



## EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND 2007-13 (ENGLAND)

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## Introduction

1. This Chapter provides guidance on the action to be taken by providers who were awarded Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Co-financed European Social Fund (ESF) ESF and Match provision contracts during or before 2010 only. Separate Guidance will be available for DWP ESF and Match provision contracts awarded during 2011. This is not guidance for other Co-financing Organisations (CFO) delivering ESF provision for example the Skills Funding Agency and NOMS (National Offender Management Service).
2. Sections of this guidance do however relate to providers delivering match provision, paragraph 4-7 below refers. These arrangements apply to English Jobcentre Plus regions only. This guidance is designed to help providers deliver their programmes. DWP Performance Managers will provide further advice where necessary.
3. This Chapter must be read in conjunction with:
  - the contract terms and conditions and schedules of contracts;
  - specification for England;
  - local contract specification;
  - overall DWP Provider guidance (of which this is part);
  - Managing Authority [ESF website](#) background to ESF.

## Match Funding

4. ESF funds a proportion of the total overall project costs; the remainder is funded by DWP. To secure ESF funds DWP has to identify similar domestically funded contracts, these are known as 'Match Funded'.
5. Contracts can be part funded by ESF or funded entirely by ESF. For the ESF contracts covered by this guidance DWP has chosen to fund these contracts entirely by ESF, this can only be done if the total value of other match contracts is in the right proportion to the value of ESF contracts. For example for every £50 spent on ESF provision, DWP has to show that £50 has been spent on match provision.
6. It is expected that the majority of match provision will be from the Provider-led Pathways, Programme Centres, Flexible New Deal and the New Deals for 18-24 and 25 Plus programmes and the Work Programme.
7. Like the ESF funded contracts, domestic match contracts also need to comply fully with ESF programme requirements. Match providers **must** comply with guidance in the following sections:
  - [Cross Cutting Themes for ESF provision](#);
  - [Marketing and Publicity](#);
  - [Document Retention](#);
  - [ESF Audit Requirements](#); and

- [Evaluation](#)

## **Provider recruitment**

8. Providers are responsible for the majority of recruitment activity to ensure a flow of appropriate and eligible participants into their provision. Providers will also receive some referrals from Jobcentre Plus particularly where there is an emphasis on JSA claimants. Direct recruitment arrangements may require the provider to develop partnership or joint working arrangements with relevant local organisations (for example voluntary sector bodies, community organisations, local authority contacts) in order to target specific groups of people and ensure that their recruitment strategy addresses the requirements of the specification.
9. Providers will be expected to develop a robust recruitment and marketing strategy to support targeting of the relevant participants specified for their particular provision. This strategy will be reviewed by Performance Managers, but it will need to be agreed in advance with Third Party Provision Manager or the ESF Group Manager.
10. For programmes supported by the Provider Referrals and Payment System (PRaP), the provider must follow the guidance within UPK/Tutor (available via PRaP on-line help) on Provider Initiated Referrals, and acknowledging and accepting referrals in PRaP.

## **Jobcentre Plus referrals**

11. The adviser will make contact with the provider to arrange an appointment to meet with the benefit claimant (also known as participants for ESF provision) and agree what documents the claimant must take for the identity and eligibility checks.
12. Jobcentre Plus referrals will be suitable for ESF provision as the needs of the claimant will have been considered as part of an adviser interview. The final decision on eligibility will remain with the provider even when it is a Jobcentre Plus referral.
13. Providers will be advised of a Jobcentre Plus contact, for the return of forms, as part of the implementation period briefings. Forms returned to Jobcentre Plus will be used to collate essential management information therefore it is critical for providers to adhere to a clear communication route to receive and return all forms, as agreed with the Performance Manager.

## **Referrals from other programme providers**

14. Participants may participate in ESF provision at the same time as participating in other provision (except for the Work Programme or

another DWP ESF provision - paragraph 16 below refers) provided there is a clear case for the need for additional help, and that it is not available in the other original provision. ESF provision must not overlap or duplicate non ESF provision. ESF providers must clearly demonstrate the rationale as to why both provisions are needed by recording reasons on the participant's personal action plan.

15. A clear audit trail must be maintained, of the reasons why the referral to ESF adds value for the participant and why the additional activity cannot be undertaken on the referring contract (i.e. ESF provider contacts the referring provider to confirm that the activity cannot be undertaken on their contract and this should be noted on the action plan).

### **Attending two ESF provisions simultaneously**

16. Participants **must not** be allowed to participate in two DWP ESF programmes simultaneously. If a participant needs to change from one DWP ESF provision to another, the first provision should be formally ended by completing an [ESF10](#) and send to [Jobcentre Plus](#).
17. Where rationale can be clearly demonstrated, there may be occasions where participants can be on ESF provision delivered by another ESF CFO, and on DWP ESF provision at the same time. For example, a participant may receive mentoring through DWP ESF provision but a skills need may be supported by appropriate Skills Funding Agency ESF provision.
18. In such circumstances the participant would be treated as a starter with both CFOs. Performance Managers will be seeking exceptionally clear rationale within action plans (including a statement of the added value for the participant of their respective provision), to justify such cases. To ensure there is no double funding the respective ESF providers should agree which elements of employment or skills provision each will provide to demonstrate that ESF support from both providers will be complementary and that neither will be claiming for similar activities from their CFO.
19. The participant's action plan must fully explain why both provisions are complementary and the 'from' and 'to' dates of both provisions must be clearly stated.
20. Participation on more than one programme may still attract the relevant outcome payment for the participant. See [paragraph 72](#) for more detail.
21. It will be expected that the DWP ESF provider maintains contact with the participant and records, on the action plan, details of continuing support provided.
22. Where Performance Managers deem that action plans have not been updated appropriately, the DWP ESF provider will face the possibility of a participant's participation being declared ineligible and a request for a refund of any outcome payments made. It is therefore crucial that action plans are updated regularly and reflect the participant's individual requirements throughout their time on provision.

23. It is extremely important, therefore, that providers familiarise themselves with other ESF co-financing organisations in their area, in order to ensure appropriate actions can be taken. Where there is any doubt, please check with the Performance Manager.

### **Other providers/partners**

24. The provider will be required to work closely with other providers/partners who support people in moving back to work. It is expected that this will promote good working relationships and ensure that appropriate referrals are made and that differing sets of provision complement each other.

