



**European Union**  
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**England and Gibraltar European Social Fund (ESF) Convergence,  
Competitiveness and Employment Programme 2007-2013**

# ESF Gender Equalities and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming - Progress Report 2014

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## Section 1: Introduction

This report provides an update on the progress that has been made towards the aims, milestones and objectives of the national ESF gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan during 2014.

A brief description of each section of the report is provided below.

Although the 2007-2013 programme clearly supported a large number of people, it should be noted that the ESF 2007-2013 programme counted 'participant events' (i.e. the number of times people started and left the programme ) and not individual people. This means that, inevitably, there will have been some double-counting of those individuals who left and re-joined the programme – which will have inflated the number of 'participants' that appear to have been supported. The Head of the European Commission's ESF Evaluation Unit recently explained that such an approach may have resulted in up to a third of ESF participants being double-counted across the EU. This approach was a requirement across all 28 Member States.

It should also be noted that when the targets were set at the beginning of the programme, the original intention was for them to be reviewed and updated at the mid-point of the programme period. However, the European Commission asked ESF to **only carry forward the original percentage targets into the second half of the programme period and not to update the whole-number (non-percentage) targets. The whole numbers are therefore presented for information only and should not be compared with the original non-percentage targets.**

This report has a particular focus on Aim 1 of the ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Mainstreaming Plan which is to increase the female participation rate so that it reaches the target of 51% for the period covering the second half of the programme. This aim is in response to a specific request made by the European Commission and which are referred to in the 2011 ESF gender and equal opportunities mainstreaming report.

The main sections of this report are listed and described below for ease of reference:

- **Section 1** Introduction
- **Section 2** of this report provides an analysis of the female participation rate in the first and second halves of the programme ( so far) as well as an overview of the action taken by the ESF Co-Financing Organisations (CFOs) in response to the updated Action Note 70 that was issued in January 2014 .

- **Section 3** also relates to Aim 1 of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities plan and describes the progress that has been made towards the various milestones and objectives.
- **Section 4** provides an overview of the gender-specific findings from the 2012-2014 cohort survey
- **Section 5** provides management information on the overall progress that has been made towards the various equality participation targets as well as equality-related output and impact indicators during 2014. The data provided is cumulative from the beginning of the programme.
- **Section 6** provides an outline of progress that has been made towards Aims 2-3 of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan.
- **Section 7** provides the conclusion's of this year's report.
- **Section 8** sets out a number of recommendations for taking further action forward.
- **Annex 1** contains a copy of the Action Note 70 update issued to ESF Co-Financing organisations on 24 January 2014

## **Section 2: Female participation in the England ESF programme - an analysis of the female participation rate in the first and second halves of the programme and an overview of action taken in response to Action Note 70 (update)**

The female participation rate in the ESF programme and action taken in response to Action Note 70 (update)

### **Background**

The European Commission has asked DWP ESF Division to report on the ESF programme's progress towards increasing the female participation rate to 51% for the second half of the programme period.

In order to make comparisons in performance between the two halves of the programme, the following periods have been selected:

- (i) January 2008-December 2011 (1<sup>st</sup> half of programme period)
- (ii) January 2012 – December 2015 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of programme period)

The two periods above were chosen to represent the two halves of the programme period because:

- the delivery of contracts didn't start until 2008;
- the current programme will continue to fund activities up until 2015; and
- contracts for the second half of the programme didn't start until 2012.

This annex shows that CFOs continued to take action to increase female participation in 2014 and it highlights the significant amount of action that has been taken by the Skills Funding Agency.

**Section 2** of this annex gives an overview of the progress made towards the female participation rate for the second half of the programme. The data contained in tables 1 – 5 below show the data on the INES MI database up until May 2014. The data for the first half of the programme period has had to be updated following adjustments to claims.

**Section 3** of this annex provides an analysis of the action that CFOs have taken in response to the Action Note 70 (update) that was issued to CFOs in February this year.

## **Female participation rate**

### Female Participation Rate at programme level

Table 1 show that the female participation rate for the second half of the programme is currently 38%. **The overall rate is 13 percentage points below the 51% target..**

Table 1 shows that most of the female participants are ESF funded (39% of 1,248,550) compared to match-funded female participants (37% of 624,977 participants). Table 1 shows that 64,607 participants are funded by both ESF and match and of these, 35% are female.

Table 2 shows that when NOMS data is excluded from the dataset, the female participation rate at programme-level is **8 percentage points below the 51% target.**

Table 2 shows again that the greatest number of female participants are funded by ESF only (40% of 1,197,300) compared to match-funded female participants ( 52% of 415,148).

**Table 1: Female participation – programme level**

	1 <sup>st</sup> half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Total number of participants	3,286,812 Previously: 3,161,812	1,938,134 Previously: 652,802
Female participation rate (FPR) target	51%	51%
Female participation rate (FPR)	38% Previously: 38%	38% Previously: 27%
Excess / deficit	-13% points	<b>- 13% points</b>
Total number of <b>ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,595,632 40%	1,248,550 39%
Total number of <b>Match</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,405,622 37%	624,977 37%
Total number of <b>Both</b> ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	285,558 34%	64,607 35%

Source: DWP ESF INES MI (November 2014)

**Table 2: Female Participation – programme level (excluding NOMS data)**

	1 <sup>st</sup> half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Total number of participants	3,013,531 Previously: 2,898,358	1,649,563 Previously: 431,286
Female participation rate (FPR) target	51%	51%

Female participation rate (FPR)	41% Previously 40%	43% Previously: 37%
Excess / deficit	-10% points	<b>-8% points</b>
Total number of <b>ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,559,556 40%	1,197,300 40%
Total number of <b>Match</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	1,179,666 43%	415,148 52%
Total number of <b>Both*</b> ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	274,309 35%	37,115 52%

\*This is a separate funding stream for participants funded by both ESF and Match.

Source: DWP ESF INES MI November 2014

### Female participation rate at programme and CFO level

Table 3 shows that **DWP CFO's** is currently achieving the 51% female participation rate. Table 3 shows that nearly all of DWP CFO participants are ESF-funded (93,279 out of a total number of participants 93,320) and of these, 51% are female.

Table 3 shows that the **Skills Funding Agency CFO** has the largest number of participants recorded on the ESF INES MI database so far. The female participation rate has increased by six percentage points since May 2014 and is now 43% (although it is still 8 percentage points below the 51% target).

