

Funding Guidance for the Local Skills Improvement Fund

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest

May 2023

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1 Summary

1.1 Purpose of document

This guidance contains information about the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) and how to apply.

The LSIF is being made available to collaborations of FE providers to enable them to respond to the priorities in the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) that will be published later this year.

There are two stages to the application process:

- i. an initial stage 1 expression of interest (EOI) for mobilisation funding
- ii. a stage 2 application for delivery funding.

This guidance provides information on how to apply for stage 1 mobilisation funding, including:

- which institutions are eligible to lead an application and/or to receive funding
- details of the LSIP areas (annex 1)
- · activities and items that are eligible for mobilisation funding
- the criteria that will be used to assess stage 1 EOI applications

At stage 2, applicants will need to provide detailed information about the projects to be delivered, including a breakdown of activities, costs, delivery targets and timescales. To help with planning for stage 2, this guidance also contains information about the activities and items that will be eligible for LSIF funding under the project delivery phase.

Guidance on the stage 2 application process will be published in the week commencing Monday 26 June 2023.

1.2 Who is it for?

This guidance is for further education providers, in England, who want to lead both the stage 1 and stage 2 application for LSIF funding on behalf of the provider collaboration for their area and for those providers who want to be part of the collaboration.

Those eligible to lead an application are:

- Further Education (FE) Colleges¹
- Institutions designated as being part of the further education sector² (Designated Institutions (DIs)
- Institute of Technology (IoT) licensees

¹ Defined as any further education college which is conducted by an FE Corporation under Section 91(3) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

² These are institutions that have been designated as being part of the FE sector under S28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

Other post-16 providers who are eligible to be delivery partners in LSIF funded projects include but are not limited to the following types of providers:

- Independent Training Providers (ITPs)
- Sixth-form colleges³
- 16-19 academies
- Schools with sixth forms
- Local Authority providers
- Higher Education Institutions
- University Technology Colleges

This guidance will also be of interest to:

- Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) designated to lead a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for a specified area
- The Greater London Authority (GLA) and Combined and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs)
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)
- Other local stakeholders with an interest in the Local Skills Improvement Plans and Local Skills Improvement Fund

1.3 Main points

- The funding available through the LSIF will consist of £80m in 2023-24 (£40m revenue and £40m capital) and £85m (capital) in 2024-25.
- Up to £100,000 mobilisation funding (taken from the £80m in 2023-24) will be available for each LSIP area to support the development of the stage 2 LSIF application.
- Mobilisation funding will be paid in arrears in respect of funding claims submitted by the lead applicant.
- At stage 2 each area may apply for up to a ceiling amount, which is based on the working age population, attainment and productivity levels of an area (annex 1).

2 Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE), referred to in this document as 'the department', is making the LSIF available to enable FE providers to respond to the priorities in the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). These will be submitted by Employer Representative Bodies (ERBs) by 31 May 2023 and published in the summer.

The LSIF is designed to support transformational activity across each of the 38 geographic areas covered by the Local Skills Improvement Plans and builds on the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) which was piloted in 2021-22 and rolled out across

³ References to sixth form colleges are to institutions conducted by sixth form college corporations as per s.91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

England in 2022-23. It is available in two stages to support collaborative activity between providers across an area, investment for new facilities and courses which meet local skill needs, and to support excellence in college leadership, governance and teaching.

Responding to the LSIP priorities will require a collaborative effort between FE providers across an area. In developing their proposals, providers should develop a collaborative structure that is appropriate for their area, building on the arrangements developed under the Strategic Development Fund.

Each area will need a lead applicant to apply for the funding. It is for providers within an area to agree between themselves which of them will lead the application. Once a lead applicant has been identified, they should communicate this to other providers in the area so that those interested in being part of the collaboration may do so.

Collaborations can use the draft LSIP priorities shared with them on 31 March 2023 to develop their stage 1 application.

All providers regardless of their role in LSIF are responsible for seeking their own independent legal advice to ensure that any project proposals in which they are involved comply with relevant legislation, including the new Subsidy Control Act, Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Charity Law.

2.1 Stage 1: Mobilisation funding (June to September 2023)

Up to £100,000 mobilisation funding will be available for each area to support initial engagement activity linked to the development of the full set of project proposals submitted at stage 2. Projects submitted at stage 2 must align with and respond to the priorities in their respective LSIP and be of an appropriate scale and size to demonstrate impact but be manageable and have a clear focus and defined outputs. As a guide, we would expect each area to identify between two and six project proposals.

The lead applicant should complete and submit the application for mobilisation funding using this guidance. Mobilisation funding will be paid in arrears to the lead applicant in respect of funding claims submitted by them to the DfE. The lead applicant is responsible for managing and distributing the mobilisation funding to the partnership as appropriate. Claims for mobilisation funding cannot be submitted until the stage 2 application window has closed. Supporting evidence will be required to confirm expenditure and should be submitted with funding claims.

Providers are not expected to make a match fund contribution towards mobilisation funding. However, any spend committed above the level approved will be at the lead applicant, project lead provider and collaboration delivery partners' own expense.

2.2 Stage 2: Delivery funding (October 2023 to March 2025)

We will issue separate guidance on the stage 2 application process. Applications for stage 2 funding can only be submitted if an application for mobilisation funding has been approved. Stage 2 applications will need to contain detailed information about the projects to be delivered, including a breakdown of project activities, costs, delivery targets and timescales, together with robust evidence of deliverability and sustainability.

The funding available at stage 2 will vary. Each area will have a funding ceiling based on the working age population⁴, weighted by attainment⁵ and productivity level of an area⁶ (see annex 1). All data is published at local authority district level and aggregated to obtain a measure for each LSIP area. Where the calculation for an area falls below a 'base' level, the ceiling for that area has been brought up to this level.

Stage 2 approved projects will be funded from October 2023 to March 2025.

The timeline for stage 1 and stage 2 applications is set out in section 10.3.

3 Application process: eligibility criteria

All applications must be submitted by a lead applicant on behalf of the collaboration using the form provided. The lead applicant is responsible for bringing together the partnership to develop both the stage 1 EOI application and the more detailed project proposals and costings to be contained in the stage 2 application.

Each project must have a lead provider, who will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the project or projects. Some collaborations may choose to have the same project lead for all projects. The lead applicant may also be a project lead. Other collaborations may want to spread the responsibility for leading projects between different providers in the collaboration.

Other providers may also be involved in the development and delivery of LSIF proposals as a Collaboration delivery provider.

3.1 Who can lead an application?

The lead applicant must be one of the following types of institution:

⁴ Working Population Size: To estimate the working population size in each area we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2021 population estimates for 19-64 year olds.

⁵ Existing attainment Levels: Attainment levels are measured by calculating the proportion of the 16-64 population without a Level 3 + qualification, and weighting this to reflect the 19-64 population. Attainment levels are obtained from the Annual Population Survey (APS) from January 2021 to December 2021.

⁶ Productivity: This is based on the Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (current prices) multiplied by the 19-64 population. GVA data is published by the ONS and 2020 data has been used (data is not currently available for 2021).

- A General Further Education College⁷
- An institution which has been designated as being in the Further Education sector8
- Institute of Technology (IoT) licensee

These institutions are eligible to act as the lead applicant because of their overall size and breadth of provision, and their focus on post-16 technical education and training.

Where the application is led by an institution acting in its capacity as the licensee of an IoT, we expect all other FE colleges in the area that are not part of the IoT to be involved also, as well as other eligible FE providers as appropriate. This is in recognition that the provision required in response to the LSIP priorities may be outside the delivery focus of the IoT, and that a core objective of the fund is to drive collaboration between a potentially wider group of FE providers across an area and to build the overall capacity and capability of the FE sector to respond to local skills priorities.

Eligible FE providers can be a lead applicant for more than one area where they meet the criteria but must ensure they have the capacity to lead and deliver the LSIP priorities for the number of areas where they lead.

3.2 Who can be a project lead provider

To be a project lead, the provider must be one of the following types of institution:

- A General Further Education College
- An institution which has been designated as being in the Further Education sector
- Institute of Technology (IoT) licensee

We expect project lead providers to be those institutions that already offer a wide breath of post-16 technical education and training, and be of a size that supports the capacity and capability needed to undertake this role. All project leads must have the capacity to be able to lead a broad range of collaboration partners from across the overall area, building and extending collaborative working where needed; and be able to enter and manage contractual relationships with other providers; and manage and report against project delivery aims.

