	01 May 2011	16 May 2011	2010/11	ASL format ILR

				– up to 01 May
ILR SL04 – or Paper Return	31 July 2011	05 September 2011	2010/11	ASL format ILR – all year activity
ILR SL05 – or Paper Return	31 December 2011	16 January 2012	2010/11	ASL format ILR – all year activity including achievements

39. The ASL ILR timetable for 2010/11 is described above. From 2008/09 providers were asked to make five, instead of three, ASL returns. All providers will be transmitting ILR returns via the web portal.
40. For all ASL ILR collections, all providers are requested to return learner and learning aim data sets. Providers should update the completion status fields in the learning aim data set at each return to reflect the situation at the reference date.
41. In particular, for the fourth ASL ILR collection (SL04) providers should accurately record learners who have completed or withdrawn from their studies by 31 July.
42. The final ASL ILR collection (SL05) from all providers should consist of a copy of the records sent at the fourth ASL collection (SL04) with learning aim outcomes added as known at the 31 December reference date. SL05 should also contain amendments to completion status for learners who at SL04 were expected to return for the 2010/11 teaching year and who subsequently did not do so.
- 42 Paper returns are required three times a year from all providers in receipt of Family Programmes funding. Supplementary Learner Record A for Child Learners is located at [http://www.theia.org.uk/downloads/ilrdocuments/201011\\_guidance.htm](http://www.theia.org.uk/downloads/ilrdocuments/201011_guidance.htm). and should be sent by email to [familyprogrammes@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](mailto:familyprogrammes@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk).
- 43 Paper returns are required 3 times a year from all NLDC providers in receipt of this funding **but who do not submit an ILR**. The NLDC paper return can be located at [http://www.theia.org.uk/downloads/ilrdocuments/201011\\_guidance.htm](http://www.theia.org.uk/downloads/ilrdocuments/201011_guidance.htm) and should be sent by email to [nldcreturns@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](mailto:nldcreturns@skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk).

## 11. Formal First Step (FFS)

44. FFS is a short episode of learning, designed to build a learner's confidence and support their planned progression into longer (often pre-Level 2) formal learning. It is not expected that every learner at entry Level and Level 1 will require this provision but it will be appropriate for

some learners. Typically it will consist of a short Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) unit or, where none is yet available on the QCF, a non-accredited or National Qualifications Framework (NQF) unit of around 10 hours, depending on the learner's needs. The important aspect of FFS is that it leads onto formal learning. Progression from FFS to formal learning will be monitored.

45. FFS provision aims to enthuse and build the confidence of people who are returning to learning (particularly at Entry and Level 1). By encouraging them to progress to and achieve Skills for Life and Level 2/3 qualification outcomes, FFS continues to support the re-engagement of learners within the context of social inclusion.
46. A discrete budget of £37.5 million has been identified to support the delivery of FFS, and providers receiving a share of this budget will be required to include FFS learner numbers within the Adult Learner Responsive section of the Summary Statement of Activity.
47. **FFS provision is not part of ASL.** It is learning that is offered as a planned, initial entry point into learning. Learner progression to further, formal learning is an intended outcome. It is anticipated that FFS will, over time, be fully assimilated into the Foundation Learning Curriculum. The assimilation of FFS would be subject to the provision matching the technical specifications of the QCF.
48. Increasingly, FFS within the Foundation Learning Curriculum should comprise of a single, short QCF unit at entry Level or Level 1. However, for 2010/11, non-accredited provision which currently does not form part of the QCF will also be fundable. This flexibility may be removed in the future with the expectation that FFS learning is supported exclusively through the QCF. The Skills Funding Agency will review this situation during 2010/11, with particular reference to the identified needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities.
49. Unlike FFS, ASL does not normally require progression as an outcome. Because of this difference, provision delivered through the Safeguard does not form part of the adult Foundation Learning Curriculum offer. However, such provision may include delivery of some programmes which are currently part of the Foundation Learning Curriculum.
50. Where possible, providers delivering "unaccredited". FFS provision should consider if there is an alternative that could replace any provision which will remain outside the QCF.
51. FFS provision is part of the Adult Learner Responsive offer and should be planned in much the same manner as the previous year. Significant changes to programmes delivered and learner numbers are not expected.

