

Chapter 18

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIPS (LEPS)

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Introduction

Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) are a key component of the Government's "In work, better off"; a Green Paper on the next steps to full employment, and were launched in the 2007 budget. They are a key feature of Integrated Employment and Skills, which is being introduced in response to the Leitch review of skills. This puts both customer's and employer's needs at the heart of service delivery.

LEPs are about Jobcentre Plus and partners working with major employers, providers and sector bodies to ensure that disadvantaged customers get the preparation and training that enables them to meet employers' needs and expectations.

The aim is to place 250,000 priority customers into LEP jobs by December 2010, and is a genuinely new approach, creating opportunities for people who have been overlooked for too long.

Background

LEPs are based on a simple deal with employers (public and private): the Government gets disadvantaged customers ready for work by;-

- Giving them the preparation and training to meet employers' needs and expectations;
- Encouraging employers with vacancies to give them serious consideration for the job – through interviews, work placements and mentoring.

Jobcentre Plus and providers match the right potential candidates to employers, and organise the pre-recruitment assessment and training to fill specific jobs on offer. This will involve tailoring customers' training plans, and, developing tailored provision. DWP is keen that all provision supports the LEP agenda by moving customers to a position where they are close to being job-ready, and able to compete effectively for all LEP vacancies.

The LEP deal requires the pulling together of training and selection work for employers, working with individual companies, providers and sector bodies. This may mean, for example, that Jobcentre Plus districts will ask contractors via CEP Contract Managers to deliver LEP Pre-employment training courses as part of their contracted delivery. Short modular courses with sector skills routeways will be at the core, but districts and providers will have the flexibility to add additional modules like Jobsearch, work skills, or specialist disability / ethnicity modules if needed.

Part A

The LEP Partnership Agreement

All DWP contracted providers are expected to work in partnership with Jobcentre Plus to deliver the government's objectives and targets with regard to LEPs, and in doing so provide a better service for employers and individual customers.

The following standard text will be included in future Invitations to Tender and Contracts:

- Upon contract award, you will be contacted by Jobcentre Plus and offered a LEP Partnership Agreement. This will enable you to enter into LEP verbal agreements with the employers you work with, therefore avoiding multiple and confusing contacts to employers. Under the Partnership Agreement you will also be copied into all Jobcentre Plus LEP vacancies for your customers, and have access to Jobcentre Plus Local Labour Market Intelligence.
- So that progress can be reported, in return you will be expected to provide information to Jobcentre Plus on your customers placed into jobs, either through Jobcentre Plus LEP vacancies, or your own Employer LEP agreements.
- We would expect the LEP Partnership Agreement should also apply to your sub contractors, working through your organisation as the prime contractor.

The Jobcentre Plus rationale for working in partnership with Providers on LEP:

- Jobcentre Plus wants a real partnership with providers so that we operate as a single system engaging locally with employers;
- Employers expect us to streamline our processes, so that they don't face multiple and confusing contacts;
- Jobcentre Plus (and Ministers) expect the 250,000 LEP target to reflect success for the system as a whole rather than Jobcentre Plus on its own;
- Jobcentre Plus wants to share all LEP contacts with providers for the benefit of all employers and customers. This means, for example, we have no sensitivity about providers subsequently claiming outcome payments if customers get LEP jobs;
- We know providers have excellent arrangements of their own with employers. We want to build on those to bring those employers into the LEP fold.

The LEP Partnership Agreement

- The LEP Partnership Agreement is attached below (PDF format);
- A referral process flow-chart
- MI forms, together with annotated guidance to capture performance



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Document

Part B

LEP Pre-employment Training Provision

In England, it has been agreed that Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding is the first choice to deliver LEP Pre-employment Training (LEP PET). Similar arrangements have been agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government to deliver LEP PET via their Skill Build Programme; and with the Scottish Executive to deliver LEP PET via their Training for Work programme.

If provision is not available via LSC (England), Skill Build (Wales) or Training for Work (Scotland), or appropriate locally, Jobcentre Plus Districts may require providers to deliver LEP Pre-employment Training courses as part of their contracted delivery. In these circumstances, Jobcentre Plus will adhere to the following hierarchy for DWP providers to deliver LEP PET:

- Use existing Programme Centre contracts to provide LEP PET
- Use other programmes, particularly New Deal Prime contracts
- Use alternative funded programmes – European Social Fund (ESF), Deprived Areas Fund (DAF – now Working Neighbourhood Fund) and City Strategies to deliver LEP PET
- Commissioning bespoke provision via DWP Commercial Employment Provision – designed to meet employer specification.

Format of the LEP Delivery Plan meeting

The delivery arrangements for each LEP PET course will be agreed between the Department for Work and Pensions, CEP, the Jobcentre Plus District, the contracted provider and employer.

