Working Together

Developing effective information, advice and guidance services to support employees undertaking learning funded through Train to Gain

March 2007

Of interest to staff and managers in the learning and skills sector who are involved in the provision of information, advice and guidance and Train to Gain programmes
This guide was written by Simon Bysshe & Associates Ltd on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council.

It is of interest to skills brokers; senior managers in further education colleges; training providers, managers and staff delivering programmes; and information, advice and guidance providers, including nextstep contractors, who may be working with them.
Executive Summary

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has responsibility for planning and funding the Train to Gain service. Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Version 3 2006/07 sets out the LSC’s requirements in terms of the delivery of information, advice and guidance (IAG) to employees whose learning is funded by Train to Gain.

IAG is at the heart of the Train to Gain offer, in order to ensure that learners make informed choices about their learning, complete courses and achieve relevant qualifications. The aim of Working Together is to help those who are organising and delivering Train to Gain in local areas to work together in supporting employees, and the businesses for which they work, to succeed.

Train to Gain is a new service available in England. However, each of the nine regions in England has identified key priority sectors, and the service is particularly targeted at ‘hard-to-reach’ employers. Train to Gain seeks to support employers. Nevertheless, successfully developing employees’ skills requires a learning partnership to be established between employers and their employees.

The purpose of IAG within Train to Gain is to make sure that the right individuals undertake the right learning and development activities, with the right levels of support, and so achieve the right outcomes. The IAG process for employees falls into three stages.

- **Pre-entry:** There should be a general information session for employees interested in training, providing details of the learning available. This session can be delivