

**EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PROGRAMME
2007-2013**

LOCAL SPECIFICATION

SOUTH EAST

**BERKSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND
OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT**

REF NO: SE 01

TITLE: SECTOR SKILLS SUPPORT



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

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1. Introduction

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Jobcentre Plus District are looking for an innovative package of tailored support that addresses the worklessness of disadvantaged customers. To engage with this group, address their barriers to work, and improve their chances of securing employment within key employment sectors.

Delivery will address the South East Regional Framework Document (2007-10), Priority Axis 1 (A) which is to 'Reduce Worklessness amongst Disadvantaged People facing Multiple Barriers to Work' and 'Improve Rates of Economic Activity by promoting Flexible Working and influencing Employer Attitudes' to address the needs of disadvantaged groups. The programme also relates to national welfare reform proposals, which acknowledge the need to tackle highly localised pockets of worklessness, poverty, inequality, and low skills.

This specification sets out the criteria for the provision to be delivered through ESF in the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Jobcentre Plus District. Prospective bidders will be required to submit full and detailed proposals, meeting the specific criteria below.

2. Aims and Objectives

DWP will co-finance activity in the Workless Adults part of ESF Priority 1. This focuses on economically inactive people in the South East who are not fully supported by existing employment programmes. Through flexible and personalised packages of support, it will enhance engagement and work readiness activity, as well as help to ensure sustained employment outcomes for disadvantaged people facing multiple barriers to work.

The range of activities that will be delivered to support the priorities contained within the South East Framework Document and the Operational Programme include:

- helping unemployed and inactive people with disabilities or health conditions to enter and remain in work, and providing support to retain in employment people who become disabled or develop health conditions;
- helping lone parents, economically inactive recipients with children and other disadvantaged parents enter and make progress in the workplace, including access to childcare;
- tailored and personalised packages of support by providing pathways to employment such as mentoring and advocacy support, pre-vocational, access and practical soft skills training, job-related customised training (including qualifications for employability), labour market orientation and work experience, work trials and post employment support;

- active and preventative measures which ensure early identification of the needs of disadvantaged people, including individual action plans and personalised support, work search activities, information, advice and guidance including financial management advice, and access to childcare and care for dependent people where caring responsibilities are a barrier to labour market participation;
- activities to extend working lives by re-engaging inactive older workers, including those who become disabled or develop health conditions;
- improving access of women to employment and increasing sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and to help men and women access occupations or sectors where they are underrepresented;
- activities to support Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs)
- helping disadvantaged people who persistently return to Jobseekers' Allowance, and addressing barriers to their retention in sustainable employment;
- increasing the participation by people from ethnic minorities in employment including, where appropriate, training to meet basic English language skills needs;
- developing the skills and employability of offenders and ex-offenders to help them enter the labour market;
- activities to tackle specific barriers to work faced by unemployed inactive people in rural areas including community-based activities and outreach.

3. Design and Content

A programme of activities which will provide employer-focused pathways to employment for priority group customers. This is to be achieved by establishing links with local employers in key sectors such as logistics, care, construction and security by identifying skills gaps and constructing a programme around the skills shortages identified.

All customers engaged on this initiative must be supported after the initial engagement/assessment stage with an individually tailored Action Plan and programme of delivery. The Action Plan must set out the agreed steps to assist the customer to move into work. It will also act as a reference framework for discussions with the customer in the interests of tracking their progress towards agreed actions/ goals.

Provision must include:

- attainment of the basic entry/foundation/NVQ/accredited training certification required to work in the relevant employment sectors. Examples may include:
 - CSCS card
 - SIA card
 - Health and Safety
 - Basic IT training

- Customer Service training
- CLAIT and ECDL
- Forklift
- LGV
- Foundation certification for entry into Childcare industry
- First Aid
- Hygiene;
- practical in-work support and ‘aftercare’ to ensure job retention;
- work placements / experience ‘taster’ sessions;
- assessment, advice and guidance;
- pre-employment training/workplace skills;
- jobsearch preparation and support;
- addressing barriers deterring entry into employment;
- motivation and confidence building;
- advocacy of work as the best route out of poverty.