3.3 Additional eligibility criteria for lead applicants and project lead providers

Unless there are exceptional circumstances⁹, we would not expect the lead applicant or project lead providers to:

have a current Ofsted grade for overall effectiveness of less than Good

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⁷ Defined as any further education college which is conducted by an FE Corporation as per Section 91(3) of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

⁸ These are institutions that have been designated as being part of the FE sector under S28 of the Further and Higher Education Act

⁹ Except in areas which have no eligible institution that meets this quality bar

- have a published Notice to Improve or
- be in intervention status for finance or quality, unless they have moved into post-intervention, monitoring, and support (PIMS).

Providers in the above categories will, however, be able to be collaboration delivery providers and receive funding from the LSIF via the project lead provider.

The Ofsted grade that determines eligibility is the one that a provider has on the date on which the application is submitted. Should this grade change before grant funding award, we reserve the right to review the application. IoTs must have a current IoT licence.

A newly merged college will not have an inspection grade. In these cases, the receiving college will be eligible if the Ofsted grade of the former institution was outstanding (grade 1) or good (grade 2) for overall effectiveness prior to the merger.

We will ask lead applicants and project lead providers to give details of any exceptional circumstances relating to their Ofsted grade, Notice to Improve, intervention status or IoT licence, if applicable. For example, in cases where there are no institutions with a grade for overall effectiveness of good or outstanding in the LSIP area.

3.4 Who is eligible to be a collaboration delivery partner?

We expect collaborations to reflect the breath of post-16 technical education and training providers within an area, recognising the distinctive roles different provider types can play in responding to skills priorities identified in the LSIP. FE providers eligible to be part of the collaboration include, but are not limited to, the following provider types:

- A General Further Education College
- An institution which has been designated as being in the Further Education sector
- An Institute of Technology (IoT)
- Independent Training Providers (ITPs)
- Sixth-form colleges and academies
- Schools with sixth forms
- Local Authority providers
- HFIs
- University Technology Colleges

Eligible providers must have a UKPRN to receive LSIF funding either directly from the department as a lead applicant or project lead provider, or as a collaboration delivery provider via a sub-contract with the project lead provider. This includes small and medium enterprises (SMEs) or voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in their capacity as a provider but not in another capacity outside this scope. Lead applicants, project lead providers and collaboration delivery providers can purchase goods and services from suppliers using LSIF funding but second tier sub-contracting arrangements

with other learning providers are not permitted. Limiting sub-contracting tiers will facilitate more effective oversight and ensure more funding is directed to front line delivery.

Providers located outside an area who have specialist expertise relevant to the project proposals, including providers offering peer-to-peer support, are eligible to join the collaboration and receive funding through LSIF regardless of their location. Lead applicants and the wider collaboration should also consider where small and niche providers with particular specialisms can add value to projects and be active in their delivery.

College groups may be involved in multiple applications linked to where they have colleges or campuses. Where a college or provider campus is part of a wider group, it should be included in the application for the area where it is situated. Training providers which operate across the country could also be involved in multiple projects but must have the capacity to deliver the priorities for each LSIF project they are involved in.

Providers do not have an automatic right to receive funding from the LSIF. Decisions on whether a provider will play an active role in the delivery of a project and receive LSIF funding will be taken by the lead applicant, following consultation with the ERB and other members of the collaboration as part of development of the stage 1 process.

4 Roles and responsibilities

Providers and other partners may be involved in the development and delivery of LSIF proposals at several different levels. These are set out below:

- Lead applicant (who may also lead a project).
- Project lead provider (who will hold a DfE grant funding agreement to deliver one or more LSIF funded projects).
- Collaboration delivery provider (who will receive LSIF funds via the project lead provider but not hold a grant funding agreement in their own right).
- Wider partners (other providers who may be members of the wider partnership
 and contribute to the dialogue on how to respond to LSIP priorities but will not play
 an active role in the delivery of projects and will not receive LSIF funding).

4.1 Lead applicant

The lead applicant is responsible for convening and leading the collaboration in the work to develop the EOI application and subsequent detailed project proposals to be submitted at stage 2; managing and distributing LSIF funding to other members of the collaboration as appropriate; and ensuring overall delivery.

The lead applicant must give all statutory FE colleges located in the area the opportunity to join the collaboration. This includes all general FE colleges and specialist colleges, as well as sixth form colleges where their curriculum includes vocational programmes relevant to local skills priorities. They should also reach out to other provider types,

including small and medium sized providers and niche providers where they have particular specialisms relevant to the LSIP priorities. We have provided the following links to provider lists to assist with this engagement.

<u>16-19 allocations data 2022 to 2023</u>. <u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-allocation-data-2022-to-2023-academic-year</u>

Funding allocations to training providers: 2022 to 2023 - Gov.UK (www.gov.uk)

Lead applicants and project lead providers are responsible for conducting due diligence checks on collaboration delivery partners such as capacity, capability, financial health and compliance with relevant legislation around procurement, subsidy control and obligations due to charity status.

4.2 Project lead provider

The project lead provider is responsible for leading and co-ordinating the delivery of one or more projects. Projects are likely to include a range of other collaboration delivery providers unless it has been agreed within the collaboration as requiring only one provider i.e., to deliver a specialist curriculum area. The project lead provider will hold the grant funding agreement with the department and will have overall responsibility for delivery of the project(s) that they lead. Where delivery involves other providers, this can be done more effectively through a contractual relationship. We would therefore encourage the project lead provider to have a contractual relationship with the other collaboration delivery providers, noting that only one level of sub-contracting is permitted with other providers.

We expect project lead providers to disseminate best practice and other learnings from their project to the wider partnership.

4.3 Collaboration delivery provider

A collaboration delivery provider is any provider within the LSIF collaboration that is contributing their knowledge, experience and expertise of working in the FE sector and/or with employers to help shape the design and delivery of one of more projects that will respond to the skills priorities set out in the LSIPs. They may also receive LSIF funding through the project lead provider. They will not have a direct contractual relationship with the department. Collaboration delivery partners can purchase goods and services from suppliers using LSIF funding but second tier sub-contracting arrangements with other learning providers is not permitted.

4.4 Wider partners

Other providers, employers and stakeholders may contribute to the dialogue on how to respond to LSIP priorities but not play an active role in the delivery of projects or receive LSIF funding. Wider partners may include other providers who, whilst not a formal member of the LSIF collaboration, may have a role in offering progression routes into and out of

LSIF funded provision technical provision. They may also engage in some activities delivered through LSIF projects e.g., participating in and benefitting from Continuing Professional Development activity where there is no additional cost to the project.

Wider partners include local authorities and MCAs, including in their role as commissioners of other skills provision. In Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, where deeper devolution trailblazer deals have been agreed, this engagement will be supported through the new Post 16 Technical Education and Skills Governance Boards which are being established to provide strategic oversight of post 16 technical skills in each area. The Board will have a number of roles including a role in signing off the LSIF application before submission to the department to ensure that it aligns with the LSIP and wider labour market strategies.

5 Stage 1 Mobilisation funding: eligible spend

This section includes a summary of the activities and costs that are eligible to be funded using mobilisation funding. Further details are at annex 3.

To support delivery planning, a list of eligible and ineligible activities and costs for stage 2 (delivery funding) is provided at annex 4 for information only, to aid planning. Project delivery activities should not be included in the stage 1 application form.

All costs must:

- relate solely to the delivery of the LSIF programme and be within the activities set out in section 5.2 eligible activities and costs; and
- not relate to business-as-usual collaborative activities that would have been undertaken in any event.

Collaborations are not required to provide match funding. However, when developing proposals, consideration should be given to ways in which mainstream funding or employer contributions could be used to support or enhance LSIF projects.

Grant funding agreements for mobilisation funding will be issued in week commencing 26 June 2023, and will only cover eligible costs incurred between the date on which the grant funding agreement has been returned to and signed by the department, up to and including Friday 15 September 2023. Claims for mobilisation funding can only be submitted by the lead applicant after the stage 2 application window has closed.

5.1 Eligible recipients

Only those FE providers who are eligible to lead an application can apply for the LSIF mobilisation funding and make claims to the department. All other FE providers who are eligible to be part of the collaboration and other organisations who incur costs as a result

of LSIF mobilisation eligible activities (agreed with the lead applicant) must make their claim to the lead applicant. Final decisions on whether a provider is eligible to receive LSIF funding rests with the department.