The employer will specify the support measures that they require. Discussion at the meeting is expected to clarify the referrals process, define individual roles and responsibilities and establish the process required to select suitable customers – for example is there a requirement for open days?

The LEP support measures include:

- Offering Work Trials for an agreed number of priority customers;
- Offering a number of places for disadvantaged jobless people to take up work experience, work placement or other employment initiatives that lead to jobs;
- Subsidised Employment; and
- Working with Jobcentre Plus and our partners on the design of LEP PET, where required, for potential recruits to ensure that it is relevant to employers' needs.

Design and Content of LEP Pre-employment Training

The District will be expected to use their local knowledge to agree with the employer the length of the LEP PET that best meets employer needs, and provides value for money. Detail about design and content of LEP PET will also be discussed between Jobcentre Plus and the employer when the LEP agreement is set up.

Discussions will include the use of the relevant Sector Employability Toolkit which is based on two weeks training in the sector specific skills required by employers followed by a Work Trial if necessary. Sector Employability Toolkits are intended to provide a guide only, and their use will be dependent upon employer choice. Materials have been developed in consultation with the nine Sector Skills Councils to prepare customers for entry level jobs in the sectors where there is significant recruitment activity.

This model must be flexible to take account of different employer requirements and Jobcentre Plus customer circumstances. The Sector Employability Toolkit will also be included in discussion at the LEP Delivery Plan meeting where final decisions on content of LEP PET.

Outputs from the LEP Delivery Plan meeting:

- Attendees should be clear about the measures agreed, they should understand the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and these will be documented for circulation following the meeting;
- Additional action points will be agreed where appropriate, documented and assigned to named individuals, including timescales for completion;
- Customer 'suitability' will be defined and agreed by all parties in terms of the particular employer requirement, to meet recruitment specifications;
- Communications; Jobcentre Plus will nominate a Single Point of Contact, usually the Third Party Provision Manager (TPPM) (Districts will decide) for the delivery plan and the contact details will be given at the meeting. Communication messages will be agreed and will cover Jobcentre Plus staff, providers and customers. Agreement should be reached on content and frequency of updates to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed of progress;
- Usually, the TPPM will contact the provider / employer to follow up the outcome of the LEP PET, however this should be arranged in such a way as to avoid multiple or confusing contact with the employer.

Note: If the customer does not enter employment immediately after exiting LEP PET, they will either:

- return to their original provider to continue their programme, following arrangements agreed in the Delivery Plan; or
- return to their original benefit regime.

Provider Referrals to LEP Pre-employment Training Provision

The Jobcentre Plus TPPM will share information on LEP PET courses with contracted (DWP) providers and partners together with the referral process.

The TPPM or another identified District contact will be responsible for notifying all contracted (and non-contracted) providers about current LEP job vacancies. The TPPM will manage the Jobcentre Plus LMS opportunity for LEP PET, and check for adequate numbers, eligibility and customer suitability.

All LEP eligible customers can be referred to LEP PET and the referrals may come from a range of both contracted (and non-contracted) providers. For example:

- Prime Contractors;
- Provider led Pathways to Work;
- Employment Zones;
- PSL New Deal;
- European Social Fund (ESF);
- City Strategy;
- LSC funded Employability Skills Programme (ESP);
- DAF/WNF.

When a provider identifies suitable customers for LEP PET, they will follow the agreed referral process including **Data Protection Act action** and copy the consent form to the Jobcentre Plus LEP co-ordinators (or nominated local contact), who will record details on LMS.

Jobcentre Plus Districts will use the standard REF2 (referral of customer to providers of JCP programmes and opportunities) to manage referrals to both contracted and non contracted providers, requesting:

- The owning provider sends the REF2 to the LEP PET provider and a photocopy to the TPPM;
- The LEP PET provider sends the completed REF2 to the owning provider together with another photocopy to the TPPM. This will enable management of the opportunity.

Jobcentre Plus Districts will use the standard Start/Leaver Notification Form (SL2) process to manage provision starters and leavers:

- For New Deal Lone Parents (NDLP) and New Deal for Partners (NDP) customers accessing LSC funded LEP PET, the SL2 process will enable Jobcentre Plus requirements for the payment of Training Premiums, Childcare, travel and other related expenses to be met;
- The SL2 will ensure compliance with DPA requirements;
- For DWP funded LEP PET, the SL2 process will also generate provider payments through the CFS system.

LEP PET and delivery through DWP providers

(a) Programme Centre Contracts

Existing Programme Centre specification and contracts already incorporate the flexibility to add new modules at any time as deemed relevant to the local labour market.

Programme Centre providers are therefore not required to deliver anything outside of their contract, specification and Rates Look Up Table price.

