Purpose

1. The purpose of this protocol is to outline joint working principles and arrangements between Skillfast-UK and the regional skills brokerage teams to ensure that the shared aims of the Skillfast-UK sector compact are delivered and that the skills requirements of employers within Skillfast-UK’s footprint are met through Train to Gain. The anticipated outputs agreed within the compact are set out in Annex A.

2. This protocol also sets out the relationship and responsibilities between Skillfast-UK, the Skillfast-UK employer engagement team and the regional brokerage services in the delivery of the Skillfast-UK sector compact.

3. Through the agreement in the sector compact, the Train to Gain offer to employers in Skillfast-UK’s footprint is enhanced to include:
   - Minimum 1,500 employer engagements and referrals to Train to Gain Skills Brokers in England
   - An increase of 8,000 learners at full Level 2 NVQ above the current baseline figure, of which 70% will be first achievements and 30% second achievements
   - An increase of 2,500 learners at full Level 3 NVQs above the current baseline figure, of which 80% will be first achievements and 20% second achievements
   - 1,000 Skills Pledge commitments
   - 200 Management and Leadership outcomes
   - 500 Apprenticeships starts
   - 600 Skills for Life achievements

   - First and additional NVQ level 2 and 3 are focussed on SSC priority qualifications
     See the list at: http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Skillfast_Sector_Compact_Qualifications.pdf

General Principles

4. This protocol will be supported and reinforced by a wider range of protocols between the regional LSC, Skillfast-UK and other key regional partners including specialist provider network and employer networks

5. Delivery of the compact will complement and align with existing regional skills brokerage arrangements. Where this is not possible, different arrangements will be documented and agreed.

6. Skillfast-UK will not make direct employer referrals to providers. This agreed approach will reinforce the concept of a single point of contact between providers and the wider brokerage network.

7. The brokerage services and Skillfast-UK will work together to ensure that employer engagement activity is aligned to avoid unnecessary duplication.

8. The role of the NSA in supporting the outcomes of the compact will be set out clearly and a protocol agreed between the Fashion and Textile NSA and Skillfast-UK.
9. Promotion and marketing of Train to Gain in support of the objectives of the compact will be jointly planned, agreed and branded both Train to Gain and Skillfast-UK.

10. A baseline will be set for employer engagement, learner starts and the range of outcomes agreed in the compact based on available performance information for the sector from 2007-2008 LSC data.

Detailed Working arrangements - Roles and Responsibilities

Skillfast-UK

11. Engaging Employers and Driving Up Demand

- Work with the regional LSC and brokerage services within the first quarter of each year of the compact to develop and agree a regional employer engagement plan to include:
  - employer targeting strategy
  - baseline and progress figures
  - regional marcomms strategy

- Communicate the core sector offer with the regional brokerage service
- Develop a broader regional offer built around the national core, to include for example ESF projects

12. Data and management information

- All data relating to compact performance and for reviews will be supplied by the LSC National Office team each quarter or by the SSC where relevant to their specific role in the compact. To maintain a single consistent process, other data sources outside this will not be used in the review process.

- For any additional regional MI, agreed by LSC / SSC as necessary outside of the quarterly nationally produced data above, this will use the relevant reporting platform managed by the Regional Brokerage Services, where possible. Where this is not possible, different arrangements will be documented and agreed.

13. Sourcing Provision

- To ensure that all provider referrals will be made by Regional Brokerage services.
- Support the development of provider capability and capacity to deliver in line with regional delivery profiles
- Ensure the regional brokerage services are regularly updated on the status of providers working in the region against accreditation standards, such as the Training Quality Standard
Help increase the number of training providers that meet the overall quality standards: Framework for Excellence and Training Quality Standard

14. Support the exchange of sector knowledge and understanding between Skillfast-UK and the Skills Brokers

- Develop the knowledge of regional brokerage service staff with regards to the sector offer and needs of the sector and associated learner entitlement. This includes information on:
  - business and skills issues, solutions and priorities for the sector,
  - and update on key changes in the sector at least annually.

