Funding Guidance for Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities 2003/04

ADVANCE DRAFT

Contents

Annexes

Glossary

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Purpose

1   This guidance provides advice to providers on the process for managing the 'Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities' (NLDC) programme. The budget was made available to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from April 2002, and as directed by Ministers, in 2002/03, the money was targeted at the local Learning and Skills Councils (local LSCs) covering the 88 Local Authorities eligible for receipt of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). In 2003/04, the scope has been widened to include other areas of deprivation that fall outside of the NRF areas.

2   The purpose of the funding is to:

"support local voluntary and community sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods."
(Programme Guidance - DfES (2002-3))

The NLDC fund thereby:

- enables local LSCs to make a full contribution to the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal through community -based learning;

- improves the quality of the learning provider base, including the development of small community and voluntary community organisations, and the provision of neighbourhood renewal skills and knowledge; and

- encourages the take up of learning opportunities, for example through the further development of Community Learning Chests.

Background

3   The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) published in 2001 its action plan for a new approach to renewing underprivileged neighbourhoods, *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal*. The strategy has two long-term goals:

- in all the poorest neighbourhoods, to have lower worklessness and crime, better health, skills, housing and physical environment; and

- to narrow the gap on these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country.

4   The SEU report identified 88 local authority areas as being the most deprived in the country considered against a range of personal, social and economic indicators. A Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) was established which aimed to enable those 88 most deprived authorities to improve services, narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country.

5   The LSC wishes to contribute to the achievement of both these goals, particularly concentrating on reducing worklessness and improving skills, but acknowledges that pockets of severe deprivation do exist across the whole country. The LSC policy for neighbourhood learning aligns with that of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) under their commitment to Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's (NRU) Learning and Development Strategy, *The Learning Curve*. The DfES work concentrates on the development of neighbourhood learning centres (including community based UK online centres) in the period 2001-04 and also programmes to deliver the Adult Basic Skills (Skills for Life), Sure Start, the Connexions Service and the Children's Fund. The NRU's strategy proposes a range of actions, including a knowledge management system, neighbourhood renewal advisors and a national learning programme to be delivered through Local Strategic Partnerships in the 88 most deprived areas, i.e. NRF wards.

6   In support of the national strategy, the LSC's priorities include engaging disadvantaged groups in the community to reduce worklessness and improve skills for employment and regenerating communities. The LSC Remit Letter sets out expectations, for example, about literacy and numeracy delivery in "the broadest possible range of settings including neighbourhood learning centres" (paragraph 53) and that local LSCs are also expected to:

"take a holistic view of how their contribution fits within the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, and to work with partners – particularly from the voluntary and community sectors – to target help where it is needed most" (paragraph 24, LSC Remit Letter).

7   This programme is one element of the DfES contribution to meeting the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal. Local LSCs are able to use their allocation for activity that is complimentary to their Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) who are developing Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies (LNRS). One of the requirements for the LNRS is a Local Action on Learning plan, which identifies the priorities for learning to deliver neighbourhood renewal in 2003/04.

8   The NSNR proposed that there should be a neighbourhood learning centre in each of the 88 deprived Local Authority Districts, although the scope for this has been widened to include other areas of deprivation outside of NRF areas from 2003/04. As a starting point local LSCs will have shared information with their LSP and identify where centres already exist, where there is no provision and where there are places which, with refurbishment, could become appropriate learning centres, accessible to, and used by, local people. This enables local LSCs to support learning in the centres and ensure that it is targeted at those communities most in need and with least facilities. Many local LSCs will have already drawn up a map or have begun mapping. Many UK online centres within each local LSC area are based in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and some have capacity building needs or could support outreach facilities.

9   The NRU Learning and Development Strategy - *The Learning Curve* - identifies a number of actions to increase the level of neighbourhood renewal skills and knowledge amongst residents, practitioners, professionals and policy makers. These have now been developed into a number of support "products" to help those involved in delivering neighbourhood renewal on the ground. They include an on-line knowledge and good practice system "renewal.net", a pool of Neighbourhood Renewal Advisers, regional networks of regeneration partnerships, residents consultancy pilots, regional centres of excellence, a neighbourhood renewal learning programme and community learning chests. In addition each Government Regional Office produces a regional action plan for skills and knowledge that provides resources for more local initiatives. The "Learning Curve" recognises that involvement in local regeneration activity can be a pathway back into work for individuals, as well as contributing to the success of wider renewal initiatives. Further information can be obtained from the NRU website: **www.neighbourhood.gov.uk**

Funding Criteria

10   Funding for 2003/04, £30m has been allocated for NLDC: £20m as recurrent funding and £10m as capital funding. £3m of the recurrent budget has been allocated as 'core' funding, divided equally between all 47 local LSCs.

