THE LSC/DfES WORK-BASED LEARNING BASIC SKILLS PILOT

SUMMARY

1 This paper sets out the context for and detail of a pilot project to engage existing LSC-funded, private, work-based learning providers (i.e. private training providers already engaged in the delivery of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) training), in the delivery of literacy, language and numeracy qualifications to adult employees aged 19 and above who are not participating in MAs, through a simplified listed rates approach to funding, based on ten of the national loadbands for further education (FE) in 2003/04. This project is not available to FE colleges.

BACKGROUND

2 The pilot has been designed jointly by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) and the National LSC (NLSC), following feedback from local LSCs at the series of recent stocktaking workshops, and ABSSU's discussions with the Association of Learning Providers (ALP).

3 Engaging employers in training to address basic skills needs is a high priority in the Workforce Development Strategy. Workforce Development teams at local level are therefore integrating basic skills into their ongoing work with employers. In many local LSC areas initiatives such as the brokerage scheme, mobile learning facilities and campaigns to engage employers are operating successfully. Employer Training Pilots are also aiming to increase employer engagement in basic skills training.

4 As reported in Countdown issue 129 in March, John Harwood, former Chief Executive of the LSC, challenged work-based learning providers to take a prominent role in developing the basic skills of adult employees, using their extensive contacts with employers. He urged providers who believe they can undertake this role to approach local Executive Directors to demonstrate their capability and thereby gain a contract to deliver this training.

AIMS OF THE PILOT

5 This fully funded pilot is aimed at engaging those existing LSC-contracted, work-based learning (WBL) providers with properly qualified staff, experience and expertise, to work closely with employers to identify those employees who want to improve their basic skills and then to deliver literacy, language and numeracy qualifications, and thereby drive up achievement rates.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PILOT

6 The approach to be piloted is set out below.

- The pilot will cover literacy, language (English for Speakers of Other Languages - ESOL) and numeracy skills provision leading to approved qualifications
- The aim is therefore for WBL providers to encourage learners to take the certificates in adult literacy or numeracy at entry level, level 1, or level 2, or to take existing, approved, ESOL qualifications where these meet learners' needs
- The pilot aims to engage new adult learners aged 19 and above who are not participating in MAs or other LSC-funded provision, and the usual eligibility rules apply (see paragraphs 181-188 of the *Funding Guidance for Further Education in 2003/04*). If a provider believes an existing learner should be considered for funding under exceptional circumstances, they should contact their local LSC to seek agreement
- Provision must be direct, so WBL providers may not enter into a franchise agreement with another training provider for this delivery. Similarly, an FE provider may not enter into a franchise arrangement with a WBL provider to gain indirect access to this pilot. This pilot is not available to FE colleges.

All activity for this pilot must be undertaken and completed by 31 March 2004.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL LSCs

7 A list of WBL providers interested in participating in the pilot was developed initially through discussions with NLSC, ABSSU and ALP, and local LSCs who currently contract with these providers have determined whether or not they meet the eligibility criteria. Additional nominations to take part in the pilot have been invited from local LSCs who have made their recommendations direct to the NLSC. Providers who wish to participate in the pilot should contact their local LSC, who will determine provider eligibility and as above recommend eligible providers directly to the NLSC. The eligibility criteria used to assess providers who wish to participate in the pilot project can be found at Annex A. The project has limited funds and, if necessary, the NLSC will consult with local LSCs to determine a selection process regarding providers and learner numbers.

8 Once eligibility has been determined, local LSCs will work with providers to agree volume of activity and contract value, and then to monitor provision through the usual processes.

FUNDING RATES

9 The ABSSU has provided £12.5 million for the pilot, and literacy, language and numeracy provision delivered by WBL providers as part of the pilot will be funded through a simplified listed rates approach based on ten of the national loadbands for FE in 2003/04. The listed rates will include the 1.4 basic skills programme weighting, the 11% disadvantage uplift and the full fee remission. The usual 10% achievement element will be paid when the employee has achieved the approved qualification identified on the learning agreement. The table below identifies the ten listed rates available. Payment of the full sum is subject to learners successfully completing their programme. All figures are given to the nearest whole pound (£). The rates are the total amounts payable and are inclusive of VAT and other taxes. The supply of education and vocational training, ultimately funded by the Learning and Skills Council, is an exempt supply for VAT under Item 5A to Group 6 of Schedule 9 of the VAT Act 1994.