5.2 Eligible activities and costs

Applicants can only apply for mobilisation funding for activities that are new and linked to the delivery of LSIP priorities; and included within the list of eligible costs outlined in this section, and not already funded through other funding streams.

Applicants must ensure that in all cases the LSIF is not used to duplicate or displace activities for which funding from other sources have been provided.

The final decision on whether activities are eligible for LSIF funding rests with the department. Funding decisions are subject to discretion, including that no mobilisation funding may be awarded.

5.2.1 Staffing costs

Mobilisation funding may be used for:

- staff cover and backfill costs, for example, to cover staff engagement in collaborative activities linked to the development of LSIF projects
- staff support from a partner provider (subject to invoices being supplied)
- administration and finance costs associated with the development of the LSIF proposals, but only if additionally incurred.

Mobilisation funding cannot be used for staff undertaking business as usual functions.

Staff costs should be proportionate for the grade of the activity. It is expected that staff will be employed at a working level and on commensurate rates. Costs for senior staff who do not have a direct teaching role are not fundable unless temporary staff or consultants have been recruited / contracted to cover all or part of their role.

5.2.2 External expertise - revenue costs

Mobilisation funding may be used to meet the costs of any specialist consultancy work needed to support the development of project design. Day rates can vary dependant on location and other factors, and we would expect average day rates to be between £300-£750 per day, including VAT. Lead applicants should seek approval from the department to pay rates above this value. A robust rationale must be provided outlining the specialised nature of the work required. Requests should be made via the DfE e-tendering platform Jaggaer during the stage 2 application window.

5.2.3 External expertise – capital costs

Mobilisation funding can be used to engage the support of appropriate experts on proposals for capital works to enable providers to develop conceptual ideas, project

timescales and costs. For example, a provider may have a conceptual idea to convert an existing workshop. Mobilisation funding could be used to engage professional consultants to develop layout plans, initial cost estimates and a delivery programme.

5.2.4 Consultation and provider engagement

All consultation and provider engagement activity must be directly linked to the development of the provider response to LSIP the priorities and must not duplicate work already undertaken by the ERB and funded through the LSIP.

Refreshments may be included to support face-to-face engagement of more than two hours but must be capped at £12 per head (inclusive of VAT). Refreshment costs at shorter engagements are not eligible.

5.2.5 Travel and subsistence

Travel and subsistence and other clearly evidenced additional costs are eligible where they are wholly connected to the purpose of conducting eligible LSIF activities and a face-to-face meeting is conducive to that activity. All such costs must be reasonable and proportionate. Annex 3 provides further details on travel and subsistence spending caps.

5.2.6 Value added tax (VAT)

VAT may be claimed but should only be included within eligible spend where lead applicants, project lead providers and collaboration delivery partners are unable to recover this separately. All non-recoverable VAT should be added to the claim. Where VAT has not been included in the original claim, it will not be funded.

6 Stage 1 Mobilisation funding: ineligible spend

This section includes a summary of the ineligible activities and costs under the mobilisation funding. Further details are contained in annex 3.

Any costs not included in section 5 are ineligible for LSIF mobilisation funding. Where the lead applicant is uncertain as to whether a cost is eligible, they should contact the DfE via the e-tendering platform <u>Jaggaer</u>. Further instructions on how to register on <u>Jaggaer</u> can be found in section 9.

Mobilisation funding cannot be used for activities or costs that are not related to LSIP related activities.

When developing proposals, the lead applicant must ensure that there is no duplication between the LSIF funding and other funding streams. These include but are not limited to Skills Bootcamps, the FE Capital Transformation Fund, T Levels, the Post-16 Capacity Fund, Skills Injection Funds or other wider government support for skills related activity including through the UK shared prosperity fund (UKSPF).

Further details on ineligible activities and costs for the mobilisation funding are outlined in annex 3.

7 Application process

Applications for stage 1 must be prepared and submitted using this guidance and the LSIF EOI application form. All mandatory sections of the application form must be completed. Annex 5 provides guidance on how to complete the application form.

There must only be **one EOI application per area**. There are 41 areas in total - this reflects the 38 LSIP areas, with Greater London disaggregated into four sub-areas. We expect one application from each of the sub-areas in London.

A full list of the LSIP areas is at annex 1.

Applications must be submitted by a lead applicant and must be one of the eligible institution types listed at section 3.

If multiple applications are received for an area, we will require the providers and endorsing ERB to work together to resubmit a single application. In these cases, this may reduce the time applicants will have to develop the stage 2 application form.

7.1 What information applications must contain

Annex 5 provides instructions for completing the EOI application form. In summary, applications should provide the following:

- Evidence to demonstrate that the lead applicant and each project lead provider has the capability and capacity to undertake their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Details of the planned mobilisation activity which will take place in preparation for the stage 2 LSIF application. Planned activities must demonstrate good value for money.
- Confirmation that LSIF mobilisation funding will be used for eligible activities only and that it will not duplicate or displace other funding streams.
- Details of the role and contribution of each member of the collaboration, including:
 - o name of proposed project lead provider for each project
 - o names of providers and other partners to be engaged in the delivery of each project (the collaboration delivery providers). Changes can be made at stage

2 up to the point at which the grant funding agreement (GFA) is finalised. We expect most GFAs for the second stage to be finalised in autumn 2023.

- The LSIP skills priority sectors that the projects will address.
- A high level summary of the projects that will be developed further at stage 2.
- Details of projects that may require support from the technical assistance organisation for capital build / works projects. The criteria for requiring technical assistance include:
 - o Any new build or extensions regardless of estimated build costs.
 - o Repurposing / refurbishment projects which may require planning consent.
 - Repurposing / refurbishment projects with estimated costs of £100,000 or more at any individual campus site within a single funding year (2023/24 and / or 2024/25).
 - Other repurposing / refurbishment works that are considered high-risk (e.g., the proposed works will be undertaken in a listed building).

We acknowledge that some details about the role and contribution of each member of the collaboration may change as full project proposals are developed. We would not expect delivery partners to change after the grant funding agreement has been finalised unless specific circumstances require this.

7.2 How applications will be assessed

All stage 1 applications for mobilisation funding must pass the eligibility check. To pass, proposals must meet the eligibility conditions set out in this section.

7.3 Eligibility criteria

7.3.1 Geographic coverage

The application must align with an LSIP geographic area set out at annex 1.

7.3.2 Lead applicant

The lead applicant must meet the eligibility conditions set out in section 3, have the capability and capacity to perform the role and have the endorsement of the relevant partners.

7.3.3 Project lead providers

Project lead providers must meet the eligibility conditions set out in section 3, have the capacity and capability to perform the role and undertake the responsibilities and have the endorsement of the relevant partners.

7.3.4 Collaboration delivery providers

FE providers who are identified in the application as a collaboration delivery provider must meet the eligibility conditions set out in section 3 to receive LSIF funding to deliver elements of the project.

7.3.5 Provider endorsement

The stage 1 application must be endorsed by each member of the collaboration listed in part A of the application form.

7.3.6 Designated ERB endorsement

The stage 1 application must be signed by the designated ERB¹⁰, confirming that the skills priorities in the application reflect those identified in the LSIP.

For London, the designated ERB (Business London) will be required to endorse the application for each of the London sub-regions before they are submitted to the department, following discussion with the Sub Regional Partners (SRPs). The four London sub-regional LSIF areas are: (1) Central London Forward, (2) West London Alliance, (3) South London Partnership and (4) Local London. The SRPs will be expected to support the development of the application for their sub-area and to engage with the ERB as part of the endorsement process but are not required to formally endorse or sign-the application.

7.3.7 Endorsement arrangements in the 2 MCA deeper devolution areas

In Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, deeper devolution trailblazer deals have been agreed. In these areas a new Post 16 Technical Education and Skills Governance Board will have a strategic oversight role which includes a role in signing off the LSIF application before it is submitted to the department. In these two areas the stage 1 application will need to be signed by both the ERB and the MCA on behalf of the Board. In signing the application, they will be confirming that the application aligns with the LSIP and wider labour market strategies. This endorsement replaces the separate requirement for ERB endorsement which applies to all other areas.

