Funding Foundation Learning (FL) Q+A (Issue 2)

All Learner Responsive Providers for 2009/10 and E2E providers from 2010/11 (See Q30 onwards for specific E2E transition questions)

Q1) What funding streams can be used to fund FL in 2009?

The FL is funded using the standard LSC demand-led funding methodology so can be claimed using 16-18 or Adult Learner responsive funding models. The structure can be used to plan Employer Responsive provision but there is no facility to claim FL programmes through the ERM. As a transition measure E2E providers can continue to claim E2E weeks and bonuses in 2009/10.

Q2) Does that change in 2010/11?

Yes, all providers including those delivering E2E now will be funded using the demand-led funding methodology in 2010/11.

Q3) Do I need to register learners for all the qualifications they are doing at the start of their programme?

No, this is for the provider to manage in accordance with each learner’s needs. In funding terms providers will be credited for the SLNs related to each qualification registered on the ILR/School Census. Each qualification registered will also be counted for success rates which will impact on the following year’s provider factor and therefore the funding received in the following year. The programme can span multiple years provided there is no break in learning.

Q4) I understand that if a learner has already achieved an element of the programme they don’t have to do it again, can they do something else instead?

Yes, they could do an alternative, which should be from the Foundation Learning Tier Qualifications Catalogue (if possible), this could for example be functional skills at the next level.  
http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/FL_Qualifications_Catalogue_August_2009.xls

Q5) If the learner is not ready to do functional skills, how can I prepare them to do this and get funded for it?

Functional Skills are available at multiple levels (i.e. entry level 1, entry level 2, entry level 3 and level 1) and learners should be attempting a level appropriate to their abilities. If they would benefit from other qualifications or attempting a qualification which includes the common units (these have
personal progress in the title) then these qualifications can be funded. Again alternatives should (if possible always) be from the FL Qualifications catalogue.

**Q6) If a learner does an award followed by a certificate how will this be funded?**

In funding terms you must register for the award and claim the SLNs and then register for the certificate afterwards. You must therefore rebate the SLNs claimed for the award using field A51a on the ILR (See Funding Guidance Annex D).

**Q7) Do I have to pay back SLN generated if a learner leaves before they have completed a programme?**

No, the SLNs are earned by the provider as soon as the learner qualifies as a start (after 2 or 6 weeks depending on length of stay). Retention and achievement are recognised within the provider factor. Learners who leave without achieving their qualification(s) depress success rates and this reduces funding in the following year.

**Q8) Some learners may not be able to immediately start working towards a QCF qualification, how is this engagement period (i.e. before they start on qualifications) funded?**

The funding mechanism is a way of providing a funding allocation to a provider rather than funding precisely what every learner does. This is illustrated by question 7 above. The funding rates per SLN were set accounting for learners who left before they qualify as a start and entitlement funding and ALS are not linked to individual qualifications so can cover this period. Providers need to use the flexibility of QCF qualifications to the full, there are many small bite sized qualifications at entry level and level 1 that learners can enrol on as part of initial assessment and these can then be funded and contribute credit to the learner’s qualifications.

**Q9) Initial assessment has identified a learner has a range of personal and social skills which need to be addressed. When I match this to units on the QCF qualification I am assuming they will gain more credit than required for the award but less than what is required for the certificate. Can I fund the extra units to achieve the extra credit?**

No, the LSC currently only funds full qualifications. However the choice is not purely between a single award or a certificate there may be other small bite sized qualifications or other qualifications at different sizes that could help with the learners development. Provided these are full qualifications they will be funded. Also see question 6 above about relationship between awards and certificates.
Q10) My learner has high personal and social development needs which cannot be simply met by the provision of PSD units and qualifications e.g. they need help finding accommodation, or counselling support. How can I fund this?

The Discretionary Learner support Fund is available to meet these needs. Also ALS funding is available to support learning, where these needs are below £5,500 they are met from the formula funded allocation. Should they total over £5,500 then an ALS costs form should be completed and submitted. The provider should also be making use of other services provided by JCP, Connexions, the NHS and the full range of other local services and charities.

Q11) Who qualifies for entitlement funding?