### **Mandatory programmes**

25. Where participants receive a working age benefit, they will have to attend DWP mainstream provision where this is mandatory. Their participation on ESF provision will not negate this requirement. However, there may be instances where benefit claimants can be on both DWP mainstream provision (except for the Work Programme) and ESF at the same time, but only if the Jobcentre Plus adviser agrees that both provisions are suitable and that being on both will not infringe the mandatory requirements of the DWP mainstream provision. The claimant's participation on ESF must have some added value in addition to their mainstream provision. The 'added value' must be recorded on the claimant's action plan by both the ESF and mainstream providers.
26. If the Jobcentre Plus adviser decides that participation on both programmes is not acceptable, the claimant must leave ESF provision to undertake mandatory provision.

### **Participants in receipt of benefits**

27. ESF provision must always be part time (i.e. provision must not be 30 hours or more per week). However, participants in receipt of benefits must liaise with Jobcentre Plus to understand any impact ESF provision may have on their benefit entitlement and national insurance contributions. Benefit regulations are likely to restrict hours available to attend provision, so providers and claimants will need to take this into account and adhere to this.
28. Where a participant is in receipt of a DWP benefit, the provider must instruct benefit claimants to **phone** the department(s) who normally administer their benefit(s), before starting provision. Claimants should have the relevant phone number; and providers should assist claimants with this task where necessary.
29. Likewise, should the claimant's circumstances change during ESF provision, the provider must advise the claimant to notify Jobcentre Plus accordingly as this may affect their entitlement to benefit.
30. For example, providers must inform benefit claimants that additional payments made to them including fares, in-work support grants, meals, allowances, childcare etc, must be declared to Jobcentre Plus to prevent the possibility of an incorrect payment of benefit.

31. When claimants are undertaking ESF provision **and** another provision at the same time, the total hours that they are attending needs to be taken into account as there may be an impact on the claimant's benefit entitlement. It is the responsibility of the claimant to take this up with Jobcentre Plus, but providers should be mindful of this and re-enforce the message.
32. For programmes supported by PRaP, the provider must follow the guidance within UPK/Tutor (available via PRaP on-line help) on Claimant Change of Circumstance.
33. More information on potential circumstances which would impact on benefits and national insurance contributions are shown at [Annex 1](#).

### **Completing identity and eligibility checks at initial interview**

34. It is essential that all participants undergo an identity and eligibility check prior to commencing provision. In all cases it is the responsibility of the provider to ensure this check has been completed at the initial interview with the participant.
35. All participants participating on ESF co-financed provision must be eligible to receive help through the European Social Fund.

#### **Step 1 – Identity Check**

36. Confirm the participant is who they say they are.

#### **Step 2 – Eligibility Check**

37. The eligibility check is to ensure that the participant is eligible for the ESF programme that they are interested in joining. As a part of this eligibility check, participants:
  - must be legally resident in the UK; and
  - able to take paid employment in a European Union member state
38. In most cases identity and eligibility should be relatively easy to establish. For example, a participant who is on Incapacity Benefit (IB)/ Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) where the provision is targeted at participants with a disability or health condition, will be entitled to start the provision by presenting their IB/ESA award notice or similar. Likewise, a participant signing as unemployed by presenting evidence of their unemployment (their signing card or similar which shows their national insurance number) will be eligible to start provision for the unemployed. As these participants are claiming benefits they will have already met these requirements.
39. It is only cases where there may be a doubt as to the participant's identity and eligibility e.g. someone not on benefit (also see note below regarding participants who have been made redundant) that further

evidence will be required. In these circumstances, a provider may need to see other documentation such as a passport or another form of identification in order to satisfy themselves that the participant is who they say they are and is eligible for their provision.

40. A provider will also need to take account of the following:
- If the participant is on benefit, the provider must ensure that the benefit claimant understands the importance of investigating with Jobcentre Plus the impact starting ESF provision has on their benefit(s).
  - People made redundant who receive Payment in Lieu of Notice (PILON) may not be entitled to benefits until their PILON is deemed exhausted. However they can start on ESF programmes on the grounds of being unemployed. They do not have to wait until their PILON is exhausted before starting.
  - There is no upper age limit for participants accessing ESF provision. Even though some contracts might specify which age groups are targeted, any participants outside this age range may still be allowed to join if they would benefit from the provision and are looking for work.
  - The minimum age for participants accessing ESF provision is age 16, unless the local specification states differently.
  - Cross Boundaries - ESF contracts are awarded within a district and it would be expected that participants would attend ESF provision within the district where they live. Where a participant signs at a Jobcentre outside their home district, they should still attend provision within their home district. However, there may be occasions where a Jobcentre Plus adviser agrees with the claimant that they can attend an ESF programme outside of their home district. An example of this may be where the travel arrangements to attend provision in their home district is particularly difficult (eg, several bus changes) and suitable provision can be provided outside of their home district with significantly easier travel arrangements. This arrangement should be agreed between the Jobcentre Plus adviser, the participant and the provider. These arrangements do not apply to Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly, Merseyside and South Yorkshire as the funding for these areas is ring-fenced and can only be used for participants resident in these areas. Likewise, funding in Scotland and Wales cannot be used for those who reside in England.
  - The participant must also meet the priority or target group criteria within the contract.
  - Participants may be in part time work of less than 16 hours and can still be eligible for ESF provision.
  - Refugees may be eligible. Please refer to the [ESF website](#) for this participant group.

- People who have permission to work in the UK, but have no recourse to public funds are entitled to attend ESF funded provision, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for the provision, this rule includes participants who originate from a non-EU country.
- People in prison may be eligible, depending on the provision.
- For match funded provision, participant eligibility is as per the existing guidance for the relevant programme.

### **Step 3 – Priority Group**

41. The local specifications detail the priority groups that DWP is seeking to help through each ESF co-financed provision. The provider should ensure that participants from the appropriate priority group join the programme.

### **Step 4 – Identity and/or Eligibility check not satisfied**

42. Jobcentre Plus referral – the provider should complete and return the SL2 form to advise why the check failed. They should not complete form ESF10 in these circumstances.
43. Provider referrals – No action is needed as there is no SL2 to return as it is not a Jobcentre Plus referral. The provider should not complete form ESF10 in these circumstances.

### **Step 5 – Identity and/or Eligibility check found to be ‘not satisfied’ at a later date**

44. The provider should terminate provision immediately and must complete page 4, part 5, section C (other exit reason) of the [ESF10](#) and return the form to Jobcentre Plus. However, the provider could, if desired, choose to continue provision, but in such cases the participants will not be counted as a ‘start’ and the provider will not be entitled to an outcome payment.

