SKILLS BROKER MODULE: THE NATIONAL EMPLOYER SERVICE
THE USER’S GUIDE

Version 2 (June 2008)
Introducing the user’s guide

This guide has been put together to help readers get the most out of the National Employer Service (NES) resource pack. The guide should be read by regional LSC teams and brokerage organisations so that they are fully informed as to the aims, content and intended uses of the pack. It will also inform regional LSC teams and brokerage organisations of the issues and preparations that should be considered before the resource pack is distributed to Brokers.

The user guide can also be read by Brokers, to give them some additional context and some guidelines on how to use the resource pack effectively.

Introducing the module

A series of training modules, in the form of resource packs and workshops, has been developed to provide Brokers with information on specific areas, including the latest policy and funding updates as of June 2008. This series of modules is intended to assist Brokers in achieving the Skills Broker Standard by linking into its particular competencies. The modules also aim to enable Brokers to confidently deliver the Train to Gain service by providing information on key areas that are deemed useful in their day-to-day brokerage role.

Feedback from Brokers has been taken into account in the initial development and subsequent revisions of the materials and activities that make up each module. This is to ensure the information in the modules is relevant to Brokers and, where possible, fills their current knowledge gaps. In addition to this, specific feedback on the module materials and activities was collected from Brokers and regional LSC staff during a pilot workshop in 2006 and during the revisions in May 2008. The feedback from this pilot region enabled improvements to be made to the final version of the module materials and activities.

This module should not stand in isolation. It should be delivered in conjunction with:

- Other training modules in this series
- Additional provision for continuing professional development activities (as appropriate for each Broker).
Introducing the resource pack

Aims and objectives of the resource pack

- Form part of Broker continuous professional development by providing more in-depth information and building on Brokers’ own knowledge and experience of NES. May act as a refresher for those who have already read version 1 of the resource pack.
- To enable the Brokers to deliver Train to Gain more effectively; offering a wider range of solutions to clients.
- To provide key input on NES to assist Brokers in achieving the knowledge elements relating to client solutions within the Broker Standards (refer to page 3 for more details).

Outcomes of the resource

The resource pack will enable Brokers to:

- Understand what NES is and how it operates
- Be aware of NES provision, funding and the eligibility criteria for large employers
- Understand the referral protocols (regions to NES and NES to regions) and therefore be able to ensure employer needs are met appropriately
- Be aware of the business issues/needs of large employers and the potential training and development undertaken in large organisations
- Be able to broker regional provision to large employers with regional or local training plans.
**Preparation**

Before you distribute the pack to Brokers, you will need to consider the following:

**The intended purpose and use of the pack**
The NES resource pack has been produced for Skills Brokers as a useful and practical resource which can be used on a day-to-day basis.

The pack will be of most use to Brokers who have limited knowledge of NES provision and working with large employers. However, those Brokers that have some experience in this area may find the information useful in order to refresh their understanding of the NES offer and respective eligibility criteria. Although NES is an independent service with its own funding, it is necessary for Brokers to be aware of NES as a potential route for large employers that they may encounter. As the section on cross referrals and Business Scenarios demonstrates, it may be viable for some large employers to work with regional brokerage.

The pack is **NOT** intended to:

- Act as a marketing tool for Brokers during their visits to employers
- Provide Brokers with a detailed guide to NES provision, funding and provider infrastructure.

If any of the above resources are required the local LSC team and/or Skills Broker Organisation will need to develop and produce them to meet the particular needs of their Brokers.

In terms of the **Skills Broker Standard**, the resources relate to some of the knowledge required in the following units (unit references given):

- **a2** Identify specific skill solutions in relation to business goals/challenges: understand the client’s skills needs and identify appropriate solutions
- **a3** Proactively network and search new solutions: understand what training solutions are available
- **a4** Help the client to critically assess a training provider’s offer: present a number of options to the client
- **b3** The framework of training and development delivery: funding packages, eligibility of employers and individuals
Referral Protocols
This section outlines the suggested national protocol for regional Brokers working with NES. In most cases it is envisaged that Brokers will communicate with NES through their brokerage managers and then through the regional Train to Gain team; it is for this reason that no named contact at NES has been given. On the NES section of the Train to Gain website:
http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/Region/NES/ , employers are directed to contact NES at cvh-businessenquiry@lsc.gov.uk.

Use of NES case studies
It must be noted that within the National Employer Service, unlike the LSC regions, there are no sectoral priorities and therefore the case studies and examples of employers working with NES are taken from a range of sectors. It may be appropriate for regional leads to consult NES for alternative case studies which may be more relevant to Brokers in their particular region.

Business Scenarios
For the purpose of the resource pack, the Business Scenarios in section 7 have been put together in the form of a reference document so that Brokers can test out their knowledge of the NES offer. It is suggested, however, that this information is used as a practical exercise for Brokers. In this case the employer profiles should be separated from the responses/approaches and used as the basis for discussion. This exercise could be run at a team meeting or as part of other training and development activities.
# LEARNING OUTCOMES

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| 2) Be aware of NES provision, funding and the eligibility criteria for large employers. | Section 2 – Factsheet  
Section 3 – Eligibility Criteria                                                  |
| 3) Understand the referral protocols (regions to NES and NES to regions) and therefore be able to ensure employer needs are met appropriately. | Section 4 - Referral Protocols                       |
| 4) Be aware of the business issues/needs of large employers and the potential training and development undertaken in large organisations. | Section 2 – Factsheet  
Section 5 - Case Studies  
Section 7 – Business Scenarios                                                        |
| 5) Be able to broker regional provision to large employers with regional or local training plans. | Section 4 - Referral Protocols  
Section 5 - Case studies  
Section 6 – Questions & Answers                                                      |
Overview of resource materials

Section 1: Introduction
The introduction gives an overview of the purpose and intended outcomes of the pack: who’s produced it; what’s in it; and how to use it.

Section 2: Factsheet
This section gives a basic introduction to NES and would be particularly useful for Brokers new to NES. It includes an overview of what NES is, what NES offers employers and who NES works with.

Section 3: Eligibility Checklist
This is a quick reference list of the eligibility criteria for those large employers who wish to engage with NES. It should be noted, however, that NES aims to be flexible to employers’ needs and that some of their employers do not have the specified 5000 employees. Equally, not all large employers work nationally and may prefer a regional set up for their training programme. This section should therefore be read in conjunction with the Business Scenarios and Referral Protocols.

Section 4: Referral Protocols
This offers an overview of how NES, regional Brokers and the LSC Train to Gain teams can work together and exchange referrals.

Section 5: Case Studies
These illustrate concrete examples of companies working with NES and also give an insight into some of the issues involved in working with large employers.

Section 6: Questions & Answers
The questions covered explore some of the common areas of discussion which arose in the induction workshops and will help to consolidate an understanding of NES. Basic questions around NES are included in the Factsheet.

Section 7: Business Scenarios
This enables Brokers to apply the information presented in the other resource materials and therefore helps check for understanding of the NES offer. It also aims to help Brokers deal with enquiries from large employers by demonstrating how some large employers may decide to work with NES whereas others choose to work regionally.