All 16-18 year old learners who are enrolled on an FL programme that contains qualifications planned to be delivered in 0.75 SLNs (336 glh) or more in any 12 months (as recorded in field A32 on the ILR). This includes where the programme spans more than one academic year provided there is no break in the learning programme. For example a learner that has a programme of 336 glh in one year will qualify as will a learner who’s 336 glh spans two years. If the learner qualifies by registering for 336 glh in both years they will qualify twice. Other learning outside qualifications does not count towards the 336 glh.

Q12) If a learner’s programme is under 0.75 SLN (336 glh) they won’t qualify for entitlement funding, how am I supposed to fund their support?

The funding mechanism is a way of providing a funding allocation to a provider rather than funding precisely what every learner does. This is illustrated by question 7 above. The learner will still qualify for ALS and entitlement funding does not have to be spent on individual learners it can be used across all learners. Also because the provider factor takes account of success rates the more support a provider gives which results in the achievement of qualifications the higher the provider factor which equals more funding the following year.

Q13) How is the length of stay determined and how is this used to determine a start?

The planned length of stay is determined by the expended end date of the overall personalised learning programme (not each individual qualification), minus the start date. If this equals under 24 weeks then the qualifying period is 2 weeks if it is more than 24 weeks then it is 6 weeks.

Q14) Where do I record GCSE points for English and Maths – is this on the ILR?
For 16-18 year olds you don’t, the LSC matches learners to their GCSE points scores using data from QCDA. For adults you record the prior attainment on the ILR yes.

Q15) Why is functional skills only 36 glh when it carries 5 credits (50 learning hours)?

The LSC funds qualifications based on glh because this represents the actual input the provider must make. Hence the 36glh used to calculate 0.08 SLN. The 50 learning hours represents the time the learner can be expected to study, this need not be under supervision.

Q16) Is the entitlement funding paid pro-rata for learners who do not qualify in full?

No, it is only paid for learners who qualify as full time learners.

Q17) Can learners do more than 1 award or certificate for PSD, or the vocational element?

Yes, however the learner can not exceed the SLN cap of 1.75 SLN and the provider can not exceed its SLN allocation.

Q18) Can a learner do functional skills at 2 levels in the same year if they are making good progress. For example English at E3 and then English at Level 1?

Yes, however the learner can not exceed the SLN cap of 1.75 SLN and the provider can not exceed its SLN allocation.

Q19) How will the funding model change when the Local Authority takes over from the LSC locally?

The Demand-led funding model will be in place throughout the transition to the YPLA and Local Authorities to provide stability and the right incentives to providers.

Q20) How do I get paid – when do I receive payment? – is there a profile?

For 2009/10 the same as you do now. In 2010/11 payments will continue to be paid on profile.

Q21) If I register a learner on a certificate and then they leave but have earned enough credit to gain an award what should I do? How would this impact on my funding?

Providers should seek to avoid this situation by careful planning. See question 6 above.
Q22) If a college or provider is a lead provider for a consortia will the consortia success rate impact on their overall success rate and therefore their funding?

Yes, as consortia lead the college or provider is responsible for the quality of the provision as well as administering the funding. However, the self assessment should identify the success rate separately for the consortia this should be discussed with the LSC if problems are identified.

Q23) Does the LSC fund stand alone units in the FL?

No except where these are within the unit funding trials for adults.

Q24) Why are notional learning hours (i.e. 10 notional learning hours = 1 credit) not the same as guided learning hours?

Credit is based on the hours the learner must study for (notional learning hours) these hours need not be guided by a member of staff. Guided learning hours (glh) are when a member of staff is present to guide the learning. For example a learner might receive instruction on completing a workbook for one hour (1glh) but then study in their own time for 9 further hours to complete it (10 notional learning hours) if they then achieve the required standard they have earned 1 credit. Funding is based on the guided learning only.

Q25) If I currently deliver First Steps Learning and am moving towards the FL model will my funding be affected?

No, First steps learning is funded as a block grant therefore what is delivered has no affect on funding. This means that you need to operate within your block grant in funding terms but adapt your curriculum to the FL model. All learning aims should be recorded as not funded by the LSC.