11   Local LSCs will work with providers to ensure that funding can be used to support any of the following recurrent and capital requirements. These lists are not exhaustive.

(i)   **Recurrent**

- encouraging innovative, accessible 'first step' learning in local communities (e.g. by extending successful outreach activities from neighbourhood learning centres and UK online centres);

- encouraging the acquisition of neighbourhood renewal skills, knowledge and behaviours listed in Annex A;

- delivering education and training including literacy and numeracy in the broadest possible range of settings;

- training or retraining local people to develop roles in community leadership or as community champions;

- building up local expertise and support those individuals working or willing to work as community tutors in gaining a range of relevant qualifications, e.g. as teachers or assessors;

- providing staff and management training for those involved with local voluntary and community groups;

- supporting the development of voluntary and community sector training providers through a capacity building programme to enable them to meet the LSC provider assessment criteria (this includes providing volunteer staff training);

- providing 'work shadowing';

- developing new ways of delivering relevant curriculum to attract excluded and under-represented groups into learning, including working with target groups to develop meaningful and engaging learning contexts;

- mapping existing neighbourhood centres to ensure good coverage of local learning opportunities at appropriate venues - the

mapping should use the template available from the DfES in the document *Neighbourhood Learning in Disadvantaged Communities - Guidance for Practitioners;* (available from **www.skills.org.uk**); and

- supporting activities that are directly associated with frontline service delivery.

(ii) **Capital**

- assisting and supporting direct delivery of learning;

- refurbishing and enhancing existing premises e.g. improving health and safety arrangements, minor works and adaptations to meet Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements;

- complementing other funds secured by applicant organisations or partnerships in order to establish a new learning centre in areas where none previously existed; and

- securing ICT provision e.g. PCs, licences, connectivity costs, and for the development/purchase of management information systems (MIS), software and data management systems for the NLDC fund.

12   The LSC would retain an interest in any assets purchased from LSC funds, as they are purchases made from public monies.

13   The NLDC fund can be used for match funding, for example with the European Social Fund or the Single Regeneration Budget.

Supporting Information

14   Our priority recipients of this fund are voluntary and community sector organisations engaged in direct delivery of learning or working in partnership with a range of providers that are offering learning, but the Fund is not exclusively designed for them. Examples of eligible providers include those concerned with outreach work, learndirect centres, UK online centres, local education authorities (LEAs), and local community centres. Both FE colleges and ACL providers are eligible for funding within the criteria for projects.

15   Schools may also be eligible providers, since many of them are well placed to provide or host family and community learning. They are often very local, offering easy access, and often have facilities that are underused (such as ICT suites). Parents coming onto school sites to access learning tend to become more involved in their children's education, and adults learning on the

premises help to create an environment where learning is seen as positive, continuous and enjoyable for all. Their most important characteristic should be that they deliver or facilitate learning to engage local people's interest. One important way of doing this is through the involvement of local people in regeneration and neighbourhood renewal activity. Where appropriate this should help people to develop the skills that they need to access the labour market successfully, particularly building their confidence and motivation.

16   Where a partnership exists or has been invited to apply for funds, an application can be made by an FE College or adult and community learning provider (as the accountable body) so long as a partnership agreement between the different organisations is in place. The LSC wishes to particularly promote partnership working, and to ensure that partnerships are captured in written agreements.

17   Providers should have been assessed for eligibility for funding in accordance with local practice, taking account of local thresholds for provider financial viability.