Guided learning hour (glh) range		Listed rate (including fee remission, achievement and disadvantage uplift) (£)	Achievement element (10%) included in listed rate (£)
3		58	N/A
6	8	88	9
9	19	174	17
20	29	220	22
30	39	363	36
40	49	416	42
50	59	473	47
60	89	583	58
90	119	839	84
120+		1009	101

10 Providers will be required to identify the most suitable 'fixed term' programme from the table above (that is, in the ranges of 6, 9, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 90 or 120 glh) for their learners at the outset of the programme in order for them to achieve the national test. Passing the national test will be the measure of achievement, except for ESOL and entry level 3 where achievement will be measured by the learner's success in the relevant external assessments for these qualifications. The fixed term programme delivered should, in each case, take the fixed number of glh planned. It is anticipated that the majority of providers will provide learning programmes of between 30 and 89 glh. For a full definition of guided learning hours (in brief, “all times when a member of staff is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a

programme"), see paragraph 56 of the *Funding Guidance for Further Education in 2003/04*.

11 The inclusion of the 3 glh listed rate is to facilitate diagnostic assessment or to provide short taster courses in addition to the main learning aim. WBL providers may also use the 6 glh provision to provide introductory programmes. This is in line with the provision opportunities available to mainstream FE providers. Where WBL providers make use of the 3 and 6 glh courses in this way (i.e. not to provide direct access to the approved qualifications), the same conditions of funding apply as in the FE sector: each learner may be funded for a maximum of one 3 glh (taster or diagnostic) programme and one 6 glh introductory programme in each of the three skills of literacy, language and numeracy. No achievement funding is paid for 3 glh courses.

12 Payment arrangements will follow those already in place for WBL providers, and are set out in Annex B. Audit requirements for all provision delivered as part of the pilot will shortly be set out in a forthcoming guidance note.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS

13 All learners must be assessed to identify the most appropriate level of learning aim before they begin a learning programme. This assessment should use appropriate assessment tools that are based on the national standards for adult literacy, numeracy and language. The results of assessment should be recorded on the individual learning plan.

TEST CENTRES

14 WBL providers delivering approved literacy, language and numeracy qualifications need either to be registered as a test centre or have access to one. The process for becoming registered as a test centre is set out in Annex C. A full list of registered test centres and further information on the National Test can be found on the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit's website: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureAccreditation. This includes information on how to become a test centre, details of the National Test Toolkit and Move On project, online practice tests, a leaflet of frequently asked questions on the National Tests, and a list of awarding body contact details and the qualifications they offer, as well as a database of centres that offer the national tests in adult literacy, numeracy, ESOL or key skills.

15 While all providers will need to be registered as (or have access to) a test centre capable of delivering approved literacy, language and numeracy qualifications, we will be making up to £2,500 available for each existing test centre that is involved in the pilot (or for each provider that is not already a test

centre) to enable greater flexibility in the assessment of these qualifications. Providers could use the funding to:

- Register with an awarding body as a test centre, preferably to offer on-screen testing either alone or in addition to manual testing, if they are not already registered
- Register with an awarding body to offer on-screen testing, if such testing is not already available
- Register to offer mobile on-screen testing, if this is not already available
- Support the set up of an employer's premises as either an on-screen or a manual test centre to enable access for a reasonable number of learners, where such testing is appropriate and not already available.

The funding should be used to help cover the awarding body registration costs and, where necessary, the purchase of ICT equipment. Any ICT equipment thus purchased must, after the end of this pilot, continue to be dedicated to supporting basic skills (or key skills) learners. Access to the facilities enabled through these arrangements should not be limited to basic skills learners on this pilot. Learners doing key skills have to do the same test as part of the key skill qualification and so should have access to these facilities where appropriate.

16 Further information about becoming a test centre is provided at Annex C to this guidance.

EVALUATION

17 The NLSC will appoint a project manager to oversee and evaluate the project. The project manager will set up a small project management group that will include representatives from NLSC, local LSCs, ALP and ABSSU. Further details will be provided separately.

NLSC
8 October 2003

Annex A

SELECTION CRITERIA

1 Providers will be considered for involvement in the pilot project where they meet the following conditions. Providers must:

- hold a current WBL contract with the LSC
- not have been identified, at the Spring 2003 Performance Review, as a provider whose performance gives cause for some or serious concerns
- have, or have access to, a registered basic skills test centre(s) in all LSC areas where they plan to deliver the pilot
- be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient appropriately qualified staff and resources to deliver adult numeracy, literacy, or language (ESOL) provision (see below for further details).

Multi-site providers who may have received a range of ratings at performance review, from different local LSCs, will only be allowed to deliver the pilot in local LSC areas where they were not rated as having performance which gives cause for some or serious concerns.