Q26) Is a learner age 19-25 who has a learning difficulty or disability required to pay fees?

A learner with a learning difficulty or disability at age 19-25 can qualify for fee remission by virtue of the learning programme they are undertaking, for example if that programme is a first full level 2, a first full level 3 or is skills for life (including other related qualifications). They can also qualify through the additional fee remission categories detailed in “LSC Funding Guidance: Learner eligibility Guidance April 2008. In addition institutions are required to have a fees policy in which they set out their policy with regards to fees. The LSC does not expect 100% of all fees to be collected so institutions have discretion over which learners are charged fees.

Q27) Does a learner age 19-25 who has a learning difficulty or disability qualify for the additional entitlement curriculum funding?

The entitlement curriculum funding is part of the curriculum 2000 commitment to broader programmes for full time learners aged 16-18. As such all learners
receive this at age 16-18 whatever setting they have been in. However, a learner who is still enrolled on and is taking part in a learning programme they enrolled on as a 16-18 year old will continue to receive the entitlement curriculum funding until they achieve or withdraw from their programme. In the FL context this means until they complete their personalised learning programme of study.

**Q28) The total SLN for the programme is lower than I expected, what can I do about this?**

The number of SLNs can be increased by converting PSD and work currently delivered using enrichment, ALS and/or E2E weekly funding to QCF qualifications.

**Q29) How is the FL reflected in allocations?**

In 2009/10 providers need to work within their existing allocation, we will look at the SLNs delivered as part of FL as a factor in future allocations.

**E2E Specific Questions**

**Q30) FL programmes may need more SLN than E2E programmes, how should I deal with this in 2009/10.**

E2E Providers continue to be funded for weeks and bonuses in 2009/10, this is an opportunity to trial FL programmes without financial penalty. Providers should consider how their overall allocation is to be spent taking into account that some learners will need more time than others as they do now with E2E. Delivery of new elements such as functional skills and vocational level 1 qualifications should not be added onto existing programmes but should be integrated with personal and social development. We need to understand better the programmes that providers will develop so we can ensure funding is aligned with need, this is one reason we need all learning aims recorded in the ILR in 2009/10.

**Q31) How will success be measured in 2009/10, will learners following an FL programme using E2E funding be measured on progression or achievement of qualifications.**

Both, Positive progressions and qualifications will attract bonus as now and we will continue to monitor positive destination rates. The achievement of qualifications will inform the provider factor for future years.

**Q32) How does FL affect EMA?**

Learners funded through the E2E budget are automatically entitled to EMA. Those registered for FL programmes are not, so must apply and be income
assessed. The automatic entitlement to EMA for E2E learners will be phased out as E2E is replaced with FL programmes.

**Q33) How does the ILR detect whether I am an E2E learner or FL learner? Have the A15 codes now gone for Progression Pathways or is there an overall one for FL learners?**

We will look at the learning aims to establish if E2E learners are covering all three strands of FL. In addition we will ask providers how they are progressing towards their agreed starts target. Providers should view 2009/10 as a development year in a relatively safe funding environment during which they should seek to start as many learners onto FL as possible before the demand-led funding methodology is implemented for 2010/11. The A15 codes remain as they are for 2009/10 they will change for 2010/11. So in 2009/10 if code 09 on A15 is entered then the E2E funding model is used but if code 11,12,13,14 is entered the FL funding methodology is used.

**Q34) How will carry over learners from 2009/10 to 2010/11 be funded?**

Yet to be determined, however the LSC always protects learners funding between years.

**Q35) If I am a college delivering E2E will achievement of qualifications count towards my success factor in 09/10?**

No, E2E is excluded from the qualification success rate. FL will be included in future.

**Q36) How are very high cost needs funded?**

This system is standard across all learner responsive provision. Should the provider have learners whose ALS needs are above £5,500 then they should ask the LSC for a high cost ALS allocation. Funding is then claimed through the ILR.

**Q37) Do I still need to complete the E2E paperwork?**

Yes, this is contractual if claiming E2E funding. However the paperwork represents best practice in planning and recording learners programmes so providers would need to develop alternatives if these documents were discontinued.