Flexibility must be built into the programme to allow for:

- customers with particular needs from provision delivery (e.g. disability issues, childcare, debt management, etc);
- the changing requirements of employers;
- the delivery of pre-employment training to meet the needs of Local Employment Partnerships.

The on-going development of the programme will be part of a regular dialogue between the provider and DWP/Jobcentre Plus Contracting, Monitoring and delivery staff. Delivery may also vary according to location. The ESF project must not duplicate existing provision in a locality.

Duration - Length of stay is dependant upon individual need but is expected to be up to 13 weeks in the first instance. An extension to a maximum of 26 weeks may be possible. The programme should be structured with timebound weekly activity. The successful Provider will need to demonstrate course duration and delivery planning. The Provider will also implement systems to record planned activity at the induction stage of the programme and time spent on agreed activities on each day of attendance (e.g. timesheets such as the Jobcentre Plus ‘ND4’ sheet).

Indicative Volumes – a minimum of 2600 starts and, 1300 job outcomes over three years.

Indicative Contract Value: £2.75m - £3.5m. Indicative value of any potential extension – up to £1.75m.

4. Activity Requirements (see also Design and Content, above)

Flexible to support the customer, but it is expected that delivery will in most cases be up to 16 hrs per week, for up to 13 weeks in the first instance. As noted above, weekly activity must be structured, timebound and recorded. Attendance records will clearly and accurately record daily attendance and reasons for any absence. These will be signed as accurate by both provider and client. Any exceptions e.g. activities specific to a particular client group (e.g. people with disabilities, single parents, etc), should be explained in the tender.

5. Target Groups

South East Region priority groups for DWP support are:

- People on incapacity benefits (particularly existing claimants, and those with children);
- Lone and disadvantaged parents;
- Other people with children, including those not on benefit;
- Most disadvantaged (e.g. ex-offenders, people from black and ethnic minority communities, homeless people, persistent returners to JSA & Working Age Benefits);
- People aged over 50;
- People with Basic Skills needs;
- Jobseeker's Allowance customers with a disability or claiming for over 6 months;
- People in receipt of Income Support;

Within the target group, it is expected that the following proportions will be met:

% of participants who are unemployed	55
% of participants who are inactive	45
% of participants who with disabilities or health issues	22
% of participants who lone parents	12
% of participants who are 50 or over	18
% of participants from ethnic minorities	11
% of female participants	51

For information on numbers in target groups available to access provision, see Annex 3.

6. Geographical Coverage

The District is, in part, a rural one, with poor or irregular public transport between many of the outlying communities and their nearest towns. Difficulties in reaching larger towns will be compounded if clients then have to travel out from town centres to peripheral delivery locations. This will have a bearing on the providers' choice of delivery location / partners, etc. The successful bidder will be able to demonstrate an ability to offer outreach provision if required.

The Provider is expected to deliver from premises in the following areas: Milton Keynes, Oxford, High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Reading, Slough and Bracknell. These may be existing premises, at partner organisations or community facilities. All travel costs incurred by the customer in accessing the Provider's premises will be reimbursed by the Provider.

The list of locations is not exhaustive. Delivery locations may change in line with economic inactivity and increasing/decreasing customer groups. Changes will be in agreement with the JCP District and the OPU Regional Contracting Team. DWP will expect plans from the successful bidder detailing how they will service the entire District, including Outreach plans, where necessary.

7. Eligibility

Unemployed and economically inactive people living within Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire District who fall within the target groups listed in Section 5.

8. Referrals

The Provider will be expected to self-source the majority of the delivery (minimum 50%). The Provider should describe in their tender how they will generate sufficient referrals to ensure performance targets are achieved. This should include working closely with Jobcentre Plus Advisers to identify suitable clients but must also show other means of generating referrals.

9. Coherence & Context with Other Provision

ESF Provision is distinct from Domestic provision and must not duplicate or take the place of this, where available.