Table 3 shows that most of the SFA's female participants are ESF-funded (39% of 1,092,147) compared to match-funded females (who represent 52% of 413,749).

Table 3 shows that the proportion of **NOMS CFO** participants who are female is 8% which is one percentage point above the female participation rate achieved in May 2014, but is also 1 percentage point below the operational target of 9%.

Table 3 shows that match funding supports the majority of female participants on NOMS provision (6% of 209,829) compared to ESF funding only (which supports 12% of 51,250).

The **'other CFOs'** have increased their female participation rate by 4 percentage points and have achieved a female participation rate of 50% which represents a four percentage point increase – and is just one percentage point below the 51% target.



Table 3 shows that, for `other CFOs`, a combination of ESF and match supports the greater number of female participants (52% of 37,115) compared to ESF alone (44% of 11,847) and match (60% of 1,358).

**Table 3: Female participation rate (FPR) at programme level by CFO**

	1 <sup>st</sup> half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)
Total number of <b>DWP CFO</b> participants	740,149 Previously: 737,982	93,320 Previously: 1,525
Female participation rate (FPR) <b>DWP CFO</b>	33% Previously 33%	51% Previously: 46%
<b>DWP CFO FPR</b> Excess / deficit - compared to 51% target	-18% points	-0% points
Total number of <b>DWP CFO ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	274,527 33%	93,279 51%
Total number of <b>DWP CFO Match</b> funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	465,622 33%	41 44%
Total number of <b>Skills Funding Agency CFO</b> participants	2,069,592 Previously: 1,956,765	1,505,896 Previously: 400,156
Female participation rate (FPR) <b>Skills Funding Agency CFO</b>	43% Previously: 42%	43% Previously: 37%
<b>Skills Funding Agency CFO</b> Excess / deficit - compared to 51% target	-8% points	-8% points
Total number of <b>Skills Funding Agency CFO ESF</b>	1,226,970	1,092,147

funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	42%	39%
Total number of <b>Skills Funding Agency CFO Match</b> funded participants	693,027	413,749
Female participation rate (FPR)	49%	52%
Total number of <b>Skills Funding Agency CFO Both</b> ESF + Match funded participants	149,595	*
Female participation rate (FPR)	27%	

Table 3 continued.....

Total number of <b>NOMS CFO</b> participants	273,281 Previously: 262,984	288,571 Previously: 221,516
Female participation rate (FPR) <b>NOMS CFO</b>	8% Previously : 8%	8% Previously : 7%
<b>NOMS CFO FPR*</b> Excess / deficit Compared to notional 51% target *	-43% points*	-43% points*
<b>NOMS CFO FPR excess / deficit</b> (compared to operational target of 9%)	-1% point	-1 % points
Total number of <b>NOMS CFO ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	36,076 13%	51,250 12%
Total number of <b>NOMS CFO Match</b> funded participants	225,956	209,829
Female participation rate (FPR)	7%	6%
Total number of <b>NOMS CFO Both</b> ESF + Match funded participants	11,249	27,492
Female participation rate (FPR)	13%	12%

Total number of <b>`Other` CFOs</b> participants	203,790 Previously: 203,611	50,347 Previously: 29,605
Female participation rate (FPR) <b>`Other CFOs`</b>	45% Previously: 46%	50% Previously: 46%
<b>`Other` CFOs</b> Excess / deficit - compared to 51% target	-6% points	-1% points
Total number of <b>Other CFO ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	58,059 46%	11,874 44%
Total number of <b>Other CFO Match</b> funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	21,017 50%	1,358 60%
Total number of <b>Other CFO Both</b> ESF + Match funded participants Female participation rate (FPR)	124,714 44%	37,115 52%

\* The 51% FPR target referred to in the NOMS CFO row of this table is a theoretical one and included for comparison purposes only. NOMS CFO is working towards achieving a **9% FPR** – this target has been set lower due to the nature of its mostly male client group;

## Female participation rate at programme priority level

### Priority 1 and 4

Table 4 shows that the female participation rate in **Priority 1** is currently 17 percentage points below the 51% target for female participation and is 9 percentage points above the female participation rate achieved in May 2014.

Table 4 shows that the female participation rate in **Priority 4** is currently 36% which is 15 percentage points below the national target of 51% and five percentage points below the female participation rate achieved in the first half of the programme. The percentage figures quoted are based on comparatively small numbers on the database. However, as the figures currently stand, the female percentage rate is still too low for this priority.

Table 4 shows that the majority of Priority level 1 female participants are funded by ESF only (36% of 750,166). Female participants funded by match only in Priority level 1 represent 30% of 465,413

Table 4 shows that the majority of females are funded by ESF only in Priority level 4 (37% of 20,810) compared to match only (30% of 5,748).

**Table 4 Female Participation Rate (FPR) by Priority Levels 1 and 4**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)</b>
<b>Priority level 1</b>	<b>2,026,929</b>	<b>1,276,228</b>
<b>Number of participants + FPR%</b>	<b>32%</b> <b>Previously: 33%</b>	<b>34%</b> <b>Previously: 25%</b>
<b>Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target</b>	<b>- 19% points</b>	<b>-17% points</b>
Total number of <b>P1 ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	964,714 35%	750,166 36%
Total number of <b>P1 Match</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	963,713 29%	465,413 30%
Total number of <b>P1 Both</b> ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	98,502 40%	60,649 35%
<b>DWP CFO P1</b> Number of participants + FPR%	722,816 33% Previously: 33%	83,953 52% Previously 46%
<b>SFA CFO P1</b> Number of participants + FPR%	881,277 37% Previously 37%	861,160 40% Previously 36%
<b>NOMS CFO P1</b> Number of participants + FPR%	273,073 8% Previously 8%	287,997 8% Previously 7%
<b>Other CFOs P1</b> Number of participants + FPR%	149,763 46% Previously 46%	43,118 51% Previously 47%
<b>Priority level 4 FPR * Number of participants +</b>	<b>41,955</b>	<b>26,558</b>

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)</b>
<b>FPR%</b>	<b>41%</b> <b>Previously 42%</b>	<b>36%</b> <b>Previously 32%</b>
<b>Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target</b>	<b>- 10% points</b>	<b>-15% points</b>
Total number of <b>P4 ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	32,567 75%	20,810 37%
Total number of <b>P4 Match</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	9,224 44%	5,748 30%
Total number of <b>P4 Both</b> ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	164 57%	*
DWP CFO P4 Number of participants + FPR%	17,333 37% Previously: 37%	9,367 41% Previously 40%
SFA CFO P4 Number of participants + FPR%	23,995 45% Previously: 45%	16,230 33% Previously: 32%
NOMS CFO P4 Number of participants + FPR%	208 12% Previously: 11%	574 11% Previously 9%
Other CFOs P4	419 52% Previously 51%	387 48% Previously 48%

*\*None for this funding stream.*

### Priority 2 and 5

Table 5 below shows that the female participation rate in **Priority 2** is currently just four percentage points below the target. This represents a seven percentage point increase since the data was last collected in May 2012.