### **Pre–Start Discussion**

45. Following completion of the identity and eligibility checks the provider should explain the type of ESF provision and how it will support the participant. Where the participant is in receipt of any benefits, the provider should ensure the participant engages with Jobcentre Plus to understand any impact on benefits. Where the participant is comfortable that the provision is suitable for them, a start date should then be agreed.
46. Providers should note that participants who attend ESF provision have to sign on as normal and should allow the participant time to attend their Jobcentre Plus office. Some flexibility may be given regarding sign on time by agreement between the provider and the local Jobcentre Plus office for the duration of the course.

### **Starts on to Provision (Definition)**

47. A start occurs on the first day that the participant attends either the provider or the sub-contractor’s premises to start meaningful activity (for

which ESF funds can be drawn down to support). Pre-start discussions and inductions with potential participants do not constitute a start on provision.

## **Starts to provision (Completion of ESF10 Page 1 & 2, Parts 1&2)**

48. Completion of the [ESF10 form](#) is critical at various stages to update Jobcentre Plus of participant starts, leavers or any other change to the participant's circumstances. The ESF10 is a key form for providing important management information and setting up provider payment systems so it is in the provider's interests to ensure it is fully and accurately completed and returned to Jobcentre Plus at the right time. [Instructions](#) for completion of the ESF 10.

### **The appropriate sections of the ESF10 form must be completed on the date the participant starts the planned activities.**

49. The provider must explain to the participant that information will be passed to Jobcentre Plus and recorded on DWP/Jobcentre Plus owned systems. This record is necessary to capture essential management information required by the European Commission to support DWP claims for funding to pay for our ESF contracts. In addition, Jobcentre Plus uses their claimant-based IT system, LMS, to manage and track starter and leaver information for employment programmes, opportunities and for Job outcomes.
50. The original page 1 & 2 of the ESF10 should be returned to Jobcentre Plus, once signed accordingly by the participant. A copy must be retained by the delivery provider, for contract management and audit purposes. Accurate and timely completion of the ESF10 will be a key contract compliance issue. Further completion of this form is required at later stages in the process and is defined further on in the guidance.
51. Where an ESF10 form is found to be incomplete, Jobcentre Plus will return the form to the provider to request a complete form.
52. Starts on provision will not be recorded until a complete ESF10 form has been received by Jobcentre Plus.
53. For programmes supported by PRaP, the provider must follow the guidance within UPK/Tutor (available via PRaP on-line help) to input a start into PRaP.

## **Attendance Monitoring (Principles)**

54. The terms and conditions of contracts require attendance records to be kept for participants. This is a contractual requirement that must be passed on to all sub-contractors.
55. Providers must set out how they and their sub-contractors plan to record participant attendance. The approach for prime and sub-contractors must be the same. Proposals must be agreed with Performance Managers during the Implementation period and before the contract starts.

56. Providers must ensure they have robust attendance management processes and procedures in place

### **Completion of Action Plans**

57. An action plan must be completed for all participants attending ESF provision. Providers will agree an action plan with each participant to define activities for the expected duration of provision. Where the expected duration is reduced or extended, the action plan should be updated to explain why. The ESF logo must be included on the Action Plan.
58. It is expected that the duration of a participant's attendance on provision will reflect the *expected duration* on the ESF10 form and the action plan agreed between participant and provider.
59. The end of provision will be defined as the last day the participant attended provision.

### **Exits from Provision**

60. There are a number of circumstances where a participant may exit ESF provision; these include:
- sickness;
  - participant attends other training e.g. Skills Funding Agency (SFA) provision;
  - participant completes the action plan and expected duration of provision;
  - participant achieves a job outcome prior to completion of the action plan or expected duration;
  - participant does not complete the action plan or expected duration of the provision as they leave provision without completing it;
  - participant starts mandatory provision e.g. Work Programme; or
  - the provider finds that the participant is ineligible once they have started.
61. In some cases employers are confirming that participants have been successful at interview, but delay their start date which may then fall outside the tracking period. Where a participant has obtained a job, but has had their start date delayed, providers are expected to continue working with the participant, in progressing their action plans and maybe even to get them another job. Providers have to be seen to be helping the participant within six weeks of this job start.

### **Exits from Provision (Completion of ESF10 page 3 & 4)**

62. The provider must complete page 3 & 4 of form [ESF10](#) to confirm the actual last day of provision and the reason for exiting provision, return the original to Jobcentre Plus and retain a copy for contract management and audit purposes. For example, exits may be to start

work, self employment or the participant advises that they no longer wish to complete provision etc.

63. Where the participant ceases to attend ESF provision before completing the expected duration (without contacting the provider), the ESF provision may remain **open for six weeks** from the last date of attendance, unless any local specification states otherwise.
64. At the end of this period, if the participant has continued to be absent, the provider must complete [ESF10](#), part 5, pages 3 and 4, to advise that the participant has failed to attend, entering the last date of attendance as the end date for which there is a signature. (A copy should be retained for audit purposes).
65. A participant **must not** remain on provision where an action plan is not being progressed.
66. Provision is terminated when a participant has not attended for a full six week period. Shorter periods of absence should not be added together to make six weeks.
67. Monitoring expected durations and attendance will be a key contract management activity.
68. For programmes supported by PRaP, the provider must follow the guidance within PRaP UPK/Tutor to input an end/complete date in PRaP.

### **Participant returns following non-completion of provision**

69. Participants who started ESF provision, but did not attend for six weeks will have had provision terminated as the provider will have returned the ESF10 advising failure to attend, as per guidance above.
70. Where the participant returns to the provider after six weeks have elapsed, providers should develop a new action plan, encompassing any previously outstanding actions.
71. On starting further provision, parts 1, 2 & 3 of a new [ESF10](#) form should be completed and returned to Jobcentre Plus and a copy retained by the provider.

### **Job Outcome Payments**

72. Provision is completed and an outcome payment is payable in the following circumstances:
  - the participant secures a job within six weeks of their last day of attendance on provision as recorded on their action plan;
  - having started ESF provision the participant leaves before completing their agreed ESF provision, and secures a job within six weeks of their last day of participation on provision as recorded on their action plan.

73. When a participant starts an Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programme, no job outcome payment will be paid until the participant has left the programme.
74. For guidance on action to take for participants participating on programmes supported by PRaP you must follow the guidance within PRaP UPK/Tutor.