52. Further information can be found at:  
[http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/QCF\\_Policy\\_Update\\_Issue\\_4\\_December\\_2009\\_Final.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/QCF_Policy_Update_Issue_4_December_2009_Final.pdf).

## **12. Family Learning Impact Funding (FLIF)**

53. FLIF includes five specific strands of learning and has been designed to meet government priorities by providing a range of FLLN and WFL programmes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods which should:

- Involve hard to reach parents more actively in their children's learning and their schools
- Encourage learning in the home
- Tailor learning and provision to meet the needs of families
- Engage fathers and boys from disadvantaged families
- Provide adults with chances to achieve and progress.

54. Local authorities and other providers in receipt of FLIF should be aware that, for the purposes of reporting to ministers on the expenditure of this funding, development and delivery of provision will be closely managed and reported upon. Evidence will be provided across the five strands from each participating authority to timescales agreed with Skills Funding Agency managers.

55. Allocations of funding for FLIF are based on a range of measures including population and indices of deprivation.

56. Any provider that receives additional funding is expected to provide separate and additional evidence to the Skills Funding Agency that the agreed programme of work has been delivered. Providers will be required to complete final reports on the programme for 2009/10 and interim and final reports for 2010/11. FLIF guidance will be published on the same web link as this document.

## **13. Digital Life Skills**

57. The Estelle Morris Independent Review of information and communication technologies (ICT) User Skills was welcomed by the Government in its 2009 Digital Britain Report. It recommended the development of a digital life skills entitlement for adults who do not have the skills to use computers, email and the internet, providing supported access to a set of online learning modules which build on the 'myguide' service. The report describes how this might operate through a range of learning providers including ASL providers, FE colleges and UK Online centres.

58. The new modules, called *Online basics*, have been developed as an offer to all adults without basic ICT skills, and provide the learner with the skills to use a computer and email safely and effectively. The Skills Funding Agency supports the use of *Online basics* courses and the myguide website (see website below) and wishes to raise awareness about these

resources among providers delivering ASL. Providers are expected to signpost learners who do not have basic ICT skills to these resources. In addition *Online basics* should be embedded in the learning offer for those adults who would benefit from it. Links should be made with local authority and strategic partnership plans to promote digital inclusion and national campaigns.

59. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) supports many different regional networks of practitioners and managers and has its own regional programme directors and project officers who disseminate good practice and materials. Providers can use NIACE to support their work on digital life skills. Providers are asked to make a strong connection with wider local digital inclusion strategies in their work on digital life skills, for example, the Get Digital programme to promote digital literacy in Sheltered Housing (<http://getdigital.digitalunite.com/>), the Community Voices programme empowering communities through digital skills (<http://www.mediatrust.org/community-voices/>) and Race Online 2012's campaign. Further information can be found at the following links: <http://www.onlinebasics.co.uk/>  
<http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/digitalbritain/tag/myguide/>  
<http://raceonline2012.org>.

#### **14. Value for Money – Adult Safeguarded Learning Providers**

60. Between January and March 2010 NIACE, on behalf of the Skills Funding Agency, carried out a Value for Money Study on local authority providers. The final report on the study will be made available to providers during 2010.
61. In negotiating and agreeing final allocations with local authority providers, managers should refer to the Value for Money summary for each provider.
62. Working through the Value for Money process helps providers and the Skills Funding Agency to focus on allocations and data in a helpful way and to come to conclusions about what type of adult education service a particular provider is and whether they could be described within the context of the exercise as either 'general', 'mixed' or 'targeted'. This exercise brings out useful information on unit costs and can inform decisions about future strategy for each provider in a progressive way.
63. Providers may benefit from working through the Value for Money process with Skills Funding Agency managers.

#### **15. Payments**

64. Payments will be arranged on a profile basis through the Skills Funding Agency system and paid in line with current arrangements. Any changes will be agreed with the provider in advance.