"For each recipient, the long-term objective will be to achieve LSC quality standards for receipt of formula funding, and the Common Inspection Framework. Providers may also choose to work towards quality standards required for delivery of the Adult Basic Skills Strategy. It is likely that for some organisations this will take more than one year". (Programme Guidance – DfES (2002-3))

18   The LSC will wish to ensure that projects contribute to the objectives of these funds, so as part of a project proposal the LSC will need certain supporting information from providers. A checklist of possible information requirements is included at Annex B.

19   Providers who fall short of the initial provider assessment, may still be accepted if local LSCs judge that, through support from this initiative, a provider or group of providers may be brought within scope for funding. Local LSCs are encouraged to support capacity building activity of this kind, e.g. the development of a voluntary sector consortium of providers who would not otherwise be able to access LSC mainstream funds.

20   There are no upper or lower thresholds for funding individual projects. Local LSCs will aim to ensure that funding is used to benefit people in the appropriate geographical location(s). It is feasible for the entire allocation to be used in a single project, if this is deemed the priority by the local LSC.

21   The local LSC can agree a payment schedule based on the circumstances and needs of individual providers. NLDC payments would usually be made after provision has taken place, but NLDC monies can, in some cases, be used to prepare and begin certain activities. This advance funding will normally only apply to non-incorporated organisations in the community or voluntary sectors and can only be used to fund clearly-defined set-up costs so that project activity can begin.

22   Funding may be provided to support organisations and provision which succeed in attracting and helping reluctant learners. For the organisation it would provide an opportunity to develop its capacity to deliver learning and to meet the monitoring requirements of the LSC and, for example the Adult Learning Inspectorate's common inspection framework.

Target Groups and Priorities

23   The priority aim is to get to 'hard to reach' learners and to seek new providers, whilst not discouraging existing providers and attracting voluntary sector providers seeking to supply effective learning. This should be in line with the specific objectives and actions set out in each local LSC strategic plan and the LNRS of the LSP.

24   Providers have the option of providing for younger learners, i.e. aged 18 and under, through Family Programmes projects. All other programmes exclusively for younger learners should be funded from other sources.

25   With the NLDC budget increased from £14m in the period between August 2002 and March 2003 to £30m for 2003/04, over 60,000 learners are expected to benefit from the initiative in 2003/04, compared with the 30,000 learners that were expected to benefit in 2002/03. These figures are neither a forecast nor a definite target. Local LSCs will not be set individual learner number targets to achieve, although they must establish with each provider the potential size of groups or numbers who might benefit from local projects, so that that information can be collated and compared to any proposed national target.

26   The local LSC will have strategic objectives in its strategic plan, which will be complementary to those of the NLDC projects.

27   Wherever possible, preference will be given to partnership projects or projects with significant partnership working or partnership potential.

28   Wherever possible, providers should seek to demonstrate how they will encourage and provide progression opportunities, and to say how they will encourage learners to pursue further activity.

Payments

29   Payments may be made on the basis of a monthly / quarterly schedule with reconciliation at appropriate intervals or on the basis of actuals, i.e. against an invoice for delivery already taken place. Expected outputs should be as well defined as possible in the contracts. The LSC will ensure that payment is not made in <u>advance of need</u>, except in exceptional circumstances contained in paragraph 21.

30   Finance Directorate will be issuing guidance on what the new end of year budget flexibility, notified to us in the 2003-04 Grant Letter, will mean in practice for local LSCs. This guidance will be included in the 2003-04 Budget Book to be issued at the end of March 2003.

Performance Indicators (PIs)

31   The key performance indicator for 2003/04 is 'how many new people have entered learning from deprived areas and how many of them have progressed to further learning'. Monitoring will focus on this PI.

32   In order to ensure that learning is accessed in line with the LSC's equality and diversity strategy, *National Equality and Diversity – Widening Participation and Promoting Inclusion 2001-2004*, the following additional data should be gathered by local LSCs and held locally:

- number of centres helped;

- number of centres new to learning;

- number of UK online centres and proportion of NLDC funds spent on supporting UK online;

- numbers helped into basic skills provision;

- number of voluntary sector organisations supported through capacity building activities; and

- number of individuals from voluntary sector organisations accessing training.

33   The LSC is discussing the data collection instrument for NLDCF for 2003/04 with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and will provide a pro forma shortly. The LSC will be mindful of concerns about keeping bureaucracy to a minimum.