15. Marketing and Promotion

- Developing and agreeing a marketing and promotion strategy and approach with the regional brokerage service, in line with the National Marketing Campaign.
- Promoting the sector offer in Train to Gain to include the Skills Pledge and broader business support

16. Monitoring Arrangements

- Nominate a lead link person to work with the brokerage service for each region
- Agree regional reviews and monitoring arrangements with the regional brokerage service and the LSC. This will include initially monthly and subsequently quarterly meetings to review performance against regional targets.

The Regional Brokerage Service work with Skillfast-UK to:

17. Data and management information

- Capture a minimum, nationally required, data set from employers as agreed with the LSC and Skillfast-UK
- Share available data with Skillfast-UK regarding all employer engagements resulting from promotion of the compact or making use of the compact flexibilities.

18. Employer engagement

- Work with the regional LSC and brokerage services within the first quarter of each year of the compact to develop and agree a regional employer engagement plan to include:
  - employer targeting strategy
  - baseline and progress figures
  - regional marcomms strategy
- Communicate the core sector offer with the regional brokerage service
- Develop a broader regional offer built around the national core, to include for example ESF projects
Agree referral arrangements in line with the agreed national customer journey including referrals to the broader areas of business support
Develop employer engagement strategies including joint work in identifying target employers (see Annex C)

19. Support the exchange of sector knowledge and understanding between Skillfast-UK and the Skills Brokers

Develop the knowledge of Skillfast-UK employer engagement team with regards to the flexible arrangements and other regional issues related to the needs of the sector. This includes information on learner and employer eligibility in Train to Gain.

20. Sourcing Provision

Identify suitable providers to meet identified employer needs
Make provider referrals utilising existing provider databases to meet employers’ needs
Utilise the Train to Gain responsive fund where an employer has expressed a wish to work with a particular provider
Work with Skillfast-UK and the National Skills Academy for Fashion and Textiles to maintain an awareness of regional provider capability and accreditation

21. Marketing and Promotion

Develop and agree a marketing and promotion strategy and approach with Skillfast-UK in line with the National Campaign
Promote the sector offer agreed with Skillfast-UK to include Train to Gain, the Skills Pledge and broader business support

Monitoring Arrangements

Nominate a lead link person to work with Skillfast-UK for the region
Agree regional review and monitoring arrangements with Skillfast-UK and the LSC. This will include, initially monthly and subsequently quarterly meetings to review performance against regional targets
Measures of Success / Targets for the compact

22. Referrals between Skillfast-UK employer engagement staff and regional brokerage services in both directions can count as engagements for both organisations provided value is being added. The organisation making initial contact must be identified in the CRM. This will allow brokers to count the following outcomes against contractual targets:

- Referrals from Skillfast-UK to source training provision following a visit
- Repeat engagements, subject to regional contractual arrangements, to previously engaged employers who will benefit from compact flexibilities
- Referrals from Skillfast-UK for training requirements outside their area of specialism

23. The following will be gathered both nationally and regionally through LSC Broker Collections and ILR systems and used to assess the strategic success of the compact:

23.1. Learner starts and completions, first and additional, at level 2, 3 and 4 by priority aim, Skills for Life achievements, Leadership and Management Development grants and Apprenticeships. This will also indicate penetration rates;

23.2. Skills Pledges signed by employers in the Skillfast-UK footprint to be measured as a cumulative figure and change from September 2008

23.3. Total number of employers in the footprint engaged in training indicating penetration rates;

24. National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) will be used to gain an understanding of each of the following:

- Recruitment activity (this will give an indication of skills shortages)
- Skills gaps
- Companies engaged in training their employees

25. The following will be gathered, on a national and regional basis, if interventions are carried out by Skillfast-UK employer engagement teams:

- Number of companies engaged to include those led by Skillfast-UK and those in which Skillfast-UK were involved. This should indicate new and repeat engagements;
- Referrals to regional brokerage service including those which Skillfast-UK have led or had involvement in;
- Learner starts and completions, first and additional, at NVQ level 2, 3 and 4 by priority aim,
- Skills for Life achievements, Leadership and Management Development Grants and Apprenticeships.
- Referrals to other regional partners and regional Business Link
- Employer investment in skills
26. In addition:

26.1. Skillfast-UK will also develop measures to assess the impact on productivity and profitability by the first anniversary of the compact.

26.2. LSC will commission additional evaluation on the compact as part of Train to Gain employer satisfaction evaluation.