Table 5 shows that the female participation rate in **Priority 5** is currently 54% - so exceeds the target by 3 percentage points. This female participation rate is based on a relatively small number of participants. .

Table 5 shows that the greatest number of female participants are funded by ESF (43% of 452,703) compared to match funding, where women represent 58% of 149,635. The vast majority of Priority 2 participants are funded by the Skills Funding Agency (601,824 out of a total number of 606,223).

Table 5 shows that the majority of females in Priority level 5 are funded by ESF only (54% of 24,871) compared to match funding (53% of 4,181 match funded participants). Again, most participants are funded by SFA in Priority 5 (26,682 out of 29,125).

**Table 5: Female Participation Rate (FPR) by Priority Levels 2 and 5**

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> half of programme delivery (period January 2008 – December 2011)</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> half of ESF programme delivery (period January 2012 – December 2015)</b>
<b>Priority level 2 FPR Number of participants + FPR%</b>	<b>1,141,881</b>  <b>47%</b> <b>Previously 46%</b>	<b>606,223</b>  <b>47%</b> <b>Previously 40%</b>
<b>Excess / Deficit compared to 51% target</b>	<b>-4% points</b>	<b>-4% points</b>
Total number of <b>P2 ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	545,500  46%	452,703  43%
Total number of <b>P2 Match</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	415,698  54%	149,635  58%
Total number of <b>P2 Both</b> ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	180,683  31%	3,885  38%
SFA CFO FPR P2 Number of participants + FPR%	1,092,359  47% Previously:46%	601,824  47% Previously: 40%
Other CFOs FPR (P2) Number of participants + FPR%	49,522  43% Previously 43%	4,399  40% Previously 36%
<b>Priority level 5 FPR Number of participants + FPR%</b>	<b>76,047</b>  <b>53%</b> <b>Previously 55%</b>	<b>29,125</b>  <b>54%</b> <b>Previously 51%</b>
<b>Excess / Deficit compared</b>		

<b>to 51% target Number of participants + FPR%</b>	<b>+2% points</b>	<b>+3% points</b>
Total number of <b>P5 ESF</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	52,851 57%	24,871 54%
Total number of <b>P5 Match</b> funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	16,987 48%	4,181 53%
Total number of <b>P5 Both</b> ESF+ Match funded participants + Female participation rate (FPR)	6,209 33%	73 62%
SFA CFO FPR P5 Number of participants + FPR%	71,961 53% Previously: 53%	26,682 53% Previously:49%
Other CFOs FPR P5 Number of participants + FPR%	4,086 55% Previously: 55%	2,443 63% Previously 63%

### **Action Taken by CFOs in response to Action Note 70 (update)**

Action Note 70 was originally sent out to CFOs by ESF Division in February 2012 and it required them to:

- (i) identify providers / provider contracts not achieving the 51% female participation target; and
- (ii) prepare a review schedule for providers not achieving te 515% female participation rate.

Although CFOs made good progress in identifying a baseline of providers to include in the review schedule, the fact that many contracts were coming to an end and the timing of the second round of contracts meant that hardly any reviews actually took place in 2012.

An updated Action Note 70 was issued to CFOs in February 2013, requiring them to submit two progress reports on the reviews that they have had with providers and the action that has been agreed to try to increase the female participations rate. CFOs have been asked to report at the end of April and end of October 2013. A gender equality good practice checklist was included as an annex to the Action Note to help CFOs develop their reviews with providers. This checklist was based upon the ESF gender equality good practice guidance that was published in March 2012.

A further\_updated Action Note was issued on 24 January 2014.

All of the CFOs responded to Action Note 70 (update) with the exception of Luton Council.

**This report summarises the details of the reviews undertaken up until April 2014 and October 2014.**

Table 6 below summarises the April 2014 returns and **Table 7 summarises the final October return.**

Table 7 below shows that, by October 2014, there were:

- 114 providers / provider contracts that had achieved the 51% female participation rate; and
- 15 providers who were excluded from the review - 6 of these were from East Midlands Local Authority Consortium (EMLAC) and 4 were from the Skills Funding Agency.

Table 7 also shows that, by October 2014, 171 had been reviewed.

It should be noted that **DWP CFO** did not conduct any reviews because all of their providers have exceeded the 51% female participation rate target – although take-up has been lower than expected for DWP CFO's ESF support for families with multiple problems provision.

The **Skills Funding Agency CFO** provided a substantial response to the Action Note 70 (update) in April 2014 and October 2014. The new quarterly performance review arrangements that they introduced for their providers in late 2012 and early 2013 continued into 2014 and helped inform this review process since the reviews included discussions around the participation of women and disadvantaged groups.

The Skills Funding Agency CFO has also changed the emphasis of its ESF Management Group meetings. Although the Skills Funding Agency has always monitored performance, the amount of time dedicated to performance review, including the equality targets, has been increased. The Skills Funding Agency's co-financing regions will, in future, also be required to report on issues and actions to the ESF Management Group.

**NOMS CFO** has an agreed female participation rate target of 9% which reflects the female offender population. NOMS CFO explained in their Action Note 7- (update) return that the female participation rate target is reviewed on a monthly basis by the operational performance manager and the provider. All bar one of their Trusts is achieving the 9% target.

