

In this chapter you will consider:

- Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding for workplace Skills for Life programmes
- funding available through Train to Gain
- contributions from employers.

Employers will appreciate guidance on how to maximise the available funding for workplace Skills for Life development. This section will give you the essentials and point you towards more detailed advice on funding. Note that LSC funding rules are subject to change on an annual basis.

LSC funding... the basics

- Workplace Skills for Life training is 'free at the point of delivery' if delivered by LSC-contracted training providers, or as part of Train to Gain.
- Skills for Life funding will support both accredited and non-accredited learning, where achievement can be evidenced with reference to the National Standards.
- Learners' needs must be demonstrated, for example by referring to previous educational attainment or through initial and/or diagnostic assessment.
- Skills for Life programmes are 'weighted' by a factor of 1.4 to take account of extra costs associated with supporting Skills for Life learners.
- Funding of approved literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications is a key priority.
- There is a 'broad intention' that accredited provision should form at least 80% of the overall provision.
- 'Mainstream' rates can vary between providers.

LSC funding - embedded Skills for Life

Here are the key points with regard to funding for embedded learning:

- LSC Funding Guidance 2005–6 definition: 'Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language (ESOL) and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to succeed in qualifications, in life and at work.'
- there is no single learning aim recognised as an embedded Skills for Life learning aim
- embedded Skills for Life learning involves at least one vocational learning aim and one Skills for Life learning aim
- learners should be enrolled on both of these learning aims, and funding can be drawn down accordingly
- only the Skills for Life learning aim will be eligible for the 1.4 programme weighting uplift
- teaching and learning of both the vocational and the Skills for Life learning aims should be explicit and recorded
- where Skills for Life are embedded within a vocational learning aim, the overall size of the learning programme must be greater than the vocational learning aim delivered on its own.

See Q6 for the advantages associated with embedded Skills for Life programmes.

LSC Funding - changes from 2006/07

Funding has ceased for very short programmes of less than nine hours. Very short Skills for Life programmes should be part of longer programmes aiming towards the achievement of qualifications in any area of Skills for Life.

Funding will not be available for external candidates who access stand-alone Skills for Life National Tests as improvement cannot be demonstrated. Providers should charge a fee for this service.

For more information on LSC funding, contact your local LSC or visit the LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk

Funding through Train to Gain

Train to Gain is a new LSC service designed to help businesses get the training they need to succeed. It will be launched nationally from the 1st August 2006 for a minimum of three years. Skills for Life will be an important part of the Train to Gain offer.

Note: it is advisable to familiarise yourself with mainstream LSC Skills for Life funding before studying Train to Gain funding.

Skills for Life is seen as important to Train to Gain because:

- the majority of people without a full Level 2 qualification are likely to have poor literacy and/or numeracy skills. (Skills for Life Survey 2003)
- study at Level 2 and/or the assembly of a portfolio of evidence for Level 2 assessment requires literacy and/or numeracy skills to be at least at Level 1
- Level 2 Literacy and/or Numeracy may be needed for many subjects and often for Level 3 'jumpers' (i.e. those of who wish to take up the Level 2 offer but who are, after assessment, shown to be capable of direct entry to Level 3).

Those who are to be funded on any Train to Gain programme at any level, may therefore also be funded through Train to Gain to undertake a programme to improve their Skills for Life. Whether communication and/or maths skills will need to be developed will be determined by the requirements of the type of vocational learning to be undertaken. Sector Skills Councils can advise on the appropriate levels for their sectors.

Communication and/or maths skills programmes may be delivered prior to commencing the vocational programme, or might be delivered in parallel. Prior to undertaking learning in parallel, providers should be comfortable that the individual will be able to learn effectively and will be able to provide evidence of their learning from the very outset of their vocational programme.

Learning programmes in Skills for Life delivered within Train to Gain, either prior to the vocational programme or in parallel with it, will be funded at a flat rate of £720 per individual, per programme.