The ESF provision in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire is designed to meet the needs of distinct client groups and particular labour market requirements. Beneficiaries will not participate in other Jobcentre Plus ESF Co-financed provision at the same time as they access this contract. Beneficiaries of this ESF provision will not normally progress to additional Jobcentre Plus ESF Co-financed provision after completing this course. If this were deemed

necessary, the Provider would have to supply a Business Case to the District Third Party Programmes Team for approval. In cases such as this the Provider must be aware that Jobcentre Plus may only credit one piece of provision statistically. It is not the aim of this provision to progress clients into further training programmes, but to achieve job outcomes. The successful bidder is expected to have an overall picture of Jobcentre Plus contracted and non-contracted provision within the target district.

It may be possible for a beneficiary to access ESF provision while accessing mainstream DWP provision as long as it:

- adds value to the DWP provision, and
- does not conflict with the requirements of the DWP provision

With the exception of those clients participating in the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP), it is not expected that New Deal (18-24 and 25+) clients would normally access this provision: where there is suitable mandatory Jobcentre Plus provision available, this takes priority over ESF provision. ESF provision may be accessed by eligible clients prior to joining Mandatory New Deal.

10. Networking Links

The successful Provider will be expected to demonstrate links they would create with local organisations, with particular focus on the third sector, to meet the requirements of this specification. Full details of any partnerships, consortiums and sub-contracting arrangements will need to be fully explained in the tender. The successful Provider will also need to work closely with any Local Employment Partnerships to address local labour market needs through pre-employment training.

11. Marketing

This provision is available to clients that are not normally eligible for JCP help. The Provider will need to demonstrate how they will market this provision to promote effective recruitment.

12. Funding Model Ratio / Volumes

Funding on this contract will be based on a ratio of 30% of contracted value for the staged payment of a delivery fee, and 70% for job outcomes. Standard DWP job outcome definitions will be used.

Indicative volumes of minimum starters are 2600 and 1300, job outcomes over three years.

13. Non-Paid Outcomes

Providers must supply information to Jobcentre Plus and will include the attainment of the basic entry / foundation / NVQ / accredited training / certification that is offered on this course to help beneficiaries to work in the local labour market. This will be done for all clients. Examples may include:

- Health and Safety
- Basic IT training
- Customer Service training
- CLAIT and ECDL
- CSCS card
- SIA card
- Forklift
- First Aid
- Hygiene

The Provider will maintain, and supply to Jobcentre Plus monthly Management Information on the number of referrals, starters, leavers, jobs, sustained jobs and qualifications achieved.

14. Evaluation

At the end of the project, Providers are required to carry out an assessment of all aspects of delivery. The successful Provider will detail their plans to evaluate this.

The assessment must include what the aim, objectives, and target groups were, what numbers were expected and actually accessed the provision, where the referrals came from, and what outcomes (in terms of work, qualifications and soft outcomes) were achieved.

- The report should also include an analysis of what worked well; identify obstacles to success and how these were tackled. There should be detail on any changes from the original delivery proposal. You will also need to consider the wider ramifications of delivering this project in terms of:
 - Responsiveness to client and labour market needs
 - Equality of access
 - Tacking Social Exclusion
 - Environmental impacts
 - Impact of delivery on your organization

ANNEX 1

Background to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire District

Overview

The District comprises the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and is covered by 9 Local Authority Districts (Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, Oxford, Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, Chiltern, and South Buckinghamshire) and 7 Unitary Authorities (Milton Keynes, West Berkshire, Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, Windsor & Maidenhead, and Slough). It runs roughly northwest from the border of London toward the Midlands. BBO has one recognised “Deprived Ward”. This is Woughton Ward of Milton Keynes.

The area is principally rural with a handful of more densely populated towns including Bracknell, High Wycombe, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Reading and Slough which have the busiest JCP offices.

There are JCP delivery offices in Abingdon, Aylesbury, Banbury, Bletchley, Bracknell, Chesham, Didcot, High Wycombe, Maidenhead, Milton Keynes, Newbury, Oxford, Reading, Slough & Witney. Some of the offices can offer Providers space to carry out interviews, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Population

The combined population is 2,139,100 (ONS / Nomis, 2005) with a working age population of 64.2% of which 83.8% are economically active. 1.5% of the resident population is claiming Job Seekers Allowance (2.6% nationally). Customers in receipt of IS comprise 3.2% and those in receipt of IB / Severe Disability Allowance 3.9%.