**Table 6: Summary of Action Note 70 Update Returns ( up until April 2014)**

CFO	No. of provider contracts achieving	No. of providers excluded from review	No. of providers to be reviewed	No reviewed	Estimated number to be reviewed again by end



	51% (9% NOMS) FPR & therefore excluded from review list	list for other reasons			of October 2013 if no change / improvement in performance
DWP	8	0	0	0	0
Skills Funding Agency	32	29	212	212	212
NOMS	8	0	1	1	1
Central Bedfordshire Council	2	1	2	3	2
GLA	0	3	4	4	4
London Councils	23	1	3	0	3
EMLAC	0	0	3	3	3
Luton Council	No response	No response	No response	No response	No response
Total	73	34	225	223	225

**Table 7: Final summary of Action Note 70 update returns ( up until October 2014)**

CFOs	No. of providers / provider contracts achieving 51% (9% NOMS) FPR & therefore excluded from review list	No. of providers exclude from review list for other reasons	No of providers to be reviewed	No. actually reviewed by the end of October 2014
DWP	8	0	0	0
Skills Funding Agency	68*	4*	167	167

NOMS	8	0	1	1
Central Bedfordshire Council	2	1	2	3
GLA	0	3	0	0
London Councils	23	1	3	0
EMLAC	5	6	0	0
Luton Council	No response	No response	No response	No response
Total	114	15	173	171

\*NB: These projects were actually still reviewed as part of SFA's standard quarterly review process despite achieving targets etc – but are included in columns 1 and 2 to indicate the number of projects that had achieved or exceeded 51%

Total number reviewed by SFA was 239 (i.e. 239 = 167 + 68 + 4)

### **Section 3: Progress towards the milestones on Aim 1 of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan**

Aim 1 of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan is:

“To increase the female participation rate to 51% in the second half of the programme”.

Aim 1 and its related milestones make up nearly 75% of the ESF equality mainstreaming plan – which indicates the importance which is attached to this aim. This section of the report focuses on the progress that has been made towards achieving Aim 1's milestones and objectives.

**Milestone 1.1: Managing Authority (MA) to issue Action Note to CFOs requiring them to: identify providers achieving / not achieving 51% female participation rate; identify number of providers to be reviewed for female participation ( i.e. construct a review list);and to agree action with providers on review list where appropriate;**

**Progress so far**

Action Note 70 was issued to CFOs in 2012 requiring them to: (i) identify providers who were failing to achieve a target of 51% and (ii) to identify which of these providers should be subject to review in future where appropriate.

CFOs were asked to submit two Action Note 70 `returns' – one at the end of April and one at the end of October 2012.

A similar, but updated Action Note 70 was issued at the beginning of 2013. The results of these Action Notes are set out in the ESF Annual Mainstreaming Update reports for 2012 and 2013.

A further, **final**, updated Action Note 70 was sent out to CFOs on 24 January 2014, asking for returns in April and October 2014.. The results of Action Note 70 update are provided in Tables 6 and 7 above.

### **Issues arising**

The Managing Authority decided not to repeat the Action Note 70 exercise in 2015 because the exercise was always intended to have a limited `life' and resources have had to be devoted to developing an equality approach for the new programme and, in particular, preparing a detailed equality survey for 2014-2020.

**Milestone 1.2: The Managing Authority to prepare and submit progress reports on female participation rate to: (i) the European Commission; (ii) the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee; (iii) the gender equality and equal opportunities sub committee; (iv) wider ESF partnership via web / publicity links**

### **Progress so far**

A female participation progress report was presented to the national PMC in September 2012. It highlighted the performance of the programme as well as the action undertaken by the CFOs in response to Action Note 70.

The latest results from the second tranche of Action Note 70 returns is presented in the 2013 ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Progress report and were presented at the national equal opportunities sub committee in December 2013.

Further progress reports were presented to the national PMC in 2014

### **Issues Arising**

Further standard MI reports will be presented to the PMC in 2015. These reports will cover the standard MI contained on the ESF database.

### **Milestone 1.3: The Managing Authority to produce an updated national ESF gender good practice guide**

#### **Progress so far**

The new guide was published in booklet and digital format in March 2012  
The good practice checklist was adapted and used in Action Note 70 to help inform provider reviews.

### **Milestone 1.4: To set up and deliver two national ESF gender equality workshops to consider what action can be taken to try to increase the female participation rate 51% during the second half of the programme. (CFOs to run internal seminars or workshop where they feel this is necessary.)**

#### **Progress so far**

Two workshops were run in November 2012 and the report of the workshops was published on ESF works.

#### **Issues arising**

The Managing Authority will consult with CFOs to see if there is any further need for workshops to be run. It does appear that an extensive number of reviews have been held with providers so it is not clear whether any further workshops are really necessary.

### **Milestone 1.5: To review the performance of DWP CFO's new provision for families with multiple problems in Priority 1 in terms of achieving the female participation rate 2013. If there is any significant underperformance in achieving the target, the Managing Authority and DWP CFO to organise a workshop with key stakeholders to investigate reasons for any underperformance in this area and agree action as necessary. (This may include drawing upon any emerging evidence from the evaluation of this provision).**

#### **Progress so far**

DWP CFO has reported in April and October 2013 that all of the providers involved in delivering the new provision for families with multiple problems are exceeding the 51% female participation rate.

Given the level of performance achieved so far, it does not seem necessary to run any special workshops for this provision

## **Milestone 1.6: To communicate the aims, milestones and objectives set out in this mainstreaming plan, highlighting the issue of increasing female participation and the progress that is being made and sharing ideas for action**

### **Progress so far**

A major article on the importance of promoting gender equality was published on ESF News on December 27 2012:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esf/news/promoting-gender-equality.shtml>

This was followed by the issuing of Action Note 70 (update) on 22 January to all CFOs : <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/action-note-070-12.pdf>. The Action Note was e-mailed to all CFOs and was published on the ESF website. The Action Note incorporated a gender good practice checklist (derived from the good practice guidance published in March 2012).

In February the gender equality mainstreaming progress plan and progress report were published on the website and advertised via the ESF Newsletter for February.

In late May the ESF Leader awards, including the 2013 ESF Gender Equality Leader Award were launched.

ESF News featured a number of good practice / female-targeted case studies during the year:

- [Issue 34](#) Milliner in demand
- [Issue 30](#) Cutting gardens cultivate community engagement
- [Issue 27](#) Raising Aspirations
- [Issue 24](#) Wild Women's Hour

The ESF Works website published a number of gender-related themes articles in June 2013 including the report on the gender equality workshops held in November 2012.