West Midlands Combined Authority: "Trailblazer" deeper devolution deal - GOV.UK

¹⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-employer-representative-bodies

¹¹ Greater Manchester Combined Authority: "Trailblazer" deeper devolution deal - GOV.UK

7.4 Additional criteria

Applications which pass the eligibility check will be assessed against the additional criteria set out in this section.

We will also conduct due diligence checks. We will use this information to assess whether issuing funding to a particular provider might present a significant risk to the department. Where this applies, we will share our findings and discuss this with the relevant provider before a final decision is made.

7.4.1 Wider provider engagement

We expect all applications to demonstrate strong provider engagement across an area, including with those listed in section 3.4, where they offer a broad range of post 16 technical provision; with clear plans in place for securing ongoing engagement with these providers in designing and delivering provision that directly responds to the LSIP priorities for an area.

7.4.2 LSIP priorities

Applications must contain a clear alignment with LSIP priorities, with mobilisation funding used to develop collaborative structures and projects that will address the skills gaps identified in the LSIP.

7.5 Assessment scoring

Each criterion will be assessed separately. The table below outlines how each eligibility and additional criterion will be assessed either as 'met' or 'not met'. If a criterion is assessed as 'not met', the lead applicant will be asked to review and resubmit additional information to meet the eligibility requirements. In these cases, this may reduce the time applicants will have to develop the stage 2 application.

Description	Basis of assessment
Not met	 The information provided in the EOI stage 1 application fails to meet the criterion and/or is inadequate; and/or insufficient supporting evidence has been provided to demonstrate the validity of the response.
Met	 The information provided in the EOI stage 1 application meets the criterion; and there is sufficient relevant evidence to support the response

8 Submission deadline

The deadline for submitting the stage 1 EOI application form is **12:00 on Tuesday 20 June 2023**.

9 How to submit your application

Applications must be submitted by the lead applicant to DfE's e-tendering platform Jaggaer by the deadline. Applications can only be accepted if submitted using the Stage 1: Expressions of Interest application form.

Register to use Jaggaer 12

Jaggaer will be used to store application documentation and for submitting and answering questions related to the application process. This will include a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document and to host all new questions and answers (Q&As). Any questions or clarification requests must be submitted to Jaggaer by Tuesday 13 June 2023.

We will be holding a support event on Tuesday 6 June 2023 for prospective applicants to ask any questions they may have about the process. Details about how to join the event will be set out on Jaggaer.

For help with registration please use the support links on the <u>Jaggaer</u> portal.

10 Next steps

Following the deadline for applications to be submitted, all applications will be assessed against the criteria set out in this guidance.

The department may ask for further information if the application is incomplete or unclear. If proposals do not meet the criteria we may, at our discretion, ask applications to review and resubmit their application. In these cases, this may reduce the time applicants will have to develop the stage 2 application form.

It should be noted that approval of the EOI stage 1 application does not bind the department to funding all detailed projects submitted in the second application stage.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via Jaggaer. We aim to confirm the outcome of this process at the end of June 2023.

10.1 Mobilisation funding claim arrangements

Mobilisation funding will be paid in arrears to the lead applicant in respect of funding claims submitted by them. Claims for mobilisation funding can only be submitted by the

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¹² https://education.app.jaggaer.com/web/login.html

lead applicant after the stage 2 application window has closed. Supporting evidence will be required to confirm expenditure and should be submitted with funding claims. Claims must make clear whether mobilisation costs being claimed are for revenue or capital funding.

The department will not fund any costs it deems to be ineligible or poor value for money. We will require proof of expenditure upon submission of the first grant claim once projects are agreed.

The grant funding agreement for mobilisation funding will be sent to the lead applicant who should sign and return it to the department before committing to any mobilisation expenditure.

10.2 Contacting the department for support

For help with using Jaggaer please use the support links on the <u>Jaggaer</u> portal.

For help with completing the application, please submit a message via the <u>Jaggaer</u> messaging facility.

10.3 Timeline

The proposed timetable for stage 1 and stage 2 applications is set out below.

Action	Deadline
LSIF stage 1 mobilisation funding application window launched: Expressions of Interest (4 weeks)	Wednesday 24 May 2023
Support event (online)	Tuesday 6 June 2023
Deadline for lead applicant to submit stage 1 Expressions of Interest application form via Jaggaer	12:00 Tuesday 20 June 2023
DfE assess stage 1 Expressions of Interest application forms (this period will include asking the lead applicant for clarification where necessary)	W/c 19 June 2023
Lead applicants notified by DfE of the outcome of their application for stage 1 mobilisation funding	W/c 26 June 2023
Grant funding agreements issued to lead applicant confirming eligibility for mobilisation funding	W/c 26 June 2023
LSIF stage 2 funding application window launched for full project proposals (12 weeks)	W/c 26 June 2023
Webinars / drop-ins held led by DfE to support applicants develop their stage 2 funding applications	During July and August 2023

Deadline for lead applicant to submit stage 2 LSIF funding application form via Jaggaer	12:00 Friday 15 September 2023
DfE assess LSIF stage 2 funding applications (this period will include asking the lead applicant for clarification where necessary)	W/c 18 September 2023
Lead applicants notified by DfE of the outcome of their stage 2 LSIF funding application and grant funding agreements issued to project lead providers confirming their project scope and costs	Late October 2023

10.4 Freedom of information and data protection

Please note that the information provided in this application may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the relevant legislation¹³ and will be stored in accordance with the DfE's retention policy and procedures. For further information, please refer to the privacy notice in <u>Jaggaer</u>.

If a request for disclosure of the information applicants have provided is received, the department would consider any request for release very carefully. Such requests will be considered under the relevant legislation. Therefore, the department cannot give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality to applicants. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by applicants' IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.

10.5 Public sector equalities duty

The governing bodies of FE colleges are public authorities for the purposes of the public sector equality duty under section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. It is for applicants to judge whether or not an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is needed for their first stage application in order to comply with their public sector equality duty.

10.6 Complaints process

If applicants are not content with the way in which their stage 1 application has been handled by the department, then applicants should use the DfE's <u>complaint process</u>.

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¹³ Freedom of information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Legislation Act 2018

Annex 1: List of LSIP geographical areas

The table below specifies the local areas only for the purposes of allocating the LSIF funding. There are 41 areas in total including the four sub-areas of Greater London. Also included are the funding ceilings for each area. Proposals cannot exceed these values.

LSIP area	Locations covered	Funding ceiling		
Combined Authorities and Greater London Authority		2023-24	2024-25	Total
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
GLA - sub area 1: Central London Forward	Camden, City of London, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Westminster	£3,265,229	£3,469,306	£6,734,535
GLA- sub area 2: West London Alliance	Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow	£2,364,330	£2,512,101	£4,876,431
GLA – sub-area 3: South London Partnership	Croydon, Kingston Upon Thames, Merton, Richmond, Sutton	£1,227,158	£1,303,855	£2,531,013
GLA – sub area 4: Local London	Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Enfield, Greenwich, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest Bromley	£3,171,283	£3,369,488	£6,540,771
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	£4,121,521	£4,379,116	£8,500,637
Liverpool City Region	Liverpool City Region	£2,223,281	£2,362,236	£4,585,517
North-East	North-East Combined Authority (Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland)	£1,768,813	£1,879,364	£3,648,177
North of Tyne	North of Tyne Combined Authority (Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, North Tyneside)	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000

LSIP area	Locations covered	Funding ceiling		
Combined Authorities and Greater London Authority		2023-24	2024-25	Total
South Yorkshire	South Yorkshire Combined Authority	£2,097,227	£2,228,304	£4,325,531
Tees Valley	Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton on Tees	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
West Midlands (with Warwickshire)	Warwickshire, West Midlands Combined Authority	£5,045,587	£5,360,937	£10,406,524
West of England (with North Somerset)	West of England Combined Authority, North Somerset	£1,446,122	£1,536,504	£2,982,626
West Yorkshire	West Yorkshire Combined Authority	£3,383,296	£3,594,752	£6,978,048

LEP areas	Locations covered	Funding ceiling		
		2023-24	2024-25	Total
Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex (Coast to Capital)	Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex	£2,205,095	£2,342,914	£4,548,009
Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Cheshire and Warrington	Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	Cornwall, Isles of Scilly	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Cumbria	Cumbria	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
D2N2 (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire)	Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire	£3,202,363	£3,402,511	£6,604,874
Dorset	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Dorset	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Enterprise M3 (including all of Surrey)	Hampshire (excluding the districts of Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest), Surrey	£2,915,984	£3,098,233	£6,014,217