Annex A: Neighbourhood Renewal Learning Framework

Audience	Building the Knowledge Base	Developing Skills	Changing Behaviours
Civil servants and Policy makers	Knowledge relates to the main themes of neighbourhood renewal: health, community safety, education and skills, housing and built environment, jobs and worklessness • recognise and work with alternative approaches to neighbourhood decline and 'what works'; • use the many sources of knowledge including residents and practitioner experience in addition to academic knowledge; • understand why different approaches have succeeded or failed	• analytical skills; • ideas leadership; • communication; • networking; • brokering; • influencing; • negotiating; • consensus building; • partnership working. (all of these across central government policy boundaries)	The behaviours needed to make a difference to the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme are common to all groups **Entrepreneurial and problem solving behaviours:** • adopting innovative ways of tackling social problems; • challenging traditional ways of working; • bringing together ideas, resources and people to instigate change; • spotting opportunities and making use of under-used resources; • taking calculated risks; • tolerating the possibility of failure; • responding to a problem with a clear outcome in mind • a 'can-do' philosophy **Reflective behaviours** • evaluating the effectiveness of what is being done • constantly revisit the relationship of inputs and processes to outputs and outcomes • Explore the reasons for success • Develop the confidence to investigate and learn from failure
Residents	**Shape and use the knowledge base:** • share experience of successful and less successful neighbourhood renewal to shape the knowledge base. • participate in the analysis of the local situation and use knowledge and good practice to improve the neighbourhood	**Community Leader** • Strategic skills to establish the vision and priorities • Organisational performance management • Probity and stewardship of resources • Listening • Negotiation • Consensus building, mediation • Conflict resolution and management • Communication	

Audience	Building the Knowledge Base	Developing Skills	Changing Behaviours
		Community expert • Confidence to share their experience • Confidence to articulate their hopes, fears and aspirations	
		Emerging Practitioner • Leadership • Partnership working • Problem –solving • Communication • Negotiating • Influencing • Facilitating • Networking • Conflict Resolution	

Audience	Building the Knowledge Base	Developing Skills	Changing Behaviours
Professionals and practitioners	• **Analyse**: the use of evidence on what works to analyse the causes of deprivation and decline. • **Synthesise** together knowledge from specific themes and create opportunities to work together with people from other backgrounds. • **Design solutions** to solve problems that draw on a comprehensive knowledge of the options and possibilities.	**Analytical skills:** • analysing problems; • creating opportunities; • designing solutions. **Interpersonal skills:** • strategic leadership and vision; • management of people; • valuing of diversity; • working with partners; • working with the community; • communication; • consensus building, mediation; • conflict resolution and management. **Organisational Skills:** • project Management; • finance and budgeting; • monitoring and evaluation; • risk assessment and management; • research; • IT skills.	Entrepreneurial and problem solving behaviours (as above)

Annex B: Project Checklist

LSC staff may request the following information from providers:

(a)   the purpose of the project

(b)   how this contributes to the aims of the initiative;

(c)   confirmation of the proposed timescales, showing clearly activities up to 31 July 2004, and separately, activities beyond that up to 31 July 2005;

(d)   how many learners would benefit or a description of how materials would be disseminated;

(e)   a description of the target groups of adults experiencing disadvantage;

(f)   a description of how partnerships will work to deliver each project and evidence of commitment from each partner organisation;

(g)   confirmation of the geographic location of activities and the centres where activities will take place;

(h)   confirmation of what/where progression or further support opportunities exist or that the provider will seek to identify these at the earliest opportunity and will encourage learners to pursue further activity;

(i)   confirmation that there is no double funding of the project;

(j)   confirmation that the project will, if required, participate in any evaluation and provide access to evaluators;

(k)   confirmation that the project will provide a final report [or equivalent document, as agreed with the local LSC] and/or interim report.

Glossary

DDA   Disability Discrimination Act

DfES   Department for Education and Skills

FE   Further Education

ICT   Information and Communication Technology

LEA   Local Education Authority

LNRS   Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies

LSC   Learning and Skills Council

LSP   Local Strategic Partnerships

MIS   Management Information Systems

NIACE   National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

NLDC   Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities

NRF   Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

NRU   Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

NSNR   National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

SEU   Social Exclusion Unit