The criteria for the 2014 ESF Gender Equality Award were also changed so that they placed greater emphasis on rewarding projects that increase female participation.

## **Section 4: Gender -related findings from the ESF Cohort Study 2012-2014**

The purpose of this ESF cohort Study was to provide evidence on the longer term outcomes of individuals who received support funded by the 2007–2013 ESF Programme and to provide data to be included in the Annual Implementation Report (AIR) which documents the implementation of ESF in England and Gibraltar.

The research involved a two-stage longitudinal quantitative survey; the first wave comprised a total of 8,440 interviews between October 2012 and November 2013 with

individuals who had received support or training funded through ESF. A follow-up survey was conducted with 4,276 of these individuals between February 2013 and March 2014.

While the survey plays an important role in enabling us to capture views and monitor participants' outcomes over time, there are certain limitations to the research that should be recognised. For example, while levels of impact are captured, it is largely a descriptive report and there is no counterfactual assessment on the impact of the ESF

The study revealed some key differences between male and female participants when it came to their motivations for undertaking provision and their experience of ESF provision:

- Female participants were far more likely to be attracted to provision because of the offer of support with caring responsibilities: seven per cent of female participants versus two per cent of men, while three per cent were motivated by the adult care that was offered (versus one per cent among men).
- One in nine (11 per cent) female participants faced barriers in attending provision, compared with seven per cent of male participants, however, women were just as likely as male participants to receive help from their training provider in overcoming these barriers (45 and 44 per cent respectively).
- Female participants with childcare responsibilities were more likely than their male counterparts to have received assistance with childcare (nine per cent versus one per cent of male participants) but also more likely to have wanted and not received some support from their provider (28 per cent versus 15 per cent).
- Female participants reported high levels of satisfaction. Over four-fifths (83 per cent) were either very (52 per cent) or fairly (31 per cent) satisfied overall. These results were similar to those reported by male participants.

The study revealed some key differences between male and female participants in terms of what they achieved as a result of undertaking ESF provision:

- Overall, three-quarters (76 per cent) of female participants in Priorities 1 and 4 felt that the support they had received through ESF had given them practical help finding a job. This was slightly, but significantly, higher than the proportion of male participants reporting this (74 per cent).

The study revealed some differences between male and female participants in terms of their outcome by the second reference point:

- At the second reference point 43 per cent of women were in employment (compared to 41 per cent of men). This meant that by the second reference point women were no longer significantly more likely to be in employment than men as had been the case at the point of entering provision.
- However, it did remain the case that by the second reference point: women were more likely to be economically inactive (24 per cent compared with 16 per cent of men); and

men were more likely to be unemployed and looking for work (42 per cent compared with 34 of per cent of women).

- Female participants who were in work at the second reference point were significantly less likely to be in full-time paid work for an employer than men (59 per cent compared with 68 per cent of men)<sup>20</sup>. However, they were more likely to be employed on permanent or long fixed-term contracts than male participants who were in work (72 per cent versus 62 per cent).
- The type of occupation entered by the second reference point was determined to a large degree by gender; as was the case upon entering provision women were more likely to be working in: caring, leisure and other service occupations (31 per cent versus five per cent of men); sales and customer service occupations (17 per cent versus 13 per cent), or in administrative; and secretarial occupations (16 per cent versus six per cent).
- Women earned less on average at the second reference point than men (a mean salary of £11,950 versus £14,400), though the gender pay gap was far less than at the point of starting provision (£12,600 versus £19,050 respectively).

The ESF cohort study revealed that ESF provision had greater longer-term impact for female participants in a number of areas:

- They were more likely to report on-going development in all work-related skills, and were significantly more likely to be satisfied than men with what they had achieved by their second interview (82 per cent versus 78 per cent of male participants).
- This is likely a result of suitable targeting of provision to women; female participants were more likely than men to find that the provision was relevant to their needs (87 per cent versus 84 per cent).

## **Section 5: Progress towards the key programme equality targets – overall programme results so far**

This section of the report provides an overview of the programme's cumulative performance in terms of achieving the equality targets since the start of the programme.

Table 4.1 below provides an overview of progress towards the equality targets for the ESF programme and uses the latest data available from the DWP INES database (November 2014).

The table shows that the overall female participation percentage target is 51% and the cumulative achievement is 38% (a 1% point increase since 2013 – but still 13 percentage points below the original 51% target).

However, other groups are well represented, for example:

- participants from ethnic minorities are only 1 percentage point below the target level set for the programme;
- participants with disabilities and health conditions (are only 2 percentage points below the programme target; and below target); and
- participants aged 50 or over are only three percentage points below the target of 19%.

**Table 4.1: Progress towards key programme equality targets**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/-
1.	Total number of participants	1,790,000	<b>5,267,810</b>	<b>+3,477,810</b>
8.	Female participants	51%	<b>38%</b>	<b>-13% -points</b>
7.	Participants from ethnic minorities	19%	<b>18%</b>	<b>-1 % point</b>
5.	Participants with disabilities or health conditions	19%	<b>17%</b>	<b>-2% points</b>
6.	Participants aged 50 or over	19%	<b>16%</b>	<b>-3% points</b>

Source: DWP ESF 'INES' November 2014

**Table 4.2: Progress towards key employment and skills indicators**

	In work on leaving (ESF OP priorities 1 and 4 only)	Gained basic skills on leaving	Gained full qualification at level 2 or above on leaving
Target 2007-13	201,000	160,000	174,000
Cumulative achievement	500,191	257,093	658,027
% female	33%	55%	47%
% disabled	16%	11%	9%
% aged 50 or over	10%	10%	14%



% ethnic minority	16%	22%	14%

Source: DWP ESF `INES' Database November 2014

The table above provides data on the extent to which ESF has helped the different protected groups make progress towards getting a job or achieving skills.

The target for those entering work on leaving ESF was 201,000. This target has been exceeded by 299,191 so far (cumulative total of 500,191).

More men than women enter work on leaving (67% compared to 33% female). although women appear to out-perform men in terms of achieving basic skills (55% women compared to 45% men).

Nearly half of women achieved level 2 qualifications on leaving (47%).

Participants aged 50+ are the lowest achievers in terms of finding work on leaving (10%).