## **Job Outcome Payments and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks**

75. Information on job outcome payments and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks can be found in [Chapter 4](#) of this guidance.

## **Further periods of ESF provision**

76. These are participants who:
  - have previously started and ended ESF provision, having completed activities set out in an earlier action plan; this includes participants who have attracted an ESF job outcome payment, following completion of previous ESF provision;
  - did not complete action plan activities from a previous period of ESF provision as detailed in [paragraph 69](#).
77. It is not expected that there will be many of these cases as someone who has just completed work activity is unlikely to be too far away from the labour market. It is assumed unlikely that ESF provision would be appropriate for them. Likewise, a participant who has completed one provision should have had any 'skills gaps/requirements' identified and covered in that initial provision, so it should only be in exceptional circumstances that they should need a second period of ESF provision. Monitoring this activity will be a key contract management activity.
78. However, in cases where new provision is appropriate, the process starts again, with a full review of the participant's circumstances. On the day a participant starts a further period of ESF provision a new [ESF10](#) is completed, to register the participant as new to provision.
79. Participants can start new ESF provision at any time. This could even be the day after leaving work, providing identity and eligibility criteria remain satisfied and a new action plan has been developed to clearly state how ESF provision can continue to support these participants.
80. A job outcome may have been paid but the job then ended and the participant starts again on ESF. In exceptional circumstances the participant may then find another job within six weeks of the first job outcome. In these cases a second job outcome payment will not be made. Where the person is deemed a new start on ESF (see [paragraph 71](#)) and obtains a further job outcome during this period of ESF provision, a second job outcome will be paid.

## The Funding Model

81. DWP has developed a more streamlined approach to provider funding. This approach establishes contracts that reflect the actual cost of delivery (through price based competitions) and share risk appropriately, with providers being paid an element of the contract price for the service delivered and rewarded for the outcomes achieved.
82. Further information can be found in [Chapter 4](#).

## Tolerances for ESF Provision

83. Tolerances will be applied to the planning assumptions for starts on the provision and they will only affect the delivery payment element of the contract. Tolerances will not be applied to the job outcome element. The job outcome unit price will remain constant throughout the life of the contract. The detail of this will be reflected in the pricing schedules.
84. The effect of applying tolerances will be to change the delivery payment (up or down) in the event that starts go outside predetermined tolerances. It needs to be noted however, that any increase in the delivery payment can only be payable if additional funding is available and performance is deemed satisfactory within the ESF programme. Tolerance limits will be agreed with providers before contract award and starts will be monitored on a monthly basis during the life of the contract as part of the normal contract management process.

## Definition of a Job Outcome

### Active participants

85. Claimants in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance who enter a job, or jobs where employment is with more than one employer which:
  - consists of at least 16 hours of work each week;
  - is expected to last at least 13 weeks;
  - begins within six weeks of the claimant leaving provision. The end date will be the last day the claimant attended provision for which there is a signature.

### Inactive participants

86. The 16 hours a week job outcome definition relates to JSA claimants only. If the participant is not claiming JSA, they will be classed as inactive and the eight hour job outcome rule will apply.
87. Lone parents and people with disabilities will be classed as inactive participants unless they are claiming JSA.
88. Participants who are not in receipt of any benefit should also be considered as 'Inactive' and consequently in these cases the eight hour job outcome rule will apply where the participant enters a job, or jobs, where employment is with more than one employer which:

- consists of at least eight hours of work each week;
  - is expected to last at least 13 weeks;
  - commenced after the participant has started on ESF or within six weeks of the participant leaving provision. The end date will be the last day the participant attended provision for which there is a signature.
89. For programmes supported by PRaP the provider must follow the guidance within PRaP UPK/Tutor to claim a job outcome in PRaP.
  90. Further information can be found in [Part 4](#) and [Part 7](#).
  91. When an eight or 16 hour job is started the participant will leave ESF provision. The provider will claim a job outcome but must continue with any further in-work support activities where detailed in the specification. This will be monitored by Performance Managers.
  92. As this is a change of circumstances, the provider must ensure participants in receipt of benefits liaise with Jobcentre Plus to understand the impact of starting work and the impact on their benefits.
  93. Providers, who also act as an employer e.g. as in an Intermediate Labour Market, should be aware of the Home Office's current guidance on rights to work. Employers have an ongoing responsibility for confirming potential participants have the rights to work and recourse to public funds before accepting them on to this type of provision. ESF is not classed as a public fund.
  94. The relevant Home Office guide can be found on the [UK Border Agency website](#).

### Evidence required for the Delivery Payment

95. Although no specific evidence is required for payment of the delivery payment, as it is paid automatically, Performance Managers will examine participants' action plans to determine the extent to which provision is being delivered. They will also be looking for evidence that activity outlined in the contract has been delivered.

### Impact of starts on the Delivery Payment (and tolerances)

96. The total indicative programme starts as shown in Schedule 6 Annex 1 of the contract will be profiled monthly over the life of the contract. This profiling will need to take account of build up to full capacity at the start of the contract and run down in the last months of the contract.
97. In addition, the upper and lower tolerance levels as shown in Schedule 6 Annex 1, will be profiled on a monthly basis, and will follow the same pattern of the total indicative starts profile as outlined earlier.
98. Managers will monitor the number of starts against profile on a monthly basis and, where progress is not in line with the profile, Performance Managers will initiate discussions with providers to determine the reasons for variance.

99. In the case of starts being less than anticipated, providers will be required to instigate recovery action within an agreed timescale and if this does not produce a return to /above profile and the number of starts eventually breaches the lower tolerance limit, a revised lower delivery payment will be required in line with what was agreed at the start of the contract. Performance Managers will work with providers to assist with any improvement plans /actions and to achieve any changes by agreement. However, Performance Managers reserve the right to move to the agreed lower delivery payment if there is no prospect of recovery after a suitable period of time has elapsed and it is clear that the provider's improvement plans are not improving the number of starts to the required level.
100. Providers also need to be aware that in the event of starts reaching or likely to reach the upper tolerance limit, the upper delivery payment can only be made if there is funding available within the budget allocated for ESF programmes. Performance Managers, through their regular monitoring of starts against profile, will be alerted to such situations and, following discussions with providers to seek confirmation that the trend is likely to continue, will make the necessary enquiries as to the availability of additional budget. If it is possible to provide additional funding to allow the provider to move to the upper delivery payment, the Performance Managers will provide the necessary authority to the provider in writing. Under no circumstances will there be an automatic right to the upper delivery payment due to overachievement. If additional funding is not available and the performance is not deemed satisfactory, then the provider will scale back and deliver to contract or bear the additional costs of overachievement.
101. Providers need to be aware that any additional funding to allow the provider to move to the upper delivery payment, does not imply any increase in the number of job outcomes which can be claimed by the provider.
102. Providers can only claim job outcomes up to the agreed job outcome targets as outlined in their contract. Schedule 5 paragraph 7.1 and Schedule 6 Annex 1 of the terms and conditions provide information about the maximum payment which can be claimed. If, exceptionally, an increase in this figure can be considered it will be subject to a separate negotiation and subject to funding being made available.