Staff requirements

2 As above, in order to be eligible to participate in the pilot, providers must be able to demonstrate that they have sufficient and appropriately qualified staff and resources to deliver adult numeracy, literacy, or language (ESOL) provision. Staff who have been delivering adult literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL) provision would be eligible to continue delivering provision as part of this pilot.

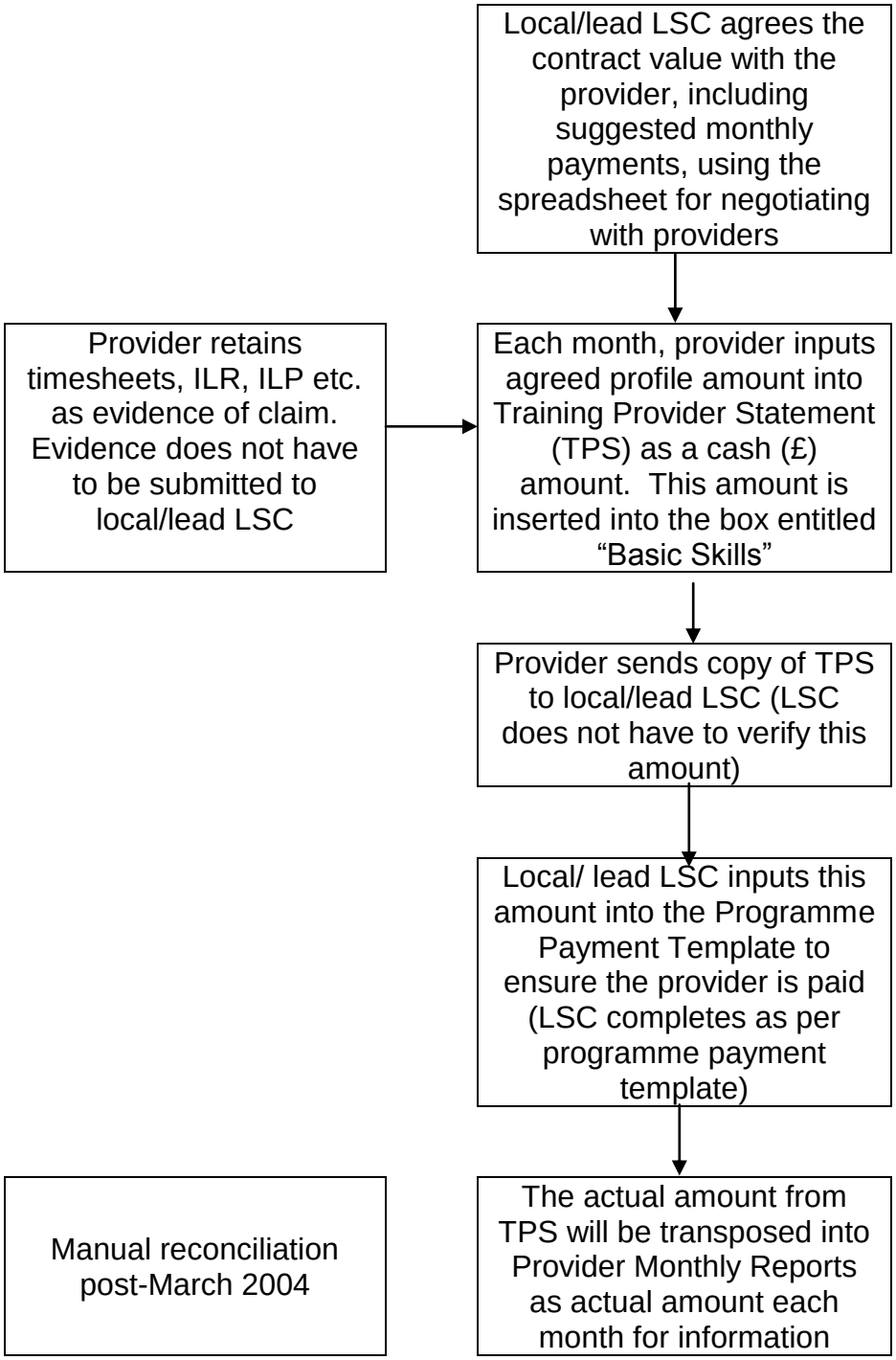
3 With regard to new teachers, the following guidance has been taken from the DfES (draft) booklet “The Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications Framework: A Users’ Guide”:

> Since September 2002 all new entrants to the teaching profession who wish to specialise in teaching adult literacy, numeracy or language (ESOL) have been required to enrol on FENTO-approved programmes that meet the requirements of the Subject Specifications at level 4, and lead to the new Level 4 Certificate for Subject Specialists in addition to meeting the requirements for generic initial teaching training qualifications.
>
> At present, the new qualifications requirements apply only to new adult literacy and numeracy teachers entering the profession from 1 September 2002, and do not apply retrospectively. There are currently no requirements for existing teachers to obtain the new specialist certificates. No existing teacher will be barred from continuing to teach adult literacy or numeracy if they do not possess these new qualifications. However, it is

expected that over time, in the interests of parity, equal opportunity, and in the light of the requirements of the statutory inspection regime, existing adult literacy and numeracy teachers will take up opportunities to obtain the new specialist qualifications as part of their continuing professional development.

Annex B

GUIDANCE ON THE PAYMENT PROCESS FOR THE WBL BASIC SKILLS PILOT



Annex C

HOW TO BECOME A TEST CENTRE

1 This information is taken from the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit's website: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/BecomingATestCentre.

2 In the past, there have been many complex requirements for test centres that have prevented smaller institutions and non-traditional settings from being able to register. However, with the increased use of ICT in the basic skills sector and the fact that potential centres can specifically register for the National Tests in Adult Literacy and Numeracy, these requirements have been significantly reduced.

3 There are already several test centres operating in non-traditional settings and many others in the process of applying, including nurseries, buses and train stations.

4 There are two possible ways of becoming an approved test centre. The first is to approach the awarding body directly and ask for approved centre status. The second is to approach a local college or Learndirect centre that is already an approved test centre. The basic process is outlined below:

- Contact an awarding body that offers the tests and ask to be registered. See www.qca.org.uk/nq/bs/adultlit_numqual.asp for an up-to-date list of awarding bodies.
- They will send you a form to fill in. This will cover information such as experience, reason for becoming a test centre, number of people likely to want to take the test, etc.
- Once the awarding bodies have received your form they will determine whether a site visit is required. During a site visit you will need to show that:

  a. There is secure storage for all test papers.

  b. There is adequate space for the numbers of people likely to want to take the tests.

  c. Somebody appropriate, who is not the candidate's tutor, will be available to invigilate.
- A decision will be made on whether to give accreditation to your centre.
- In the unusual circumstances that an application fails, feedback will be given to allow you to try again.

5 In the case of approaching a local college or Learndirect centre that is already an approved centre, the school/college would need to be sure that you have all the necessary facilities. The advantage of working through a college or Learndirect centre is that they will be able to show you how to effectively operate the tests and may be willing (probably at a cost) to provide invigilators.

6 The process of becoming an on-screen test centre is slightly different. Training may be required to cover installation of the software and the needs for support and administration when the tests are run.

Annex D

GUIDANCE NOTE ON RECORDING THE WORK-BASED LEARNING BASIC SKILLS PILOT ON THE ILR FOR 2003/04

INTRODUCTION

1 This note gives guidance on recording learners following the work-based learning (WBL) basic skills pilot on the individualised learner record (ILR) for 2003/04.

2 This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the ILR WBL/ Co-financed ESF provider support manual and the specification of the individualised learner record for 2003/04. These documents are available on the data section of the LSC website at:
http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/Data/default.htm.
Once on this page, select *data collections* from the left-hand drop-down box and *individualised learner record* from the right-hand drop-down box and then *individualised learner record 2003/04.*

3 When completing the ILR for the WBL basic skills pilot, providers should follow the guidance in the WBL provider support manual except where outlined below.

RETURNING DATA

4 Providers should return for data the WBL basic skills pilot using the same return method as for their main WBL contract (i.e. provider on-line or provider batch).

PROVIDER BATCH RETURNS

5 The guidance below is focused on the completing the ILR form. Providers making batch returns should ensure that where the guidance states that the field should be left blank, the appropriate null value is returned in the batch file (i.e. zero filled for numeric and date fields and space filled for alphanumeric fields).

PART A – LEARNER INFORMATION

6 Part A of the ILR form captures information about the learner. It should be completed as described in the provider support manual.

7 If a learner progresses from the WBL basic skills pilot to a WBL programme within the same provider, the provider should not create a new learner record for them. The learner should retain the same learner reference number (Fields L02/A02).

PART B AND C

8 Parts B and C of the ILR form collect information on the learning aim the learner is following.

9 A part B should be completed for each of the learning aims being followed by a learner as part of the WBL basic skills pilot.

10 Part C collects information on subsidiary aims for a WBL programme and is not required for the WBL basic skills pilot.