Although 16% of disabled people entered work on leaving ESF, they were less likely to achieve basic skills (10%) and level 2 qualifications (9%) than other groups.

### Key Equality Targets By Priority

**Table 4.3: Progress towards equality targets - Priority 1**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
1.1	Participants	887,000	3,311,824	+2,424,824
1.5	Disabled	22%	22%	0% points
1.7	Aged 50 plus	18%	14%	-4% points
1.8	Ethnic minorities	25%	21%	-4% points
1.9	Female	51%	33%	-18% points

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (November 2014)

The table above describes overall progress towards the equality targets since the start of the programme.

In Priority 1, the largest shortfall is for female participation (18 percentage points below the programme's 51% target) followed by participants from ethnic minorities and participants who are disabled (4 percentage points below target – along with participants aged over 50.)

**Table 4.4: Priority 1: 'In work on leaving' indicators (no targets)**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement
1.10a	In work on leaving	195,000	490,764
1.10b	In work on leaving (% of leavers)	22%	14%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	33%
	Disabled	N/A	16%
	50+	N/A	10%
	Ethnic Minority	N/A	16%

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (November 2014)

14% of Priority 1 leavers were in work on leaving. Of these, 67% were male and 33% were female (a 7 % point decrease for females since 2013). 16% of leavers in work on leaving were disabled – as were 16% of participants from ethnic minorities. 10% of participants aged 50+ entered work on leaving Priority 1.

**Table 4.5: Progress towards equality targets – Priority 4**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
4.1	Participants	24,500	68,780	+44,280
4.5	Disabled	27%	37%	+10% points
4.7	Aged 50 plus	30%	19%	-11% points
4.8	Ethnic minorities	1%	2%	+1% points
4.9	Female	51%	39%	-12% points

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (November 2014)

Table 4.5 above shows that the proportion of female participants is 12 percentage points below the target of 51%. Participants with disabilities and those from ethnic minorities have exceeded the programme targets by 10 percentage points and one percentage point respectively.

Participants aged 50+ make up 19% of Priority 4 participants (compared to a target of 30%). The participation rate for participants aged 50+ at programme level is 17% - see table 4.1).

**Table 4.6: 'In work on leaving' indicators (no targets) – Priority 4**

OP Indicator Reference	Programme Indicator	Cumulative achievement
------------------------	---------------------	------------------------

Number.		
4.15	In work on leaving (as % of all leavers)	17%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>	
	Female	31%
	Disabled	21%
	50+	16%
	Ethnic Minority	2%

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (November 2014)

The table above shows that 31% of all Priority 4 leavers are in work on leaving.

Participants from ethnic minorities make up only two percentage point of those in work on leaving. This reflects the small ethnic minority population in the South West.

**Table 4.7: Progress towards equality targets - Priority 2**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points)
2.1	Participants	825,000	1,780,830	955,830
2.5	Disabled	15%	7%	-8% points
2.6	Aged 50 plus	20%	18%	-2% point
2.7	Ethnic minorities	13%	15%	+2% points
2.8	Female	50%	47%	-3% points

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (November 2014)

Table 4.7 above shows that the total number of participants for priority 2 has exceed the Priority's target of 825,000 by 955,830.

The female participation rate is only three percentage points below the 50% target for Priority 2.

The proportion of disabled participants in Priority 2 is 7 percentage points below the target of 15%.

The proportion of ethnic minority participants is two percentage points above target.

Table 4.8 below shows that 40% of Priority 2 participants achieve basic skills. Over half of the participants gaining basic skills were female (54%) and a fifth (20%) of those gaining basic skills were participants from ethnic minorities (28%).

Nearly half of the participants achieving level 2 qualifications were female (44%) and 18% of participants achieving level 2 qualifications were aged 50+.

**Table 4.8: `Gained basic skills' indicators (no targets) – priority 2**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement
2.9	Gained basic skills	152,000	167,112
2.9b	Gained basic skills	45%	40%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	57%
	Disabled	N/A	8%
	50+	N/A	12%
	Ethnic Minority	N/A	20%
2.10a	Gained level 2	135,000	333,952
2.10b	Gained level 2	40%	43%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	44%
	Disabled	N/A	8%
	50+	N/A	18%
	Ethnic minority	N/A	16%

Source: DWP `INES' ESF Database (November 2014)

**Table 4.9: progress towards equality targets - Priority 5**

OP Indicator Reference Number.	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement	Difference +/- (% points )
5.1	Participants	50,200	106,376	+56,176
5.8	Disabled	17%	10%	-7% points
5.9	Aged 50 plus	22%	18%	-4% points
5.10	Ethnic minorities	1%	2%	+1% point
5.12	Female	51%	53%	+2% points

Source: DWP `INES' ESF Database (November 2014)

Table 4.9 above shows that the total number of participants in Priority 5 exceeds the Priority target of 50,200 by 56,176.

The participation rate for Priority 5 females exceeds the 51% by two percentage points.

The participation rate for disabled participants is 7 percentage points below the target of 17%.

**Table 4.10: `Gained basic skills' indicators (no targets) – Priority 5**

OP Indicator Reference	Programme Indicator	Target	Cumulative achievement
------------------------	---------------------	--------	------------------------

Number.			
5.12a	Gained <b>basic</b> skills	8,200	10,326
	<i>Of whom.....</i>	N/A	
	Female	N/A	55%
	Disabled	N/A	10%
	50+	N/A	15%
	Ethnic Minority	N/A	2%
5.13a	Gained <b>level 2</b>	7,300	13,768
5.13b	Gained <b>level 2</b>	40%	44%
	<i>Of whom.....</i>		
	Female	N/A	44%
	Disabled	N/A	9%
	50+	N/A	17%
	Ethnic minority	N/A	2%

Source: DWP INES ESF Database (November August 2014)

Table 4.10 above shows that 55% of those gaining basic skills in Priority 5 were women. The table also shows that 44% of those gaining level 2 qualifications were women.

The small percentage of ethnic minority participants gaining basic skills and level 2 qualifications reflects the small population in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

## Section 6: Progress towards aims 2 - 3 of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan

This section of the report provides a brief overview of progress towards Aims 2 and 3 of the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming plan.