#### General information

103. The provider may only make a claim if their organisation is the contract holder. No claims will be allowed if they are submitted by any sub-contracting organisations.
104. All claim forms submitted to the payment teams must be original versions. It is recommended that providers keep a copy for their own records. The provider must only use the approved claim forms and templates documented in this guidance and therefore should not develop their own versions of these. There are some instances where

faxed evidence and photocopied documents will be acceptable; details can be found in paragraph 22 of [Part 4 Section 1](#).

105. Please note that all evidence stencils sent to the regional payment team should be photocopies of the originals. The provider will need to retain the original for ESF audit purposes.

### Evidence required to claim a Job Outcome payment

106. The provider is responsible for obtaining verification of a participant's entry into employment/self-employment for claiming a job outcome payment; and for requesting the participant's permission to obtain the information.

### Additional information

107. In developing the evidence requirements, we have taken account of the criteria used by the National Audit Office in assessing evidence and adapted it to DWP business. These criteria are:

- **Written statements** as opposed to oral evidence;
- **Independently validated** – i.e. obtained from an independent source. This is why employer verification templates require less supporting evidence than information provided by participants;
- **Restricted to official access** – which is why DWP accepts only official supporting employer documentation (letterheads, business cards etc.) as opposed to that which might be easily accessible to members of the public (menus, till receipts etc);
- **Cost of requiring the evidence** – although this is a consideration when deciding evidence requirements, the cost would not outweigh the need to collect it; and
- **Usefulness or purpose** – if what is collected doesn't demonstrate it meets the intended purpose it will be worthless regardless of the amount collected. In this case, the intended purpose is the job outcome and that means that the evidence collected *must* support all aspects of the job outcome definition, i.e. that the participant is in work, that it's more than the minimum hours and that it is expected to last 13 weeks or more and that it started within the tracking period.

108. The [Employment Verification Template](#) will assist in gathering complete and consistent information from the employer. This form must be completed in respect of each participant for whom a job outcome payment is claimed, and must be supported by one of the following:

- a business or company stamp;
- business or company letter headed paper;
- compliment slip;
- trade invoice – an invoice for goods or services bought by the employer organisation relevant to the employer business;
- trade receipt – receipt or sales invoice for goods or services supplied by the employer organisation relevant to the employer business;

- utility bill – a utility bill for gas, electricity or water consumed by the employer organisation;
  - fax header – where the fax header is set up using the fax settings and this is clearly displayed on an incoming fax to a provider from an employer, this will be treated in the same way as a company letter headed paper;
  - a company payslip.
109. In all cases, the supporting documentation must show the name of the employer's organisation (and ideally the address) and **must be signed by the same person who signed the [Employer Verification Template](#)**. To minimise the risk of potential collusion, DWP would expect the supporting evidence to be official and would not therefore accept documentation where the employer details are handwritten.
110. Where a signed verification of employment cannot be obtained from the employer, the provider must submit alternative evidence to support job outcome claims. This will only be accepted after all reasonable efforts have been made to obtain a signed statement from the employer. To this end, the provider must keep a written audit trail for those participants for whom it has not been possible to obtain a signed statement from the employer, i.e. where either the employer refuses to provide information or the participant refuses to sign a declaration authorising the passing of information. This must show the attempts made to obtain information, e.g. refusal letters from employers or details of telephone conversations. A copy of the audit trails must be sent with the claim form and retained for possible future inspection.
111. Participant declaration - the only alternative evidence that can be accepted is an original copy of the [Customer Self Declaration Verification Template](#), a signed and dated participant declaration confirming the name, address, telephone number and contact name of the employer and a statement confirming the start date, the minimum number of hours expected to be worked per week and that the job is expected to last for at least 13 weeks.
112. Where a participant declaration is completed, this must be supported by independent evidence that fully supports the job outcome definition. Pay slips are the most common form of independent evidence. However, whilst a single payslip can be used to verify that an individual is in work, it often wouldn't confirm the number of hours worked and very rarely (if ever) confirms that the job is expected to last 13 weeks.
113. If this is the evidence route chosen by the provider then additional (independent) evidence must be supplied if one payslip does not provide all of the required information. Typically, the additional evidence could include:
- A job offer letter from the employer (providing it supports that part of the job outcome definition not covered by the payslip); or
  - A contract of employment (providing it supports that part of the job outcome definition not covered by the payslip).

114. Should the provider be unable to obtain the required evidence from either the employer or the individual at the start of the job, then it would be acceptable to gather sufficient wage slips to make the claim in retrospect. Clearly this is subtly changing the job outcome definition to 'has been in work' 13 weeks, as opposed to 'expected to last' 13 weeks.
115. The Department for Work and Pensions acknowledges that some working patterns may vary in the number of hours worked each week. Where the number of hours worked each week varies, and this does not fall below 16 hours each week, then providers can annotate against question 4 on the [Employment Verification Template](#) "variable working/shift pattern but never less than 16 hours per week".
116. For programmes supported by PRaP, if there is a number of job outcome claims, they will be subject to random sampling and will be placed 'on hold' pending acceptable evidence being submitted by the provider. Evidence for programmes supported by PRaP should be submitted to the PRaP Operational Support Team.

#### Evidence required to support Self Employment job outcome

117. If the work is self-employed, the evidence to be submitted is a photocopy of the original of the [Self Employment Verification Template](#), a signed declaration completed by the participant that confirms the date self-employment started, the number of hours worked each week and that the job is expected to last for at least 13 weeks. The signed declaration must be supported by independent evidence that the individual is actually trading. This can be:
- a letter from a recognised business start-up organisation confirming commencement of self-employment which must include a business plan; or
  - evidence of trading, such as bank statements, trade invoices, tax registration; or
  - evidence of trading that is clearly linked to the company and is proportionate to the business.