Train to Gain - assessment and eligibility

Train to Gain processes require that the literacy and numeracy skills level of potential candidates is assessed. That level will determine eligibility for Train to Gain, what level of programme should be studied and the Train to Gain funding that may be available.

Available screening tools will usually not provide robust evidence of level, but only indicate whether there is a Skills for Life need. Specific levels of skills can only be determined using Initial Assessment tools (see Q5). Some Sector Skills Councils have produced assessment tools customised to use vocabulary and scenarios specific to their sector.

ESOL is not considered here, and specialist advice should be sought where a potential Train to Gain learner has ESOL learning needs.

Train to Gain - outcomes of assessment

Those whose literacy and/or numeracy assessment shows that they need to study at Entry Level or below are not considered suitable candidates for Train to Gain and should be funded through mainstream funding to improve their literacy and/or numeracy to at least Entry Level 3 before being reconsidered for Train to Gain.

Those whose literacy/numeracy is at Entry Level 3 but below Level 1 should undertake a programme of literacy and/or numeracy leading towards the National Test at Level 1.

Those whose literacy and/or numeracy is at Level 1 but below Level 2, should undertake a programme of literacy and/or numeracy leading towards the National Test at Level 2 if their vocational programme expects these skills to be at Level 2.

Some individuals with literacy/numeracy skills generally adequate for their vocational study but with some weaknesses, should have their skills improved to an appropriate level by integrating their learning within their vocational programme. (There will be no extra funding for this.) Providers need to be confident that the vocational staff have the skills and knowledge to identify the learners' needs and to be able to embed their literacy/numeracy learning.

In some cases, employers will wish employees to undertake a programme of literacy and/or numeracy which is specific to their organisation's needs and does not lead to National Tests at Level 1 or Level 2. Under these circumstances the employer will be expected to meet the cost of the programme.

Q7

Contributions from employers for workplace Skills for Life programmes

There are a number of activities associated with workplace Skills for Life programmes that are not usually LSC fundable, for example:

- awareness raising
- needs analysis
- promotion of learning opportunities to employees
- training impact evaluation
- any training delivery that falls outside the LSC funding criteria (e.g. one-to-one training, ESOL for non-EU nationals resident in the UK for less than three years).

If the employer sees a strong business case (see Q3 and Q4), it may be possible for the broker to negotiate a contribution from the company to fund development work. Also, where schemes are large enough, the provider may be able to absorb these necessary costs within the overall funding available.

Funding example

When assessing the financial viability of a programme, consider all the fundable elements together. There is likely to be a 'swings and roundabouts' effect.

The following examples consider funding for provision only; employee replacement costs/subsidies are not taken into account.

The examples are based on a Training Needs Analysis which shows that 12 staff need to undertake training.

To think about.... Study the following examples on the next page and note why you think each particular funding solution has been suggested for each learner. Then check your answers against the explanation on page 82.

Staff member	Current skills/ qualifications				Target qualification							
	Vocational		Skills for Life		Vocational	Employer contribution	Mainstream funding	TtG funding	Skills for Life	Employer contribution	Mainstream funding	TtG funding
1 Gerry Clarkson	None	None	None	None	Food Hygiene Cert	100%	No	No	Entry Level 3	0	Yes	No
2 Fred Chubb	Food Hygiene Cert	Level 1 Cert Lit	Level 1 Cert Lit	Level 1 Cert Lit	NVQ 2 Catering	0	No	Yes	Level 2 Cert Lit	0	No	Yes
3 Angie Dawes	CLAIT	Level 1 Cert Num	Level 1 Cert Num	Level 1 Cert Lit	NVQ 3 Software Apps	0	No	Yes	Level 1 Cert Lit	0	No	Yes
4 David Jones	5 GCSEs	No GCSE English	No GCSE English	No GCSE English	BTEC Advanced Dip	40%	Yes	No	Level 2 Cert Lit	0	Yes	No
5 Sally Jones	3 GCSEs	Including English	Including English	Including English	NVQ 2 Accountancy	0	No	Yes	Level 2 Cert Num	0	Yes	No
6 Graham Myers	None	None	None	None	NVQ 2 Catering	40%	Yes	No	Entry 2 Lit	0	Yes	No
7 Greg Norman	First Aid at Work	None	None	None	NVQ 2 Catering	0	No	Yes	Level 1 Cert Lit	0	No	Yes
8 Mita Patel	NVQ 3 Accounting	GCSE maths	GCSE maths	GCSE maths	MBA	100%	No	No	Level 2 Cert Lit	0	Yes	No
9 Harry Parker	4 GCSEs	Including English	Including English	Including English	NVQ 2 Catering	0	No	Yes	Level 2 Cert Lit	100%	No	No
10 David Pritchard	None	GCSE maths	GCSE maths	GCSE maths	NVQ 3 Transport Man	0	No	Yes	Level 2 Cert Lit	0	No	Yes
11 Mina Rose	None	GCSE English & maths	GCSE English & maths	GCSE English & maths	NVQ 2 Transport Ops	0	No	Yes	None	0	No	No
12 Gwyn Roberts	None	None	None	None	NVQ 2 Transport Ops	0	No	Yes	Level 2 Cert Lit & Num	0	No	Yes

