

Annexe D – extract from the ESFD agreed document on added value

The purpose of the proposed commissioning strategy is to ensure that ESF truly adds value and enhances national strategies.

The key issues for the strategic direction of ESF in the new programme is that we must ensure that ESF supports the main policy directions for the LSC.

This will include:

- fee remission amounts (which can/will change annually);
- Funding Policy decisions such as changes to ESOL provision regulations;
- the support of Sector Skills Council approved qualifications;
- the procurement of only high quality provision;
- alignment with the demand led approach; and
- full integration with the Business cycle including commissioning.

The Commissioning Strategy needs to ensure that:

- sufficient regional flexibility is retained to meet regional skills needs;
- appropriate contract lengths are sort for ESF provision (including use of short contract periods where policy change is expected);
- ESF can still achieve its full programme targets; and
- ESF is actively used to inform mainstream development/approaches.

Foundation Learning Tier (including Entry to Employment)

The Foundation Learning Tier is a programme of work to develop a more focussed and strategic approach to Entry Level and Level 1 in order to raise participation, achievement and progression at these levels.

The Foundation Learning Tier will incorporate a range of programmes that will consist of a coherent offer of units and qualifications drawn, in time, from the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

The units and qualifications will be combined into validated progression pathways that will propel learners towards Level 2 or other positive outcomes; they will be delivered through learning programmes which emphasise personalisation alongside access to accreditation.

By 2010, the QCF will be populated and a full set of programmes with robust progression opportunities will be in place across Entry Level and Level 1 in the new framework; phased implementation of the Foundation Learning Tier will begin from September 2007. ESF should focus on supporting progression pathways in the following ways:

- Access** – working with young people to encourage them to start on E2E, or appropriate pathway.
- Support activities** – improve retention and success rate through extra support activities, for example, extra parenting support and long term mentoring

Post activities – focusing on re-establishing contact with non successful candidates, extra support for positive destination beneficiaries i.e. employed / in education / employed with training ex-pathway candidates.

Schools engagement programme (Key Stage 4)

This programme works by identifying 14-16 year olds who are at risk of becoming NEET. The programme has a limited budget; ESF may be focussed on this to enhance the provision.

Skills for Jobs

Skills for Jobs (SfJ) is an emerging response to Leitch, to support the integration of skills and employment, targeting a range of workless and low skilled individuals, who are not New Deal for Skills eligible. Emerging strategic direction for this approach is that SfJ will focus on improved engagement of the client base and employers (via brokers and partners) and that delivery would rest with the foundation learning tiers (FLT) appropriate pathways. There are still funding issues for SfJ activities; however as the provision will rest with the foundation learning tier, ESF will focus on supporting FLT delivery. SfJ is relying on a substantial amount of support from ESF in order to deliver its aims. Regional approaches to SfJ are being developed now and if ESF is to be the majority of the new money included in these approaches then the activities supported by these proposals must be ESF eligible and help meet the ESF targets.

OLASS

The offender learning and skills service (OLASS) is responsible for the learning and skills for offenders in custody and serving their sentences in the community in England. It currently offers skills for life at Entry Level 1 all the way to higher education access level qualifications. Half of the clients have skills for life needs and recent research shows that a third have learning difficulties or disabilities (LLDD). This suggests a natural focus on these candidates in particular both in the community and in their last 2 years of custody. The OLASS budget is particularly under pressure for activities to support learners in the community. It is proposed that ESF is used to enhance activities with selected clients starting with initial assessment, careers advice; mentoring and job guarantee activities which align with skills for jobs will also be supported. There may be a focus on adapting appropriate provision to suit LLDD learners with specific needs. As with SfJ these activities should align with the foundation learning tier provision available and not replace mainstream funding where available.

At present significant ESF funding, from a variety of sources, is supporting a substantial range of activity with this target group involving a number of organisation. Determining an appropriate scale of activity and ESF budget for this group will be a key issue for consultation across the region.

Priority 2

Train to Gain

Train to Gain is a national programme, which utilises brokers to facilitate access to training to support the needs of employers. ESF provides additionality by funding the gaps in the existing provision, i.e. funding

additional basic and entry level qualifications leading to Level 1 qualifications, second level 2 qualifications where needed and level 3 and above where appropriate.

Apprenticeships

The apprenticeship family delivers a range of programmes to both adults and young people. Focussing on NVQ delivery with supporting key skills and technical certificates these programmes target Level 2 and Level 3. There are limited pilots for adults at level 4 called professional apprenticeships. The majority of provision has sufficient funding available, so ESF should focus on the following priorities.

Additionality – We will procure more adult provision where this better meets the needs of employers. At Level 4 (only to SME's) ensuring that the offer aligns with current pilots.

Enhancements – Activities that support a higher success rate in delivery of mainstream programmes, or activities that promote progression, or enhancements that generate and support additional entry onto these programmes

Gaps – For example, Level 1 as a transition between E2E and Apprenticeship and with individuals needing a second Level 2 to secure/sustain employment or who need additional support to effectively progress to Level 2