#### Changing Departmental stencils

118. For most of its employment programmes, DWP is not prescriptive about the format used for evidencing job outcome claims, providing the relevant detail is captured.
119. In order to eliminate unnecessary delays in the process and to reduce the risk of providers changing the forms and missing off vital pieces of information DWP must reinforce the need to comply with the standard [Employer Verification Template](#). This should not be amended in any way (even to add provider details) but of course it may be issued to employers with an accompanying letter.

## Claiming process

120. Only the prime contract holder may make the claims. All claim forms submitted must be original versions and a copy of the claim forms and supporting evidence must be kept for audit purposes. Until a claim has been fully processed the documentation must remain in its original format. This applies to ESF and Match funded provision. When the claim has been processed, the original documentation may be scanned for storage purposes as outlined within [paragraphs 172 - 177](#).

## How to claim a job outcome payment

121. Between 2 – 5 days before submitting a claim, providers should fax the names of all those participants for whom they will be claiming job outcomes to their Regional Payment Team (RPT) following existing guidelines on faxing personal data. For programmes supported by PRaP please refer to PRaP UPK/Tutor guidance.
122. The RPT will select a sample from this list, clearly mark the names of the individuals in the sample on the list and fax it back to the provider.
123. When submitting their claim, providers should send **photocopies** of the evidence held for those individuals who have been selected by the RPT on the faxed list - the originals should be retained by the provider (see below).
124. Providers should not add any outcomes to their claim that were not included on the original list of outcomes faxed to the RPT (which includes both selected and non-selected for submission of evidence). Subsequent outcomes achieved between faxing the list and submission of the claim should be included in the following month.
125. RPTs will pay all claims where they have not requested the evidence and only reject any in the sample where the evidence is not as set out in existing guidance.
126. Any problems with provider evidence, particularly where these are persistent, will be referred to the assurance function for investigation.
127. The provider will also still be responsible for ensuring that any sub-contractor appointed by it maintains records for the specified period.
128. **Providers are reminded that they should obtain evidence for all outcomes before submitting their claims regardless of whether or not it is requested by the RPT. This evidence must be retained by the provider in line with contractual requirements.**

## Completing Job Outcome claim forms

129. For each claim period, complete the details of the individuals for who job outcomes are being claimed, on a [Job Outcome claim form](#) (JO4 ESF). To complete the JO4 ESF, please read the [notes](#).
130. Enclose the relevant supporting evidence for each participant as notified by the Regional Payment Team; these must be photocopies of the original documents, and providers must retain the original. Providers should also complete a [CLAIM7 ESF](#) for each claim period for the life of

the ESF contract. A CLAIM7 ESF summarises and puts a financial value on claims each month. All job outcome payments claimed must be entered on a CLAIM7 ESF. Please refer to the [guidance notes](#) before completing the form.

131. Since some provision is VAT free and some is VAT chargeable, the CLAIM7 ESF allows providers to separate the elements of the funding they wish to claim for according to VAT status. Providers must ensure that they categorise the provision and expenses correctly. If unsure about whether provision or expenses attract VAT, providers should contact the local VAT Business Advice Centre.
132. If applicable, to claim VAT on the delivery payment, providers will need to submit a separate invoice. The invoice should carry an invoice reference number, the provider's VAT registration number and the contract number against which the payment is being claimed. Providers will need to indicate the following:
  - the element they are claiming VAT against; in the case of ESF this will be the delivery payment;
  - the period they are claiming for; this would be the CFS claim period;
  - the value of the payment received; this would be the value of the delivery payment;
  - the date this was received;
  - the VAT calculation based on the payments received.
133. For programmes supported by PRaP the provider must follow the guidance within PRaP UPK/Tutor to claim a job outcome in PRaP.

#### Submitting claims

134. Information will have been provided at the Post Contract Award Briefing regarding claim periods and when to submit claims. Claims should be submitted to the Jobcentre Plus regional payments teams. Details of regional payment teams including named contacts and telephone numbers will have been provided at the Post Contract Award Briefing.
135. Claims should be paid within 30 days in line with the terms and conditions stated in Schedule 5 of the terms and conditions. This is dependent on the submission of valid and accurate claims.

#### Regional Payments Team(s) action

136. Information can be found in [Chapter 4](#) .

#### Performance management

137. The ESF contracts awarded during or before 2010 will be performance managed as outlined in the DWP Contract Management Framework. This will be supplemented by a programme of compliance monitoring in order to satisfy EU audit requirements and to seek out evidence that the provision is being delivered in accordance with the contract.

138. The results of compliance monitoring visits will be used to inform the overall risk rating awarded to providers and, in turn, the future frequency of provider performance reviews and compliance monitoring visits.
139. Performance Managers will also require evidence to show that prime providers are actively managing sub-contractors and that they are using all reasonable endeavours to ensure that sub-contractors comply in all respects with the contract, EU requirements and all relevant legislation.

### Provider Self Assessment

140. For self assessment procedures and further information to support this please refer to [Chapter 9](#) of this DWP provider guidance.

### Opening Times

141. Your premises and provision must be open for at least 7 hours a day, 5 days a week, except for Bank Holidays and the period in between the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays. Your Performance Manager will provide you with more information.
142. In the event of extreme weather, or other exceptional circumstances preventing you from opening, you are expected to provide alternative activities for participants to undertake and you should keep a record of what these were and inform your Performance Manager and Jobcentre Plus local office.

### Changes in Personal Circumstances

143. It is the participant's responsibility to report to you and Jobcentre Plus any change in personal circumstances. These include, change of name, address, telephone number etc. This responsibility will have been explained to the participant before they join your provision. When changes are reported, you will need to notify Jobcentre Plus on form AP3JP Change of Circumstances.

### Cross cutting themes for ESF and Match Provision

144. Providers and sub-contractors are required to take action to support ESF cross cutting themes of Gender, Equality and Equal Opportunities, Sustainable Development and Health (London region only). The specification for England provides background to these themes. Providers should read this to fully understand the requirements, however the following are some key activities that providers are required to do:
  - Maintain an equality policy, training plans and supplier diversity plan;
  - Ensure a discrimination complaints procedure is in place. Grievance Policy guidance can be found in [Chapter 2](#), of the DWP provider guidance;

- Ensure an equal opportunities policy and implementation plan for that policy is in place for staff and participants;
- Ensure buildings etc comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010;
- Providers will be expected to support and be involved in equality impact assessments undertaken by the Department;
- Providers are required to have a sustainable development policy and implementation action plan in place, which must be submitted to the ESF Performance Manager within 26 weeks of the contract starting. Guidance on the requirements for sustainable development can be found in [Chapter 14](#); and
- Within London, the prime provider must have a Health plan in place within six months of the contract start, in line with the vision for a 'Sustainable London' whose aim is to seek to improve the well-being of all Londoners.