	Reasons for choice of funding solution
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Reasons for choice of funding solution	
1	Gerry cannot be funded to undertake his Food Hygiene Certificate either through Train to Gain (TtG) or through mainstream, as this is a mandatory responsibility of an employer. His Skills for Life needs can be provided through mainstream funding.
2	Fred does not have a full Level 2 and so his vocational qualification can be funded through the TtG. He needs to be literate to Level 2 in order to complete his vocational qualification, and he can be funded through the TtG for this. As he has literacy skills already at Level 1, then he could probably undertake his Level 2 Literacy in parallel with his vocational programme.
3	Angie will be funded under TtG for her vocational programme as a Level 3 'jumper'. Her numeracy skills will be adequate if any needs are addressed through her vocational studies. Her literacy skills will need to be improved to Level 1, and these can also be funded through the TtG.
4	David is already qualified to a full Level 2 by virtue of his five GCSEs, so he may not be funded through the TtG. Both his learning aims possibly could be funded through mainstream. Although a contribution from the employer will be expected for his vocational programme, his Skills for Life programme will be free.
5	Sally's vocational programme can be funded through the TtG – as it will be her first full Level 2. But Level 1 Numeracy is adequate for Level 2 Accountancy – so, not being a pre-requisite, Level 2 Numeracy will need to be funded through mainstream.
6	Although Graham needs to move towards his first Level 2, his literacy needs to improve before he can be considered for the TtG. He can be funded for his Skills for Life through mainstream. If his employer still wants him to tackle his NVQ, the only possible funding source will be mainstream – together with an employer contribution. His level of literacy means that at the moment he is likely to struggle with this.
7	Although Greg is in an almost identical situation to Graham, his slightly higher level of literacy means both his needs can be funded through TtG.
8	Mita is already above Level 2, so cannot be funded through the TtG. In any case the programme desired is not fundable through either the TtG or mainstream FE. Despite her high level of qualifications she still needs to improve Skills for Life. This will be fundable through mainstream at no cost to the employer.
9	Harry is a good candidate for the TtG and will be funded for his vocational programme. He already has GCSE English and assessment shows he is well above Level 2 Literacy. For some reason, Harry wants to sit the test though. There will be no funding for this, so if Harry's employer wants him to do it, the employer will have to pay.
10	David will be classed as a Level 3 'jumper' as, although effectively unqualified, his experience suggests he can go straight to Level 3. His Level 2 in literacy will support this, and so both will be funded through the TtG.
11	Mina wants to undertake her first Level 2 and TtG can fund this. Her current Skills for Life are considered adequate and so there is no need to improve these in her current role.
12	Gwyn will be joining Mina in undertaking the NVQ 2 in Transport Ops. Unlike Mina, his Skills for Life need to improve. So as well as funding his vocational programme, TtG can fund his classes in both Literacy and Numeracy.