

Employability Skills Programme Provider Guidance

Skills Funding Agency / Jobcentre Plus Common Service Standards

- Regular (monthly at least) contact with Jobcentre Plus at District level should be maintained in order to review the level of demand (referral to start ratio) and manage the Programme within funding limits
- Provision should be available continuously throughout the year on a roll-on-roll-off basis. Jobcentre Plus benefit regulations for full-time Jobseeker Allowance customers cover a one week break in provision but cannot cover a two week close down period such as that taken by some Colleges at Easter or Christmas. Where a College closure will be for more than one week, customers will need to notify Jobcentre Plus of a holiday period in their claim (up to 2 weeks) in order to continue to receive a Training Allowance.
- Jobcentre Plus customers should be seen by the provider within 7 working days of the date of referral to provision.
- Where the initial customer interview / assessment poses questions about the suitability of ESP for a customer, providers should inform Jobcentre Plus immediately.
- There should be a single point of contact within the provider organisation for Jobcentre Plus to send referrals to and to raise issues about the service. The provider should also agree a single point of contact within Jobcentre Plus.
- Jobcentre Plus REF2/SL2 notifications of the start, type and duration of provision should be returned to Jobcentre Plus within 48 hours of receipt.
- Wherever possible, provision should be available for start within 10 working days of:
 - a) the referral interview (for part-time learners), or
 - b) the Pre Entry Interview (this takes place in Jobcentre Plus and is required to set up a training allowance for full-time learners).

Providers should not be operating waiting lists that are any longer than this.

- Providers should work with other contracted providers (including the voluntary and community sector) in the area, where this would help meet the needs of unsuitable learners or learners who are also eligible for other-funded Agency provision such as the Training Offer for those who have been unemployed for 6 months. Jobcentre Plus must approve a customer's start on any other provision in line with benefit conditionality
- Providers are encouraged to use and share with Jobcentre Plus any Skills Funding Agency ESP provision success studies that may help boost awareness of the programme.
- Providers should seek to resolve any local issues or problems with processes with their local Jobcentre Plus contact before escalating to the Skills Funding Agency Account Manager.