## Management information

145. Management information (MI) is used by DWP, Jobcentre Plus, and the European Commission to measure contractual performance and to support the financial claims for ESF provision.
146. The overall priority for the capture and reporting of MI is:
- to inform the overall management of the contract to ensure that targets are achieved and delivery is in line with the bid;
  - to ensure that information is captured to facilitate the payment of providers; and
  - to meet the ESF MI requirements (for the ESF and match elements of ESF projects) that must be met in order to meet the required audit trail and ensure claims for ESF funds are eligible to be paid.
147. Whilst the majority of the information required is taken from DWP IT systems additional MI is collected from providers via the ESF10 form. This form is designed to provide confirmation of the participant's identity, personal characteristics and eligibility for ESF provision. It also provides confirmation that the participant is content that this information is shared with DWP and that it may be used for the purposes specified on the form. DWP will store this information on its IT systems. Copies of the ESF10 must be retained in line with the document retention policy (see [Document Retention](#) section of the guidance).
148. It is important that the ESF10 is completed by providers and passed to DWP immediately on the participant starting provision. This ensures that DWP has complete and current MI on who is participating on provision. It also ensures that both DWP and providers are satisfying ESF requirements.
149. Information on referrals, starts and job outcomes will be collected as part of normal processes and will be fed into the DWP IT systems which

will be used to monitor progress towards the achievement of starts and job outcome targets (the 'hard' targets).

150. In addition to the standard MI that will be collected through DWP IT systems, providers may be required to keep details of other soft outcomes as evidence that they are delivering in line with their bid. Where a provider has such a requirement within their contract, the information should be sent to the Performance Manager on a monthly basis using the [ESF4a](#) spreadsheet and an [ESF5](#) narrative report. Regional ESF managers may also require a copy of these reports; providers should agree arrangements with the Performance Manager.
151. The reports from contract compliance monitoring visits will also be used by Performance Managers in assessing the overall performance of the contract.

## Marketing and Publicity

152. There are a number of regulatory requirements (ESF and Match) in terms of marketing and publicity and these apply equally to those providers and sub-contractors who deliver ESF funded provision and those who deliver match funded provision.
153. ESF providers are required to develop and implement a Marketing and Publicity Plan which details the activities they will undertake to satisfy the ESF regulatory requirements. This will be monitored and reviewed by the Performance Manager.
154. ESF providers are required to develop and implement a Marketing and Publicity Plan which will detail the activities they will undertake to satisfy the ESF regulatory requirements. This will be monitored and reviewed by the Performance Manager.
155. Further information relating to marketing and publicity can be found in [Chapter13](#).

## Regulatory Requirements of ESF Marketing and Publicity

156. To meet the regulatory requirements providers must have specific ESF publicity measures, these include but are not restricted to the following:
  - Publicising ESF opportunities to potential applicants;
  - Ensuring that all ESF and match funded support activities are publicised to participants and the general public;
  - Providing DWP with 'Good News' stories, this includes collecting the relevant information and obtaining participant permissions;
  - Displaying an ESF 2007-2013 plaque in each main delivery location, in a prominent place, where it is clearly visible to staff, participants and wherever possible, others using the building;
  - Providers must remind participant of EU and ESF support throughout their time on provision and have evidence to support this audit requirement. Providers can use a DWP produced leaflet (MKT8000) which explains ESF funding. Versions available include: [English](#),

[Arabic](#), [Bengali](#), [Punjabi](#), and [Urdu](#). It is available in Braille and other languages on request

- Supplying provider and provision details for inclusion in the ESF public databases;
- Using the ESF logo in line with guidance on any documents including forms and letters concerning the administration of the ESF/match funded activity this includes use of the logo on Action Plans and other documents used to support the delivery of ESF and Match funding programmes. Information and a copy of the ESF 2007-2013 logo can be found at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/esf-logo-guides.pdf>; and
- Publicity materials produced by providers must be approved by DWP before publishing and use.

### **Additional regional requirements**

- Providers or sub-contractors delivering ESF or Match funded provision in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly; you must also use the Cornwall convergence logo. Information about Cornwall Works communication strategy and the use of the convergence logo can be found at: <http://www.convergencecornwall.com/>
- Providers or sub-contractors delivering ESF or match funded provision in London; you must also use the Mayor of London logo. You will also need to enter and maintain details of your ESF and Match funded provision on the directory of ESF Skills and Employment Services. Your Jobcentre Plus Group ESF Team will provide further information.

### Developing Products and Materials and obtaining clearance

157. The Jobcentre Plus Group ESF Team should be provided with copies of all proposed marketing or publicity material prior to its final production and issue.. The Jobcentre Plus Group ESF Team will check that all materials comply with the ESF regulatory requirements. Draft products should detail how the ESF 2007 – 2013 logo will be used, an annotation showing “Jobcentre Plus logo to go here” would be sufficient”.
158. All material must be sent through the Jocentre Plus Group ESF Team. The team will then work with providers to produce mutually acceptable marketing products. This will ensure Jobcentre Plus is aware of marketing activities and that there is sufficient awareness and fit with other activities.
159. Jobcentre Plus will consider draft marketing material against a set of ESF regulatory requirements to ensure that products/material meet and comply with ESF marketing, and publicity standards. The ESF Group team will then provide feedback and work with providers in setting up arrangements for developing the marketing products through to successful sign off. Feedback on the initial draft material will be returned

to the provider within 10 working days of Jobcentre Plus receiving drafts.

#### Marketing and Public Relations (PR) planning including media handling

160. DWP/Jobcentre Plus has a very active communications community that regularly engages participants, employers, participant representatives the media and others on a national and regional basis. Providers will need to work closely with Jobcentre Plus to ensure that marketing and PR activity are co-ordinated. This is to achieve complementary timing of activity and consistency of message, and to ensure that all audiences understand how the activity providers are delivering for DWP fit into the wider picture. A partnership approach will ensure DWP and providers are able to maximise the value of their communications.
161. Providers will be required to regularly share marketing and publicity plans with the Jobcentre Plus Group ESF team who will be the main point of contact to co-ordinate marketing activity and products. They will liaise with local Jobcentre Plus staff to maintain awareness of marketing activity to participants.
162. There will be times when elements of the marketing plans will need changing. For example, providers may need to be flexible on timing, if there is a clash, which might lead to confusion for the target audience. Additionally providers might need to incorporate ministerial involvement in PR activity.