Current Provision in the District

JCP has contracts with a number of Providers to deliver the Mandatory New Deal (ND) Options, including Self Employment (Training Network Group) and the New Deal for Musicians (MIP with Armstrong Learning), across the district. The majority of Berkshire’s contracted provision is delivered through a “Prime Contract” with Action for Employment (“A4E”). Programme Centre provision is available throughout BBO (A4E). Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire has contracted ND Options through Scout Enterprises, Rathbone Training, Shaw Trust, Careers Enterprise, CfBT, and InBiz who were originally engaged in 2001 with delivery currently extended to March 2009. A recent contract Variation has extended some of A4E’s ND and Programme Centre provision into Bucks & Oxon.

There are limited smaller contracts that are dedicated to specific projects: Deprived Areas Fund (via A4E, a health Condition Management programme in Milton Keynes), Progress2Work (via Turning Point, Mentoring for recovering substance abusers, ex-alcoholics, the homeless and ex-offenders, etc). Current ESF courses are already in their residual delivery phase and come to a natural end in March 2008. Some clients are also able to access LSC / Ufl courses with assistance from JCP where there is a Service Level Agreement in place. Non-New Deal clients can be signposted to intermediary provision with non-contracted organisations.

New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) Job Broking Services are delivered by: Enabling Partnership (Enham Trust), Oxfordshire Employment Services (OES), Richmond Fellowship, Shaw Trust Ltd., Support Shop, Workbridge Enterprises, and Work-In-Progress UK (formerly "Advance Working").

Work Preparation is delivered by Shaw Trust Ltd., and Vale of Aylesbury Primary Care Trust. Oxfordshire Employment Services (OES), Shaw Trust Ltd., and Remploy Interwork deliver WorkStep support.

Benefits are claimed through Dundee Contact Centre (0845 6004250); Berkshire benefits processing is by Canterbury Business Delivery Centre (BDC) and Bucks and Oxon by Cosham BDC.

Principal Industries / Key Employers

The majority of employment is in the service sector (85.1%, compared to 82.1% nationally). The district has a very strong finance, I.T, and business sector (27.6% compared with 20% nationally), with IT being very strong in Bracknell & Slough. Distribution, hotels and restaurants are another area of significant employment (25.5% compared to a national average of 24.7); however this is below the average for the southeast of England (26.3%). There are two areas of very high public administration, education and health employment (Oxford 44.4%, and Aylesbury Vale 30.4%), which are well above the regional and national averages (24.5% and 26.4% respectively) due in part to having the largest training hospitals in South East England. The proportion of professional and managerial workers is higher in the district than UK averages and Oxford in particular benefits from a highly educated workforce.

The District continues to witness a decline in manufacturing industry, though there are some smaller high technology companies that continue to thrive (e.g. biotech, motor racing (Williams & Renault)

Current Development & Initiatives

Labour market demand in this District is expected to grow at a faster rate than the South East and UK as a whole generating an anticipated 105,000 new jobs until 2015. Several towns within the District are undergoing or planning

regeneration of retail delivery. There is high pressure throughout the South East for additional housing development.

A new complex is due to be complete in **High Wycombe** by Easter 2008. Bracknell plans received outline planning permission for a £750 million redevelopment in December 2006. **Aylesbury's** Waterside development is due to start in spring 2008 for completion by Autumn 2009. Aylesbury Vale has committed to 1000 new houses per year for the next 20 years.

Bicester town centre is to be redeveloped, and the Bicester Village retail centre is expanding. A new build is currently being negotiated for **Banbury** 2008 (Motor Park, Hotel, Restaurant and dealerships). **Oxford** is seeking planning permission to redevelop the Westgate shopping centre. **Witney** hopes to see the Marriott's Close shopping development occur in 2008/9.

Windsor will host the Olympic Rowing at Dorney Lake in 2012 and is attracting investment in reduced traffic congestion and increased car parking.

