



LEP – Sub Committee

LEP - Lancashire Skills and Employment Board

Private and Confidential: No

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Capacity Building Funding and Delivery Plans – Lancashire ESIF Skills Funding Agency (SFA) Opt-in Projects 2016 - 2018

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Executive Summary

A strategic and collaborative approach has been adopted to the use of capacity building funding available within the three ESIF projects now operating across the county. This will return best value and encourage cross project working to the benefit of participants, employers, delivery partners and key stakeholders.

Up to £825,000 is available for capacity building activity. The Lancashire Skills Hub has worked with the project leads from Lancashire Employment and Skills Executive Partnership (LESEP) and learndirect to produce an overarching plan of activity and indicative budgets which is being presented at this meeting.

The committee has a key role in approving capacity building / delivery plans for the three ESIF SFA Opt-in projects. The committee will receive regular progress reports regarding delivery of the plans from the Strategic Partnerships Managers and the Steering Groups and will be asked to undertake formal progress reviews at key points in the life of each project to comply with SFA audit requirements.

Recommendation

1. The committee agrees the cross-cutting approach to investment of capacity building funding available through the three ESIF SFA Opt-in projects, including assumptions at (3) of this paper.
2. The committee approves the capacity building / delivery plan for each theme.

1. Capacity Building Funding

Capacity building funding has been included in each of the 3 SFA Opt-in Projects. The purpose of the funding is to a) enable employment of the Strategic Partnerships Managers for



NEET, Employers and Adults which will be deployed to the Hub; and b) to fund activities which support overall project success (beyond direct delivery).

It is important to note that there are two methods of accessing the funding for capacity building across the three ESIF projects for Lancashire.

The first method, with a total of £150,000 available, applies to the NEET project. This was the first project to be agreed with the Skills Funding Agency, and the capacity building money is available in proportion to drawdown of delivery funding, i.e. to access the full £150,000, 100% of the fundable project outputs and outcomes must be delivered. There is, therefore, a risk attached to this funding as the final value of funding available is dependent on the extent to which the project has delivered.

Efforts were made to influence the Skills Funding Agency to give a stronger guarantee of this funding for the NEET project. Whilst there has been no change to the SFA position for this project, their position evolved so that the capacity building funding for the two subsequently agreed projects (Employees Support in Skills (ESS) and Access to Employment (ATE)) is granted at fixed points in the project, subject to LEP approval of capacity building / delivery plans and reports (through the Skills and Employment Board) rather than being directly tied to the achievement of project outputs and outcomes.

The programme specifications for all three projects detail a series of specific elements that must be included in the relevant capacity building / delivery plans and these are reflected in the attached plans.

2. Report Format

The attached report has an overarching spreadsheet outlining the themes and related activities. It is collated to show the main beneficiaries of the capacity building funding spend:

- Participants
- Employers
- Delivery Partners
- Various Key Stakeholders

Whilst the activity mainly benefits these groups as shown, the end user (participant) will benefit from all activity through the capacity building of the network of organisations.

Underlying capacity building / delivery plans for the ESS and ATE projects detail the indicative budgets against the funding themes within the projects as each theme requires a separate plan in order to comply with SFA requirements.

The NEET project has just one delivery strand. The overarching spreadsheet updates and replaces the original capacity building plan for this project which was previously agreed by the committee to reflect revised LEP priorities and ensure alignment with the plans for ESS and ATE. The committee is asked to agree these amendments.

3. Assumptions

There are several underlying assumptions which it is important to understand when reading the capacity building / delivery plans. These are:



- The Strategic Partnership Managers will have a key role in driving forwards certain elements of the plan.
- Some elements of the plan will need to be commissioned.
- Cross working across projects will give the best value and focus, so where one project takes the lead, it does so for the benefit of and with the support of the other relevant project(s). This is particularly the case where the close employer links of the ESS project allow for:
 - Engaging businesses in the development of standards
 - Supporting employers to respond to the apprenticeship reforms
 - Co-ordination of Labour Market Information (LMI)

A number of these activities were listed in the programme specification for ATE, however the committee is asked to approve their exclusion from the ATE delivery plans rather than duplicate activities already included in the plan for ESS.

The budgets given in each plan are indicative only and the actual funding spent on specific activities may change to reflect need; if significant variations are required, recommendations will be brought to the committee for approval.

4. Action

The committee is requested to review the proposed activities and the individual capacity building / delivery plans for NEET (amended), ESS Themes 1, 2 and 3 and ATE Themes 1 and 2 and note the overall investment to Lancashire's capacity to deliver support to the target beneficiaries outlined at 2 above.

The committee is requested to approve the delivery plans and agree to review progress at key points set by the SFA i.e. quarterly for NEET and at 9 and 15 months into each project's delivery for ESS and ATE.

5. Recommendations

The committee agrees the cross-cutting approach to investment of capacity building funding available through the three ESIF SFA Opt-in projects, including assumptions at (3) of this paper.

The committee approves the delivery plan for each theme.