#### National and Regional media handling

163. Information on national and regional media handling can be found in [Chapter 13](#).

#### Good News and Success Stories

164. DWP/Jobcentre Plus requires further information on participants whose individual stories can be celebrated. This information will be used in marketing and publicity products which will help raise awareness of ESF provision, providers and DWP/Jobcentre Plus.
165. The [proforma at Annex 11](#) must be completed with all the relevant details and participants must give their permission for their details and story to be used in any marketing and publicity products.
166. Once completed the proforma should be sent to the Jobcentre Plus Group ESF Team who will ensure that the information is retained for use in marketing and publicity products.
167. In addition, each year DWP co-sponsor the Adult Learners' Week. All organisations, individuals and groups of learners' who have benefited from ESF can be nominated for an award. A number of specific ESF sponsored awards are open to any participant or group of participants who have benefited from ESF. Participants can also nominate their ESF project providers for an award.

168. The awards are made on a regional basis and can help to pay for learning resources. Winners receive a framed certificate and an invitation to a national ceremony held in London in May during Adult Learners' Week.
169. If providers want to enter their organisation, nominate an individual or to find out more, they should call the Campaigns Team at NIACE on 0116 2044200, or e-mail [alw@niace.org.uk](mailto:alw@niace.org.uk) or visit [www.alw.org.uk](http://www.alw.org.uk). As this is an annual event providers will need to contact NIACE before the closing date for nominations.

## Document Retention

170. There are specific rules that apply to ESF and Match provision about the length of time documents must be retained; this includes documents and information generated by providers. ESF and Match documentation for the 2007 - 2013 programme must be retained until at least 31 December 2022. (and in Wales until at least 31 December 2024. This applies to Provider-led Pathways to Work contracts and New Deal for Disabled People contracts that have been delivered in Wales and used for match funding purposes). Providers will be notified should these dates be changed at any stage in the future.
171. Providers with programmes (both ESF and Match Funded) which are part or fully funded by ESF are required to keep evidence of the project costs they claim from DWP until at least 31 December 2022 (and until at least 31 December 2024 where contracts delivered in Wales being used for match funding purposes have been varied with the extended period). The contract will specify what these costs are and the documentation that must be kept. There is a requirement under EU Regulations that these costs must be actual, eligible and relevant to the project and be supported by original documents. Non-compliance can result in the recovery of funds.
172. Where a sub-contractor ceases to trade or is no longer doing business with the prime provider, the prime provider must ensure that all original documents, as specified in [Annex 9](#), are retained for the full retention period i.e. until at least 31 December 2022 (and in Wales until at least 31 December 2024).
173. Where a Prime Provider ceases to trade or will no longer be doing business with DWP they should discuss retention of documents with their DWP Performance Manager.
174. Documents that must be retained by both Match and ESF providers are shown in [Annex 9](#). This list may not be completely exhaustive and could be subject to further review in the future.
175. It is extremely important that providers have robust systems and controls in place to maintain and monitor access to documentation throughout the retention period.
176. All documents (including any electronic information) must be readily accessible to requests from auditors and stored in accordance with DWP standards. There must be a separate file of documentation either

in hard copy and/or electronic format for each individual participant that is linked to a specific contract number; and arranged in a record keeping system that will enable the secure storage and effective retrieval of documentation.

177. Audits will start with a contract number and the level of scrutiny will go down to the level of an individual participant. Documentation must show that payments claimed in respect of an individual participant were eligible in accordance with the contract terms and conditions. The participant file must also contain evidence that the participant was made aware of the contribution of ESF towards their training.
178. [Annex 9](#) provides further information on ESF and Match funded provision related documentation that must be retained as a minimum to meet audit requirements until at least 31 December 2022 (and in Wales until at least 31 December 2024 where the contract has been varied). [Annex 10](#) provides information where documents are retained in an electronic format.

## ESF Audit Requirements

179. Both prime providers and sub-contractors are subject to audit controls and review. The following is a list of the bodies, which require access for audit purposes - it is not exhaustive:
  - ESF Audit Authority;
  - The European Court of Auditors;
  - The European Commission's Auditors;
  - The National Audit Office;
  - DWP Risk Assurance Division; and
  - Other bodies as required by or on behalf of DWP/European Commission.
180. It cannot be emphasised enough that failure to meet audit requirements results in a high financial risk for both providers and DWP, as funds used inappropriately or for ineligible participants or purposes are recoverable.

## Business Support Implementation

181. The Government is committed through the Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP) to reducing the number of publicly funded business support schemes by 2010. The regional ESF Frameworks are committed to ensuring that where ESF does provide direct support to business it is consistent with these principles.
182. See local specifications where the tender proposes using ESF support for self-employment or creation of social enterprises.

## Evaluation

183. Independent evaluation will be an important element of the ESF provision. The full design of the evaluation programme is still under development but it is likely that providers will be asked to support a variety of evaluation projects, including:
- Evaluation by the ESF Managing Authority (DWP);
  - Regional evaluation commissioned by or on behalf of the Regional Skills Partnership;
  - Programme delivery evaluation commissioned by the DWP CFO.
  - Other interested parties may administer further evaluations.
184. Provider assistance will be expected, as required.
185. Evaluation by the ESF Managing Authority will include a two stage national cohort study of participants from 2009 and a range of other studies focusing on, for example, gender, disadvantaged groups, equal opportunities, in-work training, sustainable development and the delivery of ESF in relation to ESF targets and the Regional ESF Frameworks. It is likely that providers may be asked to participate, and to assist in identifying participants for the cohort and other surveys. This may involve providing contact details for some or all participants, having sought in advance the permission of the individuals concerned.
186. Researchers may wish to visit and interview providers, programme participants and partners involved in the provision. Providers delivering this provision will be contacted beforehand. Findings will be disseminated to all providers in order to facilitate sharing and adoption of best practice and continuous improvement of the service. Evaluation findings will also be published as part of the DWP research series.
187. Providers will also be asked to report on progress and evaluate their own provision at regular intervals to support DWP's reporting requirement to the Managing Authority at regional and national levels. At the end of the project an evaluation report will also be required, summarising project activities and outcomes achieved, and highlighting issues of special note, such as innovation or achievements against the ESF cross-cutting themes of equality and sustainability.