LEP areas Locations covered		Funding ceiling		
		2023-24	2024-25	Total
Essex, Southend- on-Sea and Thurrock	Essex, Southend-on-Sea, Thurrock	£2,694,630	£2,863,044	£5,557,674
G First (Gloucestershire)	Gloucestershire	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Greater Lincolnshire	Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North-East Lincolnshire, Rutland	£1,719,900	£1,827,394	£3,547,294
Heart of the South- West	Devon, Plymouth, Somerset, Torbay	£2,453,972	£2,607,346	£5,061,318
Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire	£1,506,406	£1,600,557	£3,106,963
Hull and East Yorkshire	East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Kent and Medway	Kent, Medway	£2,432,227	£2,584,241	£5,016,468
Lancashire	Blackburn and Darwen, Blackpool, Lancashire	£2,210,086	£2,348,217	£4,558,303
Leicester and Leicestershire	Leicester and Leicestershire	£1,487,191	£1,580,140	£3,067,331
New Anglia (Suffolk and Norfolk)	Norfolk, Suffolk	£2,305,244	£2,449,322	£4,754,566
Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Solent	Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, and the following districts in Hampshire: Eastleigh, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, New Forest, Southampton	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
South-East Midlands	Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, North Northamptonshire, West Northamptonshire	£2,525,542	£2,683,388	£5,208,930
Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire	Staffordshire, Stoke-on- Trent	£1,621,452	£1,722,793	£3,344,245
Swindon and Wiltshire	Swindon, Wiltshire	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Thames Valley Berkshire	Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
The Marches	Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000
Worcestershire	Worcestershire	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000

LEP areas	Locations covered	Funding ceiling		
		2023-24	2024-25	Total
York and North Yorkshire	North Yorkshire, York	£1,212,121	£1,287,879	£2,500,000

Annex 2: Roles and responsibilities

There are four categories of providers that will be involved in the LSIF programme. Their roles and responsibilities are:

Stage 1 - Roles and responsibilities for mobilisation

- Lead applicant (who may also lead a project) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them. We expect the lead applicant provider will be a specialist in at least one of the LSIP priority areas.
 - Undertake a leadership and convening role with other colleges and providers in the area, working closely with them and the ERB in developing the EOI application and subsequent detailed project proposals.
 - Reach out to engage other types of providers, especially those which may have specialisms relevant to the skills priorities identified in the LSIP, for their input into the development and delivery of the project proposals.
 - Manage and disseminate the mobilisation funding to the partnership where appropriate to do so.
 - Achieve consensus on the projects needed to deliver the skills priorities set out in the LSIPs with the collaboration and agreeing a project lead provider for each project.
 - Initiate a review of existing collaborative governance structures and determine whether any changes are required to deliver LSIF activities.
 - Complete the LSIF first stage application form by the deadline and in accordance with the respective guidance. Submitting the form on behalf of the collaboration ensuring it is fully completed and the content is accurate.
 - Act as the primary contact with the DfE and a communication conduit to other providers in the collaboration.
 - Conducting due diligence checks on collaboration delivery partners such as capacity, capability, financial health and compliance with relevant legislation around procurement, subsidy control and obligations due to charity status.
- **Project lead provider** (who will hold a DfE grant funding agreement to deliver one or more projects) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them.
 - Consider how they can lead on addressing the ones relevant to their specialism and who they may need support from to help with delivering the project.
 - Lead on developing the outline project proposal(s) for which they are the designated project lead provider. This is likely to include engaging with a

- range of other collaboration delivery providers unless it is a specialist curriculum area or specialisation has been agreed within the collaboration.
- Conducting due diligence checks on collaboration delivery partners such as capacity, capability, financial health and compliance with relevant legislation around procurement, subsidy control and obligations due to charity status.
- Collaboration delivery provider (who will receive LSIF funds via the project lead provider but not hold a grant funding agreement in their own right) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and kept abreast on any developments to them.
 - Share their knowledge, experience, and expertise relevant to the LSIP priorities to help shape the outline project proposal(s) that will respond to them.
 - Contribute to drafting elements of the outline project proposal(s) where the collaboration agrees partner expertise is needed.
- Wider partners (other providers and stakeholders may be members of a wider partnership and contribute to the dialogue on how to respond to LSIP priorities but will not play an active role in the delivery of projects and will not receive LSIF funding) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them.
 - Contribute to the dialogue on how to respond to LSIP priorities but will not play an active role in the delivery of projects and will not receive LSIF funding.

Stage 2 - Roles and responsibilities for delivery

NOTE: This information has been provided to support areas in planning for the second application stage. Some details may be amended to reflect any feedback we receive from the sector ahead of publishing the second stage application guidance.

- Lead applicant (who may also lead a project) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them.
 - Undertake a leadership and convening role with other colleges and providers in the area, working closely with them and the ERB in developing the second stage application and detailed project proposals.
 - Ensure cohesion of the LSIF funded project proposals, taking steps to avoid conflict or duplication between projects.

- Ensure that all statutory FE providers which are situated in the LSIP area and offer a broad range of technical provision are invited to join the collaboration.
- Reach out to engage other types of providers, especially those who may have specialisms relevant to the skills priorities identified in the LSIP, for their input into the development and delivery of the project proposals.
- Engage with wider stakeholders, where appropriate, for example the National Careers Service and Careers Hubs, taking account of their views in the development of the project proposals and opportunities for collaboration.
- Manage and disseminate the LSIF funding to the partnership, where appropriate to do so, including achieving consensus on the proportioning of funding across the collaboration.
- Confirm with the collaboration the projects needed to deliver the skills priorities set out in the LSIPs and the lead provider for each project.
- Continuous review of the collaborative governance structures and determine whether any changes are required during the delivery of LSIF activities.
- Complete the LSIF second stage application form by the deadline and in accordance with the respective guidance. Submitting the form on behalf of the collaboration ensuring it is fully completed and the content is accurate.
- Act as the primary contact with the DfE and a communication conduit to other providers in the collaboration.
- **Project lead provider** (who will hold a DfE grant funding agreement to deliver one or more projects) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them.
 - Lead on developing the outline project proposal(s) for which they are the
 designated project lead provider. This is likely to include engaging with a
 range of other collaboration delivery providers unless it is a specialist
 curriculum area or specialisation has been agreed within the collaboration.
 - Ensure only eligible activities, as set out in the application guidance, are included in project proposals and the costs are reasonable.
 - Act as the primary contact with the department in respect of the specific project(s) for which they are the project lead provider and disseminate information to other project delivery partners (collaboration delivery providers), the lead applicant and wider partners as appropriate.
 - Lead and co-ordinate the delivery of a project(s), with a range of collaboration delivery providers, unless the project is a specialist curriculum area e.g., land-based or specialisation has been agreed within the collaboration so that other providers are not involved in project delivery. In such circumstances we would expect the project lead provider to

- disseminate information to other members of the collaboration on the progress of the project and undertake appropriate engagement as required.
- Agree contracts or service level agreements (SLA) with the other delivery partners (collaboration delivery providers) which are robust and clearly set out their role and responsibilities in the delivery of the project.
- Use the grant funding within the agreed parameters set out in the grant funding agreement to effectively deliver the project(s).
- Refine how the partners work together to deliver the project(s) alongside employer-led organisations, in responding to the LSIP skills priorities.
- Monitor delivery of all aspects of the project, taking appropriate intervention activity with other collaboration delivery providers, as appropriate, where delivery is not in line with agreed expectations set out in the contract or SLA.
- Where the project(s) include capital works which meet the criteria for referral to the technical assistance (TA) organisation, the project lead provider should ensure requests for information and documentation are provided in a timely manner to the TA during the negotiation stage to enable an assessment of deliverability and costs to be completed prior to issue of the grant funding agreement. Collaboration delivery providers may engage directly with the TA, but the project lead provider should maintain oversight of progress and report any risks to the department. The project lead provider will be responsible for the use of mobilisation funding for professional fees related to capital works elements in line with the department's guidelines and for maintaining oversight of usage by collaboration delivery providers.
- Complete and return all requests for monitoring returns to DfE in line with the terms of the grant funding agreements within the set deadlines, including but not limited to, progress against key outputs, equality and diversity impacts and programme monitoring returns for each project.
- Collate evidence and submit funding claims to the department on behalf the collaboration delivery providers in-line with the terms of the grant funding agreement. The project lead provider will be required to assess the accuracy of the claims and the sufficiency of the supporting evidence. Where there are errors or insufficient evidence, the lead provider should request the collaboration delivery provider to re-submit their claim. The project lead provider will not be expected to fund purchases on behalf of the collaborating parties. The project lead provider will be required to reimburse the collaboration delivery providers following receipt of payment from the department.
- Take account of provision delivery relevant to the project(s), overlaps and complements provision across the area, exploring opportunities for better co-ordination and minimising conflict or duplication.
- Take account of national level priorities including the expansion of level 4
 and 5 provision (with a potential focus on short course/modular approaches

to delivery), Covid recovery, skills for green jobs, advanced manufacturing, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and healthcare.