11 The fields contained in part B are listed below in the order in which they appear on the ILR form.

A02 Contract/Allocation type

12 This field is not required for the WBL basic skills pilot and should be left blank.

13 Note: For providers making batch returns, if their MI system derives this or enforces an entry in this field, it is acceptable to use the same contract/allocation type as for their main WBL contract. In this case the value recorded on the ILR form should match that returned in the batch file.

A09 Learning aim reference number

14 Use the valid entry from the Learning Aim Database (LAD) for the learning aim. The LAD is available on-line at http://providers.lsc.gov.uk/lad/.

A10 LSC funding stream

15 Use code 80 – other LSC funding. It is important that the correct code is used in this field as this identifies that aim is WBL formula funded. The use of a value other than 80 is likely to result in validation errors when the data is transmitted to the LSC.

A15 Programme type

16 Use code 99 – none of the above

A16 Programme entry route

17 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A27 Learning start date

18 Record the date on which learning for this aim began.

A28 Planned end date

19 Record the date by which the provider and the learner plan to complete the learning related to this learning aim. Do not update this field if the learner continues learning beyond this planned end date or finishes before this date. The actual end date should be reflected in field A31 – actual end date.

A51 Number of on-programme payments

20 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A24 SOC code

21 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A26 Sector code

22 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A53 Additional Learning/Social Needs

23 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A49 Special project and pilots

24 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A44 Placement employer name

25 This field is important for the pilot in order to identify which employers are engaging in the programme. Providers should ensure this field is completed for all learners in the pilot.

A45 Placement employer postcode

26 This field is important for the pilot in order to identify which employers are engaging in the programme. Providers should ensure this field is completed for all learners in the pilot.

A23 Delivery location postcode

27 Enter the postcode of the address at which the learning is delivered.

A06 ESF data set

28 This field indicates whether ESF data is required for the aim. It is expected that in most cases ESF data will not be required for the pilot, in which case this field should be left blank.

29 The pilot will not be funded directly by ESF co-financing. However, it is possible that pilot funds may be used as match for ESF co-financing. Local/lead LSCs will inform providers if this is the case, in which case a value of 01 should be recorded in field A06.

A40 Achievement date

30 Record the date the learner achieved the learning aim. This field should be left blank until the learner achieves. If the learner leaves without achieving the learning aim, this field should also be left blank.

A43 Sector framework achievement date

31 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A31 Actual end date

32 Record the date that the learner completed the learning activities necessary to achieve the learning aim or the date the learner withdrew from the learning activities.

A34 Completion status

33 Use code 1 where the learner is continuing; use code 2 where the learner has completed; use code 3 where the learner withdraws without completing the learning aim; use code 4 if the learner withdraws from the learning aim and as a direct result transfers to a new learning aim.

34 Code 5 is not applicable to the pilot.

A35 Learning outcome

35 Use code 9 where study is continuing; use code 1 where the learning aim has been achieved; use code 3 where the learning aim is not achieved; use code 4 where the exam/assessment has been taken and the result is not yet known; use code 5 where the learning activity is complete and the exam/assessment has not yet been taken.

36 Note: Code 2 – *partial achievement* is not applicable to the learning aims offered under the WBL basic skill pilots. Partial achievement is where the learning aim has not been achieved but some modules or credit towards the learning aim has been achieved. The qualifications offered within the pilot are not made up of modules or credit and partial achievement is therefore not possible.

A37 Number of units completed

37 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A38 Number of units to achieve full qualification

38 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

A50 Reason learning ended

39 This field is not required for the pilot and should be left blank.

PART D - ESF DATA SET INFORMATION

40 It is expected that in most cases a part D will not be required for the WBL basic skills pilot.

41 The pilot will not be funded directly by ESF co-financing. However, it is possible that pilot funds may be used as match for ESF co-financing. Local/lead LSCs will inform providers if an ESF data set is required for the pilot. In this case, providers should complete a part D for each learning aim being followed by the learner.

42 If required, the part D should be completed as described in the ESF/WBL provider support manual.

PART E - SPECIAL MONITORING DATA

43 Part E of the ILR form is required for all learning aims delivered as part of the WBL basic skills pilot. Details of up to two learning aims may be recorded on a single part E. If a learner has more than two learning aims, complete an additional part E.

44 All fields except A46 should be completed as described in the WBL provider support manual.

A46 National Learning aim monitoring

45 Use code 27 in the first box. This code was previously unassigned and will now be used to indicate that the learning aim is part of the pilot. Use code 99 in the second box.