DWP Provider Guidance, Chapter 8 Programme Centre Provision:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/pg_chapter_8.pdf

(b) New Deal Prime Contracts

Current JSA New Deal contracts can be, and are used to provide customised training for sector specific or large-scale employer recruitment. Contract variations are not required on existing contracts for New Deal eligible customers; however, for other customer Groups (Disadvantaged Area Ward (DAW)/Disadvantaged Group Ward (DGW)) a simple contract variation will be negotiated by DWP Commercial Employment Provision (CEP).

DWP Provider Guidance, Contents Page:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/provider_guidance.asp

(c) Alternative funded programmes - European Social Fund (ESF), Deprived Areas Fund (now Working Neighbourhood Fund) and City Strategies

This will be arranged by the Jobcentre Plus District, the Local Authority and other partners working together to provide a package of funding for the provider.

Providers will be contacted by Jobcentre Plus District External Relations Teams to provide further information.

DWP Provider Guidance, Chapter 12 European Social Fund:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/pg_chapter_12.pdf

(d) Commission additional provision using local procurement/low value partnership routes

If all three previously mentioned provision routes are not appropriate, DWP CEP team will work with Jobcentre Plus Districts and other partners to explore a local/low value procurement approach that best meets employer requirements and government procurement regulations.

Providers will be contacted by Jobcentre Plus District External Relations Teams to provide further information.

External Inspection/Audit

Existing procedures apply. Please refer to the DWP Provider Guidance Chapter 17 External Inspection:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/pg_chapter_17.pdf

LEP Eligibility

To be eligible for LEP Pre-employment Training, the individual must be:

A priority Group Customer (PGC) 1 or PGC2 customer;

A PGC3 or PGC4 customer in a Disadvantaged Area Ward (DAW) or a Disadvantaged Group Ward (DGW).



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Jobcentre Plus customers who are already participating in DWP contracted mainstream provision; customers of Provider Led Pathways to Work, Employment Zones (EZ) and Private Sector Led (PSL) New Deal are permitted to access LEP PET at no cost to the provider.

New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP)

Jobcentre Plus customers who are eligible for NDDP are also eligible to be referred to LEP PET provision. NDDP Job Brokers will work with the Jobcentre Plus LEP Team to identify and maximise suitable employment opportunities that are available with LEP employers.

Access to work (ATW)

Access to Work offers practical support to overcome work related difficulties and is available to people with disabilities and/or health conditions who wish to use LEP as a routeway into paid employment. To be eligible, the customer must either be employed, about to start paid employment or need help with a job interview.

For customers with more complex health conditions / disabilities, Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers who are supporting LEP eligible customers, may consider using more appropriate needs-based provision eg Work Preparation, Work Step or Job Introduction Scheme.

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) Customers undertaking Pre-employment training

There is no minimum or maximum length of time set for LEP PET, however, the normal 16 hour rule will apply:

- JSA customers may access two weeks' full time employment related training in a 52 week period; or
- If longer than two weeks, then two of those weeks to be full time, and the rest less than 16 hours per week;
- Part time training of 16 hours or less may also be used for Pre-employment Training.

More detailed information on JSA eligibility can be found in DWP Provider Guidance, Chapter 1 Introduction:

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/pg_chapter_1.pdf

Payment of travel and Childcare

All customer groups will have access to payment of travel and childcare, specifically;

- **Programme Centre Contracts and New Deal Prime Contracts**

The Programme Centre or New Deal Provider will pay travel and childcare costs, re-claimable from Jobcentre Plus as detailed in the **DWP Provider Guidance**

http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/pg_chapter_4.pdf apart from:

- Customers who are in receipt of a Jobcentre Plus Allowance Payment (i.e. they are currently participating in the Intensive Activity Period (IAP) or an Option), the IAP or Option provider will pay travel and childcare as per the Provider Guidance and:
- Customers referred to LEP PET from Pathways to Work (Provider led), Employment Zones and Private Sector led provisions, the travel and childcare will be paid for by the Provider Led Pathways, Employment Zones and Private Sector Led provider.

Alternative funded provision, eg European Social Fund (ESF)

The provider delivering the provision will pay travel and childcare costs, as this is generally included in the provision, apart from:

- Customers who are in receipt of a Jobcentre Plus Allowance payment (i.e. they are currently participating in the IAP or an Option), the IAP or Option provider will pay travel and childcare as per the Provider Guidance and:
- Customers referred to LEP PET from Pathways to Work (provider led), Employment Zones and Private Sector Led provisions, the travel and childcare will be paid for by the Provider Led Pathways, Employment Zones and Private Sector Led provider.

**Additional provision
(locally procured/low value provision via DWP CEP)**

Travel and childcare payments should be included in the specification.