- Collaboration delivery provider (who will receive LSIF funds via the project lead provider but not hold a grant funding agreement in their own right) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them.
 - Share their knowledge, experience, and expertise relevant to the LSIP priorities to help develop the detailed project proposal(s) that will respond to them.
 - Contribute to drafting elements of the detailed project proposal(s) where the collaboration agrees partner expertise is needed.
 - Ensure only eligible activities and reasonable costs are included in the project proposals, as set out in the application guidance, for elements of their own delivery.
 - Deliver elements of the project(s) where the collaboration agrees partner expertise is needed to achieve successful delivery. Each collaboration delivery provider is responsible for their own costs as part of the project.
 - Deliver the project in line with the contract or service level agreement agreed with the project lead provider, highlighting risks which could negatively impact on successful delivery to the project lead provider at the earliest opportunity and in line with the contract or service level agreement.
 - Submit invoices and supporting evidence of expenditure to the project lead provider in a timely manner in accordance with the contract or service level agreement (SLA) in place with the project lead provider to allow them to submit the funding claim to the department.
 - Complete and return all requests for management information to the project lead provider in a timely manner in line with the contract or SLA with the project lead provider. This will allow them to report on progress to the department in line with the grant funding agreement, including but not limited to, progress against key outputs, equality and diversity impacts and programme monitoring returns for each project.
 - Provide scrutiny and challenge to help the collaboration take a wider perspective of the barriers affecting LSIP skills priorities and the solutions proposed to address them.
 - Where the project(s) include capital works which meet the criteria for referral to the technical assistance (TA) organisation, the collaboration delivery provider should comply with all requests for information and documentation from the TA organisation in a timely manner. The collaboration delivery provider will be responsible for direct liaison with the

TA organisation but should keep the project lead provider up to date on progress and should highlight any risks which could impact on completion of the TA assessment by the deadline dates. The collaboration delivery provider will be responsible for the use of mobilisation funding for professional fees in line with the department's guidelines.

- Consider how they can invest in the project(s) to ensure the sustainability and quality of new provision developed with LSIF funding.
- Take account of how provision delivery relevant to the project(s), overlaps and complements provision across the area, exploring opportunities for better co-ordination and minimising conflict or duplication.
- Take account of national level priorities including the expansion of level 4 and 5 provision (with a potential focus on short course/modular approaches to delivery), Covid recovery, skills for green jobs, advanced manufacturing, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and healthcare.
- Wider partners (other providers and stakeholders may be members of a wider partnership and contribute to the dialogue on how to respond to LSIP priorities but will not play an active role in the delivery of projects and will not receive LSIF funding) should:
 - Know what the priorities outlined in the LSIPs for their area are and keep abreast on any developments to them.
 - Contribute to the dialogue on how to respond to LSIP priorities but will not play an active role in the delivery of projects and will not receive LSIF funding.
 - Engage in some activities e.g., participate in CPD activity where there is no additional cost to the project. We expect project lead providers to disseminate best practice and other learnings from the project to the wider partners.
 - In some cases, offer progression routes into and out of LSIF funded provision technical provision.

Annex 3 - Stage 1 mobilisation funding: eligible and ineligible activities and costs

Details of the mobilisation funding eligible and ineligible activities and costs are outlined in sections 5 and 6 of this guidance. A summary is provided in the table below.

Applicants can only use LSIF funding to meet new costs associated with the LSIF programme. The mobilisation stage will consist of **revenue and capital funding**.

If applicants need support or advice on eligible and ineligible activities and costs, please send a message to the DfE via the <u>Jaggaer</u> portal.

Revenue eligible and ineligible activities

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not
		Included
Admin costs	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and should be proportionate for the grade of the staff. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. • For backfill or new admin staff recruited	Business as usual admin costs that would have been undertaken in
	to work on the LSIF, including recruitment costs, on-costs such as national insurance and pension contributions where applicable. • The list below provides examples of admin activities that could apply to LSIF projects. It is not an exhaustive list. • Organising events and employer engagement activities related to LSIF projects. • Co-ordination of collaborative activities to support LSIF projects. • Processing LSIF funding claims including all associated admin.	any event.
Employer/ stakeholder engagement and business support activities.	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and must not duplicate similar activity for which LSIP funding has been used for. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list.	Business as usual employer / stakeholder engagement and business support
	Staff cover costs and travel and subsistence if required to facilitate employer engagement (acceptable rates are included within the benchmarking	activities that would have been undertaken in

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	 guidance). This could include engaging employers in the design and development of new programmes which respond to LSIP priorities, conducting training needs analysis. Business networking forums and events of more than two hours, including hospitality costs (acceptable rates are included within the benchmarking guidance) to facilitate peer to peer support and knowledge transfer. Skills / training needs analysis for an individual employer or groups of employers to identify skills gaps related to current or future needs. 	any event. • LSIF employer / stakeholder engagement and business support activities lasting less than two hours.
Other Consultancy and professional services	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Consultancy costs (acceptable rates are included within the benchmarking guidance) not included in other categories. Market research e.g., conducting employer surveys. This activity must be different, in addition to, or complementary to any research done by the ERBs as part of the LISP. Other specialist external staff. 	Business as usual consultancy and professional services activities that would have been undertaken in any event.
Support for co- ordination and collaboration	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and should be proportionate for the grade of the staff. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Recruitment costs for new staff specifically recruited to work on LSIF projects, including on-costs such as national insurance and pension contributions where applicable. Existing staff cover costs where posts are being backfilled to enable collaboration. Travel and subsistence costs related to face-to-face collaboration. Additional staff costs to support collaboration including overtime payments, if applicable 	 Staff costs for business as usual, including support function activities. Overhead costs e.g., heating or lighting unless the new staff are incurring this as an additional expense e.g., they have set up a new office.

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	Where a staff member's current role has been abolished / suspended and they would otherwise be partially or fully surplus / not have contract renewed.	
Other	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Non-recoverable VAT.	Recoverable VAT

Capital eligible and ineligible activities

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
Professional fees for capital projects	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Consult appropriate experts on capital works project proposals to enable providers to develop conceptual ideas, allowing for a better understanding of project timescales and costs at an early stage. For example, a provider may have a conceptual idea to convert an existing workshop into space for 4 separate digital teaching spaces. Mobilisation funding could be used to engage with professional consultants to develop some layout plans and provide an initial cost estimate and delivery programme. 	Business as usual admin costs that would have been undertaken in any event.

Benchmarking Guidance Staff costs and consultancy fees

The table below provides guidance on the benchmark for costs associated with the eligible activities list above.

Staff costs

Staff	Cost
Co-ordination and admin staff	Typical annual salary of £24k to £30k
	Day rates varied from £85 to £135.
	Hourly rates quoted from £9 to £37.

Consultancy Fees

For day rates above £750 inclusive of VAT, additional information should be provided in the EOI and stage 2 application form to show that market testing has been undertaken and the provider has sourced more than one quote. Where insufficient information is provided, we will request additional information at the assessment stage. This could lead to a delay in approving the EOI or stage 2 application.

Average costs for consultants	Day rates
Consultancy (non-industry)	Between £400 to £500 (including VAT)
Consultancy (industry)	Between £300 to £750 (including VAT)

Refreshments

Refreshments may be included to support face-to-face engagement of more than two hours but must be capped at £12 per head (inclusive of VAT). Refreshment costs at shorter engagements are not eligible.