### **Aim 2: To maintain on-going commitments made in the ESF Operational programme in order to help ensure that legislative and regulatory requirements concerning gender equality and equal opportunities are met**

Milestone 2.1 To maintain the role of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities sub-committee, ensuring that it reports to the national ESF Programme Monitoring Committee and helps ensure that equality is embedded into the ESF programme in terms of planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

#### **Progress so far**

Meetings of the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities have been held annually, each December, since 2011 and annual mainstreaming reports have been published each year for the programme. The subcommittee will meet in early 2016 to discuss the progress reports for 2014 and 2015 ( the final set of ESF management information monitoring data will be available by then).

The Skills Funding Agency report on supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to access European Social Fund Priority 2 and 5 provision has been drafted and the main findings were presented to the ESF gender equality and equal opportunities subcommittee in December 2013. The report was published in early 2014.

The mainstreaming plan has been updated and was published on the ESF web site in March 2014.

All of the evaluation reports contain appropriate sections on equal opportunities including the cohort survey, the Priority 1 and 4 evaluation and the forthcoming families with multiple problems provision evaluation.

**Aim 3: To consider lessons learned from the gender equality and equal opportunities mainstreaming approach during the 2007-2013 programme and to take these into account when mainstreaming equality in the next programme period.**

The ESF Evaluation Synthesis report for the first half of the programme will be published in 2014 and will include references to gender equality and equal opportunities.

The Managing Authority has prepared a lessons learned report which will be discussed at the final meeting of the equal opportunities subcommittee in early 2016.

## **Section 7: Conclusions**

One of the main aims of the ESF gender equality mainstreaming plan is to increase the female participation rate for the programme so that it reaches the 51% target during the second half of the programme period.

The current female participation rate (at programme level) of 38% is the same as that achieved in the first half of the year and represents a 13 percentage point deficit in terms of the 51% target. When NOMs data is removed from the MI database report, the female representation at programme level is 43% - which is 8 percentage points below the 51% target (although 2 percentage points higher than that achieved in the first half of the programme period).

When female representation is broken down by priority level, it can be seen that the female representation target has only been achieved in Priority 5 (where it has exceeded the percentage target by 3 percentage points). Female representation in Priority 1 (34%) is two percentage points higher than in the first half of the programme - but this still represents a target deficit of 13 percentage points. Female representation on Priority 5 is 5 percentage points lower than in the first half of the programme and is 15% points below the 51% target. Female representation in Priority 2 is 47% - which is the same as in the first half of the programme.

It is interesting to note that, for the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) CFO, the female participation rate in Priority 1 increased from 37% to 40% (a three percentage point increase). The SFA CFO has made a great effort to promote female participation in

response to the Action Note 70 exercise. Whilst a causal link cannot be proven, it is quite plausible that this increase is due to the SFA's increased efforts to promote female participation in response to Action Note 70.

The female participation rate for DWP CFO in Priority 1 has also increased from 33% in the first half of the programme to 52% - and this probably reflects the change in the target groups for this provision – with families with multiple problems provision being more likely to include female participants.

The Action Note 70 exercise has undoubtedly raised the overall level of awareness of the need to achieve a higher level of female percentage across programme partners which can only help in the next programme period.

Good overall progress has been made towards the other equality targets and output indicators for the programme. The participation rates for people from ethnic minorities and for disabled people are only one and two percentage points below target and the participation rate for older people aged 50 or over is only three percentage points below target.

The participation rate for disabled people in Priority 2 remains at 8 percentage points below target which is disappointing.

## **Section 8: Recommendations**

The main three main recommendations from this report are:

- (i) the Managing Authority and subcommittee should continue to promote gender equality and monitor the programme's performance in terms of gender equality - as well as wider equal opportunities;
- (ii) the lessons learned from delivering the 2007-2013 ESF programme should be carried forward into the mainstreaming approach for the new programme; and
- (iii) the Skills Funding Agency should continue to act on the good practice they identified in promoting disability disclosure ( especially in Priority 2).

Carrying forward the lessons learned can be done by integrating these into the equality survey ( where appropriate) and by taking the equality survey and separate lessons learned report into account when preparing the equality mainstreaming strategy for ESF in the new programme.

### **Annex 1: Action Note 70 Update**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/309574/action-note-070-12.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/309574/action-note-070-12.pdf)



**European Union**  
**European Social Fund**  
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# **2007-2013 Action Note**

**Reference Number:** 070/12 UPDATED  
**Date Issued:** 24 January 2014  
**Review date:** 30 September 2014

## **Action to increase the female participation rate in the second half of the 2007-2013 ESF programme**



## Who

ESF Managing Authority; the Greater London Authority (GLA EPMU); GLA CFO; and ESF Co-financing Organisations (CFO).

## What

This action note is a **further update to Action Note 070/12 UPDATE** that was issued on 22 January 2013. ESF Division has agreed to provide the European Commission with **two further progress reports** on action taken by CFOs to increase female participation during 2014. CFOs should send updated CFO Provider Priority Lists and CFO Provider Review Schedules (see annexe 1) to ESFD **on 30 April 2014 and 31 October 2014**.

**CFOs should also encourage their best performing providers to apply for the 2014 ESF Gender Equality Award.** The criteria for the 2014 award will be amended to reward projects that are taking the most effective action to increase female participation.

## Cleared

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## Background

1. The European Commission has asked ESFD and its partners to take action to increase the female participation rate to achieve the Operational Programme (OP) targets during the second half of the programme. This will mean aiming to achieve an overall female participation rate of 51% across the OP in contracts starting in 2011-2013 (compared to 38% achieved in the first half of the programme). It will not be

possible to achieve the female participation for the whole of the 2007-2013 programme. The programme will, therefore, aim to achieve the targets for the 2011-2013 period only.

2. Action Note 70, issued on 24 February 2012, required CFOs to review the performance of individual providers in terms of the extent to which female participants were accessing their provision. CFOs were asked to: (a) identify providers who had a female participation rate of less than 51% using the CFO Provider List pro-forma in Action Note 70; (b) compile a CFO Provider Review Schedule providing details of when the providers would be reviewed and the action that had been agreed with providers to try to improve female participation during the remainder of their contracts; and (c) send completed returns to ESFD who would report on progress made to the European Commission and national ESF Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Sub Committee. This exercise was repeated in 2013.

