DWP Provider Guidance ESF 2014 to 2020

Chapter 2: Strategic Working Relationships and Working with Partners

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Overview of partnership working

2.1 Effective partnership working is vital to your delivery of DWP ESF 2014-2020 provision and you will be required to work with a wide range of local partners. This chapter sets out the high level requirements for developing working relationships between yourself and your partners.

2.2 Local partners may include, but are not limited to:
- Local Enterprise Partnership areas
- Local Authorities
- Department for Work and Pensions / Jobcentre Plus
- regional European Social Fund partners
- employers
- National Offender Management Service
- Probation Services
- Skills Funding Agency
- Big Lottery
- other LEP area ESF funded providers
- local health services
- housing providers
- voluntary and community sector and specialist organisations

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• Sure Start Children’s Centres
• statutory partners named in the Child Poverty Act
• other DWP welfare to work providers for example Work Programme and Work Choice.

2.3 You must establish robust and effective long term working relationships with all your contacts and local partners. You will need to determine how these relationships are maintained and it will be up to you and partners to agree joint engagement arrangements including the level and frequency.

2.4 For London Troubled Families see Annex 1a for further detail on working with local partners.

2.5 Your DWP Performance Manager will need to be kept informed of these relationships and the extent to which they are working to support your provision delivery.

Working with Local Enterprise Partnership areas

2.6 As the contracting body, DWP will be your single point of contact. DWP will facilitate contact between you and the LEP area representatives where it is deemed to be necessary. There will be no requirement for you to contact LEP area representatives directly; or for LEP area representatives to contact you directly.

Working with DWP/Jobcentre Plus

2.7 Each CPA will have at least one DWP ESF manager who will be able to help you build links to Jobcentre Plus locally.

2.8 The DWP ESF manager will work with District colleagues to ensure that Jobcentre Plus advisers fully understand the process for signposting potential participants to you and will take forward any issues with this process.

Interaction with the Work Programme

2.9 It is essential that you work closely with Work Programme partners operating in your CPA. This will help to ensure smooth transition when participants in your provision wish to volunteer for the Work Programme instead, or when your participants are mandated to start on the Work Programme.

2.10 Working with Work Programme partners may also help you to identify Work Programme participants who are approaching the end of their time on the Work Programme and may wish to volunteer for this provision when they leave.

Interaction with other DWP Provision

2.11 Details of mainstream DWP provision which affects participation in DWP ESF provision are given at Annex 2. Any exchange of information about participants with other providers must be in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
Participation in other programmes and initiatives

2.12 You are expected to help participants to access other relevant services which they may be eligible for so that DWP ESF 2014-2020 provision is experienced as part of a coherent package of employment and skills support where applicable. When participants are referred to other services, you must ensure an effective exchange of information to help deliver a seamless service to the participant. Any exchange must be in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Skills Funding Agency

2.13 The SFA is responsible for the funding and procurement of all skills provision. You should be clear on the provision supported by the SFA, identify and make links with these organisations locally to avoid duplication.

Big Lottery Fund

2.14 The Big Lottery Fund supports projects that tackle poverty, improve employability and promote social inclusion. You should be clear on the provision supported by the Big Lottery Fund, identify and make links with these organisations locally to avoid duplication.

National Offender Management Service

2.15 NOMS are responsible for commissioning and delivering adult offender management services for those who are in custody and in the community.