LSC Skillfast-UK
27 February 2009
ANNEX A

Anticipated Outputs of the compact

Anticipated Outputs (over three years)

- Minimum 1,500 employer engagements and referrals to Train to Gain Skills Brokers in England
- An increase of 8,000 learners at full Level 2 NVQ above the current baseline figure, of which 70% will be first achievements and 30% second achievements
- An increase of 2,500 learners at full Level 3 NVQs above the current baseline figure, of which 80% will be first achievements and 20% second achievements
- 1,000 Skills Pledge commitments
- 200 Management and Leadership outcomes
- 500 Apprenticeships starts
- 600 Skills for Life achievements

The LSC offer to employers will be as follows:

Repeat full Level 2 and Repeat full level 3 qualifications
Please see the list at http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Skillfast_Sector_Compact_Qualifications.pdf

Apprenticeships
- Roll-out of existing and new apprenticeships frameworks.

Skills pledges
- Sector specific skills pledges, utilizing a form of words that builds on and is consistent with the Government’s national Skills Pledge.

Management and Leadership
- Standard Train to Gain rules apply. In addition, eligibility for TtG management and leadership will also be extended to employers in the Skillfast-UK footprint with between 5 and 9 employees.
Train to Gain – The service

The core Train to Gain service available to employers is an independent and impartial brokerage service which will diagnose business needs and source appropriate training provision.

Through Train to Gain Skillfast-UK and the regional brokerage service will provide:

- A comprehensive analysis of training needs and will propose solutions to those needs. Solutions which will identify clearly which elements attract government funding and those for which the employer will have to pay, in part or in full;
- Easy access to relevant and flexible, high quality training delivered mostly in the workplace and using increasingly an assess train, assess model which will enable the employee’s prior learning and experience to be taken into account;
- Access to LSC fully funded programmes, for example Skills for Life, Level 2 provision and Apprenticeships;
- Information and support from a Skills Broker, working to national standards, providing access to a wide range of training packages including higher level qualifications and training that is not qualification-based;
- Information and advice to employers and employees on qualifications and training, local/regional skills shortages and priorities as well as eligibility for funding;
- Support to develop ongoing strategies addressing future training needs, which are aligned to business objectives;
- Contribution to wage costs for employers that employ less than 50 full time employees;
- Support to help employers agree SMART objectives and impact measures for training and development activities at an organisational, team and individual learner level if required;
- Support to help employers evaluate the impact of training and development on individual, team and organisational performance for all training and development regardless of whether or not it is funded; and
- Ongoing support to help employers to develop strategies to address future skills and training needs, which are aligned to business objectives and embedded in their business processes, including capacity building if required.
ANNEX C

Targeting Strategy

Skillfast-UK will work with regional brokerage services to agree a targeting strategy which will minimise the number of employers who are contacted by both organisations to promote general opportunities under Train to Gain and the additional services and flexibilities offered by the compact.

Principles for this are given below;

- Skillfast-UK will promote this offer only to those employers within their footprint
- The compact includes an agreement that Skillfast-UK will work with the largest 40 companies in its footprint. These will be identified on a regional basis and their details shared with the regional LSC and brokerage service
- Large companies (more than 5,000 employees) with a presence in more than 1 region will be targeted by Skillfast-UK who will work jointly with the LSC’s National Employer Service (NES)
- In the case of companies who are already working with Skillfast-UK or the regional brokerage service to plan or implement training delivery under Train to Gain the flexibilities under the compact will be promoted by the current lead organisation. If necessary or requested by the employer additional support will be provided by Skillfast-UK or the regional brokerage service
- Skillfast-UK will work with the regional brokerage service to establish the use of Train to Gain by their employers in the region;
- If an employer is active Skillfast-UK will liaise with the regional brokerage service to determine whether Joint contact or visit is made to the employer or Skillfast-UK or the brokerage service contact the employer alone
- If an employer is inactive Skillfast-UK will promote the sector offer
- In order to avoid companies being targeted by both Skillfast-UK and the regional brokerage service agreements will be reached on a regional basis on how to segment employers not currently active on Train to Gain This will take the company size, sub-sector and location into consideration into account.
- In all cases above both Skillfast-UK and the regional brokerage service can count the engagement subject to value being added
ANNEX D:

Skillfast-UK Regional Contacts

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