3. Although good progress was made in establishing the CFO provider lists and review schedules during 2012 – 2013, further completed CFO provider review schedules will be required explaining what action has been agreed with providers during 2014 (where further action is appropriate).

## Action

4. CFOs should send an updated Priority List of Providers and an updated CFO Provider Review Schedule (see Annex 1 for both) to ESFD **on 30 April 2014.**

5. The priority List of Providers and CFO Provider Review Schedule will need to be **reviewed and updated during the year and further updated versions will need to be sent to ESFD on 31 October 2014.**

6. NOMS CFO should only include providers who are failing to achieve their 9% female participation rate target on provider lists / review schedules. (NOMS is an exceptional case, given the nature of its provision.)

7. Smaller CFOs will need to complete the provider lists and schedules for individual underperforming project providers even where the CFO's overall provision exceeds the 51% female participation rate.

8. A good practice checklist to help inform discussions and reviews with CFOs is provided in Annex 2.

9. **CFOs should also encourage their best performing providers to apply for the**

**2014 ESF Gender Equality Award.** The criteria for the 2014 award will be amended to reward projects that are taking the most effective action to increase female participation. Details of the ESF Gender Leader Awards will become available in May 2014 when the annual ESF Leader Awards are launched.

## Contact

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## Annex 1

### CFO Provider Priority List (Female Participation)

CFO: .....

CFO Provider name	Is the provider achieving a female participation rate of 51% ( yes / no)	If the provider is not achieving a female participation rate of 51% when does their current contract end?	Should this provider be included in the review schedule (see table below)? Yes/No  (Consider scope for future action.)	If this provider should not be included in the visits schedule – explain reason.

## CFO Provider Review Schedule (Female Participation)

CFO.....

CFO Provider name (selected from priority list)	When will this provider be reviewed? ( either indicate date OR  Indicate which quarter of calendar year 2012 / 2013)	Date of actual review	Action taken / future action future action agreed

## Annex 2: Good practice checklist for promoting female participation in ESF provision

This basic and generic checklist aims to help generate ideas for action and inform discussions between CFOs and providers when considering ways to promote female participation in ESF.

The questions and issues in section 1 relate primarily to recruitment of women – an obvious way of increasing female participation. Sections 2 and 3 relate to issues which may encourage those women who are recruited to remain in training or on the provision rather than leave the ESF support prematurely.

The checklist below is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. CFO staff will obviously wish to add their own ideas and tailor the generic checklist below so that it is appropriate for discussions with their providers.

### 1. Consider how the provider engages and recruits women:

- Does the provider promote its project via 'word of mouth'? How do they do this?
- Does the provider use outreach? For example does outreach extend to: school gates? shopping malls? children's centres? GP surgeries? local community centres?
- Has the provider asked female participants what they think about the recruitment process and promotional material? What positive feedback did they receive? What negative feedback did they receive? What action needs to be taken?
- Is support for childcare clearly advertised and promoted in the provider's promotional material?
- Does the provider recruit via informal activity such as coffee mornings or informal taster sessions?
- How does the provider / project work with referral agencies and other organisations? Are the referral agencies aware of the need for ESF to help women as well as men? What more could the provider do to raise this awareness?
- Does the project advertise on flyers and newspaper adverts using positive images of women?
- Has the project considered using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and web blogs?

## **2. Consider the structure and content of provision:**

- Is provision accessible to women? How do you know? Have female participants been consulted? What did they say?
- Has the provider reviewed the content of their provision? Is it gender sensitive, flexible, creative and tailored? Have they consulted female participants on how they feel about content / structure of provision? What issues have arisen and how have they been dealt with?
- Is the duration of the course / support appropriate? Where is the flexibility?
- Could on-line learning or training be an option?
- Is there an initial assessment? How does this address women's needs/ aims / objectives?
- How would the participant know that childcare is provided (other than specifically requesting it when joining)?
- How does the provision build confidence – especially for women in jobs/ work placements / sectors which are non-traditional / male dominated?
- What help is available for women wishing to start their own business?
- What about work experience or volunteering opportunities?
- What are the reasons for women leaving the project early?

## **3. Support:**

- Should be personalised
- Should be planned and offered in ways that lead to independence
- Would women-only groups be appropriate?
- Does the provider use mentors and buddies?
- Does the provider build group support?
- Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is essential at each stage of the learning journey
- Progression routes and advice need to be tailored and realistic

### Annex 3: Equality targets and target groups – A position statement

**Equality indicators and targets** were negotiated and agreed for the programme. Equality indicators and targets help to assess the extent to which people with different ‘protected characteristics’ (e.g. gender, race, age, and disability) are accessing the programme. Equality indicators and targets support the public duty to promote equality by monitoring the extent to which disadvantaged people with ‘protected characteristics’ have access to ESF support. The monitoring of equality indicators **helps ESFD and CFOs fulfil their legal obligations** to promote equality.

The programme has target groups (e.g. unemployed, inactive, low skilled employees etc). The justification for supporting people who fall into the target groups was made in the programme’s ex-ante evaluation – which considers the status of various groups in the labour market. The concept of target groups **helps the programme focus support on those who need it most.**

Equality indicators/targets and target groups therefore serve different purposes:

- equality indicators/targets help us fulfil our legal obligations; and
- target groups provide a focus for support to help ensure that ESF supports those with greatest need.

There is, of course, some overlap since some people who fall into the programme target groups will also have protected characteristics which relate to the equality targets.

Although women are not intrinsically a *specific* target group in the ESF programme (except for part time women employees in Priority 2), providers must ensure that women from across the unemployed / inactive / disadvantaged target groups have access to the ESF programme. For example, providers targeting disabled people or employees without level 2 for example need to consider whether female disabled people or female employees without level 2 are accessing ESF support.

It is therefore important to make sure that when providers target disadvantaged people they do so with a corresponding ‘gender focus’. This can include actively encouraging more women to take part in ESF, as well as making sure that the support offered is appropriate and helps meet the needs of disadvantaged women - for example by ensuring flexible support, providing confidence building and offering care support where needed.

#### **Providers MUST NOT:**

- **use female ‘quotas’;**
- **reject individual eligible men in the target groups; or**
- **put men at some other disadvantage in order to help achieve a female equality target.**

**Providers are therefore not being asked to reject men – but to redouble efforts to attract more female participants.**