Maidenhead should benefit from the planned £5 billion Crossrail plan which would link it with Central London, Essex and Kent.

Councillors in **Slough** have approved a scheme to build a new bus station, library, retail outlets and open spaces. The 'Heart of Slough' development will provide a new focus for cultural activity in Slough and the southern region, establishing a cultural quarter for creative media, information and communications industries from Europe. The project will include a mix of commercial buildings, housing and community buildings and space. It will bring together public performance spaces, a digital library, 21st Century interactive museum and an enterprise hub for small, local creative industries. Construction of Terminal 5 of Heathrow is expected to bring 5,000 jobs in construction alone.

Milton Keynes is developing the Theatre District and The Hub areas. It will also be the locations for a new Casino development. The main Shopping Centre is undergoing a £400 million phased development over 10 years. The Campbell Park area development will include a marina. The Denbigh area of **Bletchley** is also expanding and there are plans to relocate the bus and rail termini, and pedestrianise the town centre.

Major companies tend to base themselves within **Bracknell** because of the geographical links. There are several office premises available or in the process of being built in the area so there is scope for more companies to have their office base here.

The Future Labour Market

In the next few years we expect the main labour market in a large part of the District to be in the Retail, Hospitality and Construction Industries. Construction jobs are usually filled via agencies.

Redundancies

In the second quarter of 2006-2007, the district saw 1182 redundancies in Berkshire, 1150 in Buckinghamshire and 850 in Oxfordshire. This was across a variety of industries, but losses were predominantly in manufacturing and hospitality, with some smaller losses in information technology and retail areas.

Claimant Numbers by Ward

Berks Bucks & Oxon District has 30 Wards where 6.4% or more of the Working Age Population are claiming Income Support (= 11,110 clients). There are 46 Wards where over 6% of the Working Age Population are claiming IB or SDA (= 15,785 clients). There are also 11 wards with Lone Parents in the top decile (of 4% and above of Working Age Population = 2,500 clients).

30 Wards where over 6.4% of the Working Aged population is claiming Income Support:

West Berks has 2, totalling 355 clients;
 Reading has 4, totalling 1755 clients;
 Slough has 6, totalling 2430 clients;
 Milton Keynes has 4, totalling 2700 clients;
 Aylesbury has 3, totalling 775 clients;
 Chiltern has 2, totalling 180 clients;
 High Wycombe has 2, totalling 720 clients;
 Cherwell has 1, totalling 450 clients;
 Oxford has 6, totalling 2065 clients;

46 Wards where over 6% of the Working Aged population is claiming IB / SDA:

Bracknell has 4, totalling 910 clients;
 West Berks has 2, totalling 390 clients;
 Reading has 5, totalling 2000 clients;
 Slough has 8, totalling 3145 clients;
 Milton Keynes has 8, totalling 4195 clients;
 Aylesbury has 2, totalling 550 clients;
 Chiltern has 3, totalling 450 clients;
 High Wycombe has 3, totalling 830 clients;
 Banbury has 3, totalling 1020 clients;
 Oxford has 7, totalling 2115 clients;
 Abingdon (Vale of White Horse) has 1 with 180 clients.

11 Wards where over 4% of the Working Aged population is a Lone Parent:

Reading has 1, totalling 295 clients;
 Slough has 2, totalling 445 clients;
 Milton Keynes has 2, totalling 655 clients;
 Chiltern has 1, totalling 55 clients;
 High Wycombe has 1, totalling 180 clients;
 Cherwell has 1, totalling 230 clients;
 Oxford has 3, totalling 640 clients;

Claimants in Relation to Working Age Population (BBO District Totals):

Descriptor	Number	Proportion of Working Age Population (%)
Total Working Age Population	1,286,626	100
Income Support Claimants	43,740	3.4
IB / SDA Claimants	49,495	3.85
Unemployed JSA Claimants*	15,529*	1.21*
Sick & Disabled	60,595	4.71
Lone Parents	17,920	1.39

* JSA Claimant count from local claims count, October 2007

Note: All Other Data from Jobcentre Plus Geographical Information System / NOMIS as at 16/03/2007