1. Now that the Train to Gain has been expanded to include a wider range of support for employers including the recent addition of further flexibilities for SMEs, what is the benefit to employers of a sector compact in their sector?

The sector compact is a three year agreement covering all sizes of employers in the sector. Flexibilities agreed as part of the sector compact will therefore remain in place for three years, providing that demand exists from employers. Within Train to Gain the sector compacts are also the only agreement that enables employers to access support for second and subsequent Level 3 qualifications.

The SME flexibilities are interim arrangements designed specifically to support employers with less than 250 employees. At this time, these flexibilities are not part of the permanent Train to Gain offer to employers and therefore may not remain in place indefinitely.

The Sector Compact therefore provides employers in a sector with three key additional benefits within Train to Gain:

- The commitment to a set of flexibilities over a three year period;
- Access to support for second and repeat qualifications at Level 3; and,
- Access to these flexibilities for all employers within a sector, regardless of size.

2. What is included in the new offer for employers through the ConstructionSkills sector compact?

The support through Train to Gain already enables employers in the sector to access advice on skills and on the Skills Pledge. Train to Gain also offers funding support for a range of vocational skills and qualifications for individuals working employers of all sizes including:

- Apprenticeships for all ages;
- a first vocational qualification at NVQ Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4; and,
• Skills for Life.

Train to Gain also provides support Leadership and Management skills in companies employing over five and less than 250 employees.

In addition to the support already available through Train to Gain, employers in the sector will now be able to access:

• up to 6,500 traditional apprenticeship starts;
• up to 2,111 specialist apprenticeship starts;
• 3,000 Skills Pledge commitments;
• 50,000 plant operatives qualified at Level 2 – about 70% will be first Level 2’s and about 30% second Level 2’s;
• Level 3 qualifications – about 80% first Level 3’s and about 20% second Level 3’s;
• a Construction Bursary Scheme to enable up to 1500 potential apprenticeship candidates from diverse backgrounds to obtain high quality work experience leading to employment with SMEs in the sector; and,
• a range of improved services and products for the sector which will be developed as part of the sector compact.

The sector compact gives special flexibility for key qualifications to be available for the first time through Train to Gain as repeat qualifications – i.e. employees who already have a NVQ Level 2 or 3 can now be supported to achieve a second NVQ Level 2 or 3. This flexibility is focussed on the most important qualifications to the sector.

ConstructionSkills as part of its Sector Qualifications Strategy have identified the range of qualifications that employers believe are the priority to meeting their existing and future business needs. The qualifications that do not meet employers expectations have also been identified which has resulted in 208 qualifications having priority status against a total of 408 qualifications listed.
Following the announcement made in October 2008, from January 2009 SMEs will, in addition to the sector compact offer, have an enhanced Train to Gain offer with:

- NVQ Level 2 qualifications all fully funded including repeats on the ConstructionSkills agreed list;
- Level 3 qualifications for 19 to 24 year olds all fully funded, and 25 + year olds co-funded as with the core Train to Gain offer including repeats on the agreed ConstructionSkills list;
- Units and thin qualifications in business critical areas; and,
- Leadership and Management extended to 5 to 250 employees.

This responsive enhancement for SMEs reflects immediate economic circumstances. The sector compact agreement is for three years and enhances the sector structural Train to Gain offer for employers.

3. **Which companies are eligible for advice and support through Train to Gain?**

All companies based in England are eligible for support through Train to Gain in the following sectors:

- Contracting (defined as SIC 45); and,
- Professional Services (defined as SIC 74.20).

These businesses can access support for skills needs through Train to Gain. Funding for skills and qualifications relates to individual employees in these companies – some employees may be eligible for funding support to meet but some may not. Both the skills brokers and colleges and training providers can advise on eligibility for funding support as part of the Train to Gain service.

4. **When will the new offer in Train to Gain be available for employers?**

The sector compact offer under Train to Gain is available from 2\(^{nd}\) January 2009 with the main rollout across skills brokers and ConstructionSkills specialist advisers from mid-March 2009.
The enhanced offer to SME employers in the sector within Train to Gain was announced on 15th October 2008 with the main rollout across colleges and training providers commencing 2nd January 2009.

Each sector compact covers a period of up to three years and will be an integral part of the Train to Gain offer to employers.

5. How can employers access the support from Train to Gain including funding for skills?

The standard model of accessing Train to Gain support applies in this sector.

Train to Gain Skills brokers or ConstructionSkills specialist advisors will visit and start the process of analysing how a company’s performance can benefit from investment in employee skills. Both LSC and ConstructionSkills are working together on behalf of employers and will call on each others service on behalf of employers as needed.

For advice on training and development and on qualifications available to employers through Train to Gain, employers can also talk to colleges and training providers.

6. How much money is available?

The LSC has targeted £133m to support the objectives of the sector compact over three years from within the current Train to Gain budget. The amount of funding in the sector compact relates directly to the level of demand predicted from employers by ConstructionSkills, so if this demand does not materialise from employers over the life of the sector compact, this funding will not be available for employers in this sector.

7. Where can I find further information?

ConstructionSkills and LSC are finalising arrangements for delivery of this new offer and will publish further information on their websites

- LSC - Train to Gain website at www.traintogain.gov.uk
- ConstructionSkills can be found at www.cskills.org
If you are an employer or a learner – please contact the Train to Gain service, your ConstructionSkills contact or speak to your current provider

If you are a provider – please speak to your LSC partnership manager or contact the Train to Gain service

If you are an LSC colleague - please contact Lorna Rukin or Ken I’Anson

If you are a ConstructionSkills colleague - please contact Tom Gibney