Travel and subsistence and other clearly evidenced additional costs

While providers may follow the travel and subsistence policies they have for their other institution, we would expect them to be broadly aligned with the following rules that DfE applies to its staff (DfE may query or refuse to reimburse costs that are strongly unaligned):

- mileage and fuel rates and allowances should be no higher than those set by HM Revenue and Customs¹⁴;
- where public transport is used, travel should be via standard class (unless there is an option to choose a different type of ticket offering better value for money at the time of purchase); and
- where there is a period of absence from the normal workplace, subsistence will be paid via receipted actuals up to the following rates: £5.00 for over 5 hours, £10.00 for over 10 hours, £13.80 over 12 hours and £21.25 for over 24 hours (where breakfast is included with the accommodation tariff).

Where a provider can demonstrate a clear additional cost to them of delivering the LSIF, other additional costs may be eligible.

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¹⁴ As set out in HM Revenue and Customs' guidance here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-travel-mileage-and-fuel-rates-and-allowances)

Annex 4 - Stage 2 delivery funding - eligible and ineligible activities and costs

For information only

The table below outlines the eligible activities and costs covered by the LSIF delivery funding in the second application stage. Whilst we do not anticipate the eligible activities and costs will change significantly ahead of launching the second application stage. We will reserve the right to amend the details taking account of any queries we receive, where necessary, for clarification purposes.

Applicants can only use LSIF funding to meet new costs associated with the LSIF programme. The delivery stage will consist of revenue and capital funding.

Revenue eligible and ineligible activities

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
Admin costs	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and should be proportionate for the grade of the staff. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list.	Business as usual admin costs that would have been undertaken in any event.
	For backfill or new admin staff recruited to work on the LSIF, including recruitment costs, on-costs such as national insurance and pension contributions where applicable.	
	 The list below provides examples of admin activities that could apply to LSIF projects. It is not an exhaustive list. 	
	 Organising events and employer engagement activities related to LSIF projects. Co-ordination of collaborative activities to support LSIF 	
	projects. o Processing LSIF funding claims including all associated admin.	
Advertising,	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF	Business as usual
communications & marketing	projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list.	advertising, communication and marketing activities
	 Events, including modest hospitality costs (acceptable rates will be 	that would have been undertaken in

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	confirmed in benchmarking guidance at stage 2) other than those specifically related to employer engagement which has a separate category. • Web page design and development costs. • Awareness raising activities and advertisement costs. • Costs associated with marketing and promotion of new programmes. • Promotional materials, e.g., leaflets.	any event.
Curriculum planning / design and development of new skills provision and capacity building	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Staff time to support curriculum planning, where additional teaching cover costs are incurred. Onetime costs of repurposing provision or services to high priority areas. This activity of repurposing / restructuring provision should be in direct relation to LSIF policy and priorities outlined in the LSIP. Development of new training hubs/centres. Consultancy costs (acceptable rates are included in the benchmarking guidance) providing expert industry input for the design, development, and delivery of new course content. 	 Provision below level 2 Provision outside of the Skills for Jobs White Paper's definition of 'technical education' Provision otherwise eligible under other ESFA funding.
Direct teaching costs	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and should be proportionate for the grade of the teacher. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Teaching undertaken by non-salaried staff, e.g., employers or specialists. Additional teaching costs related to the delivery of new programmes or additional modules. New (non-capital) teaching resources. Where a teacher's current role has been abolished/suspended and they 	Salary costs cannot be transferred to the LSIF budget. Costs must be 'new'.

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	would otherwise be partially or fully surplus/not have contract renewed.	
Employer/ stakeholder engagement and business support activities.	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and must not duplicate similar activity for which LSIP funding has been used for. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Staff cover costs and travel and subsistence if required to facilitate employer engagement (acceptable rates are included within the benchmarking guidance). This could include engaging employers in the design and development of new programmes which respond to LSIP priorities, conducting training needs analysis. Business networking forums and events of more than two hours, including hospitality costs (acceptable rates are included within the benchmarking guidance) to facilitate peer to peer support and knowledge transfer. Skills / training needs analysis for an individual employer or groups of employers to identify skills gaps related to current or future needs. 	 Business as usual employer/stakeholde r engagement and business support activities that would have been undertaken in any event. LSIF employer / stakeholder engagement and business support activities lasting less than two hours.
Evaluation	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Costs associated with the collaboration's own evaluation such as cover costs for internal staff, researcher consultancy costs etc. DfE officials should be consulted on the scope of individual project evaluation before committing LSIF funds to ensure there is no conflict or duplication with the LSIF wider programme evaluation. Individual project evaluations should be made available to DfE on request. 	Business as usual evaluation activities that would have been undertaken in any event.
Innovation	Costs must relate to LSIF projects. There should be no duplication with the FE	Business as usual innovation activities

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	Innovation Fund managed by Innovate UK but LSIF can be used where appropriate to support FEIF or other Innovate UK managed programmes. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list.	that would have been undertaken in any event.
	 exhaustive list. Costs of delivering innovation and entrepreneurship support. Research and knowledge transfer related to the adoption and diffusion of new innovative technology or business processes Supporting learners in research projects related to innovative technology or business processes. Providing advice and guidance and training needs analysis (TNA) support for employers to identify and develop the skills and capacity needed to facilitate the adoption and diffusion of new technologies. Funding teaching cover costs for staff to undertake industrial secondments and disseminate knowledge and skills to wider audiences related to innovative technologies or business processes. Developing new learning programmes in response to new skills requirements related to the implementation of innovation technologies / business processes and commercialisation. Engaging employers in the design and delivery of learning programmes in response to new skills requirements related to the implementation of innovation technologies / business processes and commercialisation. Fostering skills and behaviours to support innovation. Promoting the use of the Innovation Skills Framework 	
	across technical, vocational, and academic education routes. Offering deep dives into specific elements e.g., commercialisation, leadership, to foster greater innovative focus, role dependent.	

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	Delivering programmes which incorporate the Government's Intellectual Property Office standards to support innovation leadership skills, entrepreneurial talent, and knowledge of intellectual property (IP) rights and usage to improve commercialisation of new products and services.	
Learner engagement and progression support	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Learner outreach activities e.g., engagement with schools. Providing additional careers advice, information, and guidance (CAIG). National Careers Service engagement or engagement with local careers hubs. Other learner engagement or outreach activities. 	Providers should not duplicate, but only add value to, existing activities that are funded through the Careers Hubs and National Careers Service.
Learning and development categorised as workforce industry exchange	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Costs associated with diagnosis of staff training needs to support industry related learning activities in line with LSIP priorities, including engaging industry staff and teaching cover costs and travel and subsistence costs where applicable. Professional development costs for staff to improve industry relevant knowledge and skills, where additional teaching cover costs are required to cover staff time to support curriculum review with industry staff, time out with industries on placements etc. May be some costs associated with hosting seminars led by industry professionals and experts. 	Business as usual learning and development activities categorised as workforce industry exchange that would have been undertaken in any event.
Other consultancy and	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list.	Business as usual consultancy and professional services

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
professional services	 Consultancy costs (acceptable rates are included within the benchmarking guidance) not included in other categories. Market research e.g., conducting employer surveys. This activity must be different, in addition to, or complimentary to any research done by the ERBs as part of the LISP. Other specialist external staff. 	activities that would have been undertaken in any event.
Project management	 Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and should be proportionate for the grade of the staff. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Additional expenses incurred to manage LSIF activities and support collaboration and co-ordination this could include salary or consultancy costs for staff recruited specifically to work on this project, teaching cover costs for existing staff, overtime payments or temporary increases in salary in recognition of additional responsibilities. Admin costs specifically related to coordination activities across the partnership. 	Business as usual project management activities that would have been undertaken in any event.
Recruitment	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Recruitment costs such as recruitment agency fees, advertisement costs etc for all new staff including project managers, business engagement staff, admin staff etc and other consultants or specialists.	Business as usual recruitment activities that would have been undertaken in any event.
Staff / teacher training and development	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Costs associated with diagnosis of staff training needs to support activities in line with LSIP priorities	Business as usual staff/teacher training and development activities that would have been undertaken in any event.

