



## LWBLA note to London Councils: European Structural Investment Funds 2014-2020

### 1. Overview

The LWBLA welcomes the opportunity to be consulted and on the new ESIF programme.

The LWBLA is supportive of:

- The proposed youth priorities, and
- The broad definitions of eligibility.

Likes the concepts of:

- Tailored support
- Informed customers, and
- Employer engagement

In terms of communication we would welcome an open structure established specifically for dialogue between co-funders, stakeholders and providers over the life cycle of the programme. Is this something that the LEP and London Councils can co-lead?

In terms of who is defined as a provider with current reference to 'schools and colleges' we would like this to be expanded to include 'independent providers' as appropriate within the five programme areas for the reason that they deliver key services to the target client groups.

### 2. LWBLA interaction with Local Authority

Issues the LWBLA would welcome Local Authority discussion and support for the purpose of targeting within the ESIF include:

- Schools whose overall GCSE performance is below the national and London average,
- Pupils Aged 15 + most at risk of not achieving A-C's in English and Maths.
- Boroughs with NEET and 'not known' combined averaging over 12% of the cohort,
- Boroughs with less than 1000 resident apprentices (of all ages), and
- Boroughs whose overall employment levels declined between 2001- 2011.

This is not an exclusive list it struck the LWBLA that there should be a rationale and logic to the definitions and criteria used to target interventions locally.



### 3. Strategic evaluation of ESF

When independent providers were asked what they would like to see the LEP - London Councils take account of strategically (when identifying complex issues), the following themes stood out:

- The importance of effective contract management by co-funders,
- Designing appropriate outcomes for target groups,
- Avoid programme underspend with unrealistic payment schedules, and
- Inadequate evidence of sustainability.

### 4. Bidding as the vehicle for commissioning

In terms of critical processes that influences the effectiveness of commissioning the following issues were seen as paramount:

- Avoiding bid writing that encourages 'fantasizing'.
- Divergent outcomes from co-funders for the same client groups.
- Importance of provider track record.
- Cross borough collaboration necessary to reflect travel to learn patterns.

More controversially:

- Placing more reliance on Ofsted grades as a proxy for effective quality assurance and funding agency contract delivery.
- Backlash against the 'prime ' model, which sucks cash out to underwrite the prime and not the front line service.
- Look at encouraging innovative collaborative models for small organisations particularly the 'not for profits' and charities to generate scale, impact and sustainability.

Informally providers are keen to support linking education with technology and or sport by focusing on issues of positive lifestyles and choices to redress 'gang culture', failure at school, and lack of work experience.

### 5. Supporting Mainstream Programmes: Apprenticeships & Traineeships

The apprenticeship programme provides a critical transition from education to employment and could prominently feature all five programme themes, why, because:

- Apprenticeships have the highest combined success rate for outcomes (71%) and progression (91%) but represents only 8% of 16 -18 volume in London.
- 98% have employed status from day 1.



- In terms of Qualification studied: 66% level 2, 33% level 3 +.
- 70% of apprentices employed by an SME.
- Rapidly expanding sectors such as digital media.
- 80% of all apprentice training delivered by independent providers.

Barriers:

- Weak IAG for 15 year olds – needs more direct interface with apprentices and providers, not careers advisors per se.
- Lack of incentive for SME's and high performing employers particularly in the suburbs where employment is in decline.
- Poor English and Math's prevent education progression beyond level 2.
- Lack of higher-level apprenticeships (alternative to Uni.) for 19+ unemployed.

The Richard Review process will lead to the deregulation of qualifications and a switch to tax credits, mandatory employer cash contributions, and open tender pricing during the ESIF programme - so providers will be subject to unprecedented uncertainty and change.

Traineeships are a new programme with low take up but compete with other publicly funded work experience. This needs clarifying between providers and co-funders perhaps creating a unified 'London offer' for employers. Only grade 2 Ofsted providers can deliver traineeships but all providers can offer work experience.

Strategically London has an unbalanced vocational offer with an oversupply of classroom-based qualifications relative to the work-based route.

## 6. Preventing NEET

The LWBLA is keen to promote 'ambassador' service models into schools and education environments. People relate to the experience of apprentices and industry experts. The importance of qualifications and working with schools who often interpret RPA as 'staying on at school'. The warehousing effect defers failure

## 7. NEET reengagement

More emphasis should be given to supporting foundation leave study programmes with clear progression into employment/apprenticeships. In London 10-12,000 16-18 year olds (average 350 per Borough) have rejected all forms of classroom based education.

The most effective interventions come from charities, social enterprises that offer bespoke programmes often localised and highly targeted. In terms of managing performance risk collaborative partnerships and an integrated offers particularly for the 19+ age group.