

North West Network

Learning and Skills Council Qualified Provider Framework

Background and Introduction

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About today

This event is to:

- Outline what ESF is and how it operates in the NW
- Outline the way the LSC commissions contracts for provision of services
- Explain the Qualified Provider Framework
- Explain timescales for submitting responses (where known)

It also gives you the opportunity to ask questions on the procurement process

About North West Network

North West Network represents the interests of Third Sector (voluntary and community) organisations in the region in relation to European funding at regional, national and European levels

Our aim is to increase the take up of European funding by the Third Sector in the North West region of England

We also aim to promote and assist the Third Sector to network and develop partnerships at local, regional, national and European levels

What is ESF?

- The European Social Fund (ESF) is the main financial tool through which the European Union translates its strategic employment policy aims into action.
- ESF aims to improve employment opportunities in the European Union by providing financial support towards the running costs for vocational training schemes, guidance and counselling projects, job creation measures and other steps to improve the employability and skills of both employed and unemployed people.

ESF in the North West

The ESF Programme is based on two main Priorities:

Priority 1 - Extending Employment Opportunities

- The objective of Priority 1 is to increase employment and to reduce unemployment and inactivity.
- It will help to tackle barriers to work faced by disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents and other disadvantaged parents, older workers, ethnic minorities, and people with no or low qualifications. It will also aim to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

ESF in the North West

Priority 2 - Developing a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce:

- The objective of Priority 2 is to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce by; reducing the number of people without basic skills;
- Increasing the number of people qualified to level 2 and, where justified, to level 3;
- Reducing gender segregation in the workforce
- Developing managers and workers in small enterprises.
- There will be a particular focus on the low skilled.

“New” Challenges

Changing economic environment

- EU Programmes based on continuing employment growth
- Challenges posed by redundancies
- Challenges posed by reducing job market
- Challenges face by changing job market

Additional Funding (Euro/GBP rate)

- - some flexibility
- - activity still prescribed by ESF programme

Co-financing

Co-financing means channelling both ESF money and the required match funding to providers in a single stream. Organisations which do this are called Co-financing organisations (CFOs)

The Learning and Skills Council

The Learning and Skills Council exists to make England better skilled and more competitive with a single goal of improving the skills of England's young people and adults to ensure a workforce of world –class standard

The LSC is a non-departmental public body responsible for planning and funding high quality education and training for everyone in England other than those in Universities

Every year the LSC procures a proportion of its education and training provision via open and competitive tendering. This allows the LSC to fill gaps in the provision, address market failure and drive up quality.

What is the LSC's Role ?

- The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is the CFO for most of the actions in Priority 2
- The LSC has three main priorities in the North West with regard to ESF
 - Support individuals to secure sustained employment;
 - Reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training;
 - Work with employers and individuals to meet skills gaps and shortages thereby improving competitiveness.

Procurement -Setting the Scene

As a public body the LSC has to follow the Public Procurement Directives and needs to select the correct criteria to decide which procurement route must be followed in order to ensure that the process is open, fair and transparent

The procurement route the LSC has selected is a restricted one which allows them to pre qualify potential providers by asking them to provide generic information which is then evaluated to a pre-determined scoring framework

The Qualified Provider Framework QPF

Put simply this means that the LSC require organisations to pre qualify before they are invited to respond to Invitations to Tender (ITTs)

The Qualified Provider Framework is a maintained list of all organisations from which the LSC will secure education and training services.

Any organisation that wishes to be invited to tender for education and training services must successfully pre-qualify.

The e-tendering portal

The pre qualification stage is a completely electronic system that has been established by the LSC to purchase education and training services

The e- tendering portal is BRAVO solution

<https://lsc.bravosolution.com>

The LSC will issue targeted Invitations to Tender (ITTs) according to provider categorisations against types of provision to all those providers who have successfully been admitted to the QPF

You need to communicate to the LSC exactly what areas of provision your organisation is interested in and have to answer questions related to that provision

QPF: The Process

Organisations that wish to be eligible to receive Invitations to Tender (ITTs) can apply to pre qualify any time during the year. This 'always open' approach will allow organisations to apply at a time convenient to them and which suites their business need

When the LSC identifies a need to tender for provision, it will temporarily freeze the list to new applicants in order for the tendering process to begin

The dates that the list will be frozen will be published well in advance, ensuring organisations have sufficient opportunity to apply to pre qualify

Which organisations should apply to pre-qualify

Any organisation that wishes to be invited to tender for education and training services

Organisations which DO NOT hold a current contract with the LSC that wish to contract for education and training services must pre qualify to receive tenders via the e-tendering portal

IF organisations wish to be invited to tender for new provision e.g. a new programme or a new initiative, they need to pre-qualify via the e-tendering portal

Organisations wishing to pre qualify

Organisations which hold a current contract with the LSC will be invited to continue that contract and the associated provision into the new academic year via negotiation. They will not normally be required to tender to keep existing levels of provision and therefore need not pre-qualify via the e-tendering portal

If organisations with current contracts wish to be invited to tender for new provision e.g. a new programme or a new initiative, they need to pre-qualify via the e-tendering portal

How to apply to pre-qualify

Provider Status

New Provider

who has not contracted
with the LSC previously,
nor registered to receive ITTs

Existing Provider

with current LSC contract
who has not
previously registered
interest in receiving ITTs

Provider who has successfully
Published an LSC PWW since
August 2007

Register on e-Tendering portal &
respond to questionnaire

Log in to e-Tendering portal
ensure any existing data
is correct and complete
new questions

Questions ?