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	 including engaging specialist staff if applicable and teaching cover costs and travel and subsistence costs if applicable. Training programme costs and associated travel, subsistence costs and teaching cover costs if applicable related to LSIF projects Professional development costs, including support for staff to improve subject and pedagogic content knowledge. Professional development should use an evidence-based approach. Costs incurred related to other effective CPD and upskilling activities which are directly related to LSIF projects including associated travel, subsistence and teaching cover costs if applicable. Support and induction packages to help recruit, retain and develop new and inexperienced staff. Training resources and materials to support formal or informal staff CPD related to LSIF projects. This includes the cost of designing and developing bespoke/ tailored training resources and materials. Costs associated with dissemination of knowledge and skills to other teaching staff and other peer-to-peer support including teaching cover costs and travel and subsistence if applicable. 	
Support for co- ordination and collaboration	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects and should be proportionate for the grade of the staff. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Recruitment costs for new staff specifically recruited to work on LSIF projects, including on-costs such as national insurance and pension contributions where applicable.	 Staff costs for business as usual, including support function activities. Overhead costs e.g., heating or lighting unless the new staff are incurring this as an additional expense e.g., they have set up a new

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	 Existing staff cover costs where posts are being backfilled to enable collaboration. Travel and subsistence costs related to face-to-face collaboration. Additional staff costs to support collaboration including overtime payments, if applicable Where a staff member's current role has been abolished/suspended and s/he would otherwise be partially or fully surplus/not have contract renewed. 	office.
Other	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Non-recoverable VAT	Recoverable VAT

Capital eligible and ineligible activities

Note: acceptable rates will be confirmed in benchmarking guidance at stage 2.

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
Equipment	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Buying new equipment Repurposing equipment	Business as usual equipment that would have been purchased in any event.
IT / software	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Non-equipment technology New software	Annual software licences past LSIF delivery window
Refurbishments / capital works	Eligible costs must relate to LSIF projects. The following are examples and not an exhaustive list. Non-equipment technology	Business as usual refurbishments /capital that would have been undertaken in any event.

Category	Activities Included	Activities Not Included
	New software	Refurbishments / capital works that has received funding from DfE funding streams

Stage 2 - Staff costs and consultancy fees

The table below provides guidance on the benchmark for costs associated with the eligible activities list above.

Staff	Cost
Project Managers	 Typical annual salary of £35k to £40k Day rates ranging from £374 to £1,000 a day are typically externally sourced.
Co-ordination and admin staff	 Typical annual salary of £24k to £30k Day rates between £35 to £85 Hourly rates from £9 to £37
Specialist curriculum staff (to develop and deliver courses)	 Day rates between £300 to £400 Hourly rates from £30 to £58
Teaching staff back fill rates	 Day rates varied from £200 to £350 Hourly rates from £29 to £52

General Further Education Colleges

University and College Union data English FE pay scales (updated 01/08/2022)	Lower Range	Upper Range
Leadership and management scales	£39,347	£98,222
Spine point - 37 to 68		

Sixth Form Colleges

National Education Union	Spine Point Range	Spine Point Range
data		

Sixth Form College Leadership Grades (updated 01/09/2022)		
SFC L1 to L9	£51,731	£62,434
SFC L10 to L18	£63,933	£77,288
SFC L19 to L27	£79,143	£95,679

National Education Union data London and Fringe Area Allowances Sixth Form College Leadership Grades (updated 01/09/2022)	Spine Point Range
Inner London	£4,343
Outer London	£2,894
Fringe	£1,147

Consultancy Fees

We will query day rates above £750, including VAT. We would only pay above this threshold for very niche and specialised work and would expect the lead applicant to state that they had undertaken market testing and sourced more than one quote.

Average costs for consultants	Day rates
Consultancy	Between £300 to £750 (including VAT)

Annex 5: Instructions for completing the EOI application form

The application form is in two parts; an excel spreadsheet (part A) and a word document (part B). Please follow the instructions below to complete part A of the application form.

Part B of the application form requires an outline of both the lead applicant and project lead providers' experience, capacity and capability in undertaking the roles and responsibilities that are outlined in annex 2 of this funding guidance, an outline of the governance arrangements that will be in place to minimise risks and ensure effective oversight of the projects' delivery, an outline of your collaboration's proposed project for the stage 2 application, and declarations from the collaboration, the lead applicant and the designated ERB.

Part A – Excel Spreadsheet

Section 1 – Lead applicant institution

In the tab labelled 'lead applicant institution', please fill out the lead applicant's contact details and essential information.

All applications must have a clearly identified lead applicant institution. The lead applicant and the skills priorities and actions for the area must be endorsed by all providers in the collaboration. The skills priorities and actions must relate to the LSIP priorities (this includes high level LSIP priorities or drafts).

The lead applicant is responsible for leading and co-ordinating the collaboration to develop the expression of interest for LSIF funding. They will be the main contact for the development of the LSIF application form and coordinate activities in respect of the stage 2 application, following confirmation that the EOI has been approved by the department. The role and responsibilities of the lead applicant are outlined in annex 2 of this guidance.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we would not expect the lead applicant to have a current Ofsted grade for overall effectiveness of less than Good, have a published Notice to Improve (NtI), or be in intervention status for finance or quality, unless they have moved into post-intervention, monitoring, and support (PIMS). Where there are ungraded institutions, due to recent mergers, we will accept the former grade of the receiving institution. IoTs must have a current IoT licence.

Section 2 - Members of the collaboration

We expect collaborations to reflect the breadth of post-16 technical education and training providers, recognising the distinctive roles different provider types can play in responding to skills priorities identified in the LSIP.

In the tab labelled 'members of the collaboration', each member should outline their rationale for inclusion in the collaboration and give a high-level outline of their contribution to the collaboration in **table A**.

Please provide information on the statutory FE providers located in the area that have been invited to join the collaboration but have declined. Please provide the rationale for them wishing to remain outside the collaboration. If an institution does not wish to engage in a dialogue or provide a rationale, please indicate in **table B.**

Section 3 of the funding guidance details the providers that are eligible to receive LSIF funding.

Section 3 - Mobilisation funding activity

In the tab labelled 'mobilisation funding activity', please set out the planned activities you wish the mobilisation funding to support up to September 2023 including the estimated cost for each activity. Applicants can only apply for mobilisation funding for costs that are new, related to the delivery of the LSIF programme and are included within the list of eligible costs for the mobilisation funding outlined in section 5 and annex 3 of this funding guidance.

The department will not fund any costs that it deems to be ineligible or not providing good value for money. We will require proof of expenditure upon submission of the first grant claim once projects are agreed. Eligible and ineligible activities are outlined in annex 3 of this funding guidance. We acknowledge some of the details on activities and costs may change. Providers will not be held to the specific activities or costs.

Examples are provided in the table below.

Please identify different eligible activities separately. Day rates for consultants (including VAT) should be provided where applicable. Examples are provided below.	Total Amount
External expertise - 10 days at £600 inc. VAT per day	£6,000
Cover costs for staff to develop project proposal for project 1 - 20 staff x £200 per day x 2 days	£8,000
Expected professional fees for refurbishment of 2 workshops – refurbishment costs estimated at £50,000. Professional fees estimated to be 12% of project costs = £6,000	£6,000
Total	£20,000

Section 4 – Project overview

We expect areas to identify a number of projects for their area which respond to LSIP priorities. Projects should be of an appropriate scale and size to demonstrate impact but be manageable and have a clear focus and defined outputs. As a guide, we would expect areas to put forward between two and six project proposals.

In the tab labelled 'project overview', we require some initial ideas on potential projects. We acknowledge that some of the details may change during the 12-week, stage 2 project development stage. Please provide information in the excel spreadsheet in respect of:

The number of project(s) within your collaboration.

- The skills sector the project(s) will address aligned to LSIP priorities (from the pre-populated list)
- Any cross-cutting themes for each project (from the pre-populated list)
- The project lead provider for each project
- Details of which projects will require support from the technical assistance organisation for capital build / works projects. Projects meeting the following criteria will require support from the technical assistance organisation:
 - New build projects, including extensions regardless of estimated build costs.
 - o Repurposing / refurbishment projects which may require planning consent.
 - Repurposing / refurbishment projects with estimated building costs of £100,000 at any individual campus site within a single funding year -2023/24 and / or 2024/25.
 - Other repurposing / refurbishment works that are considered high-risk for other reasons (e.g., the proposed works will be undertaken in a listed building).

We acknowledge some of the details on the role and contribution of each member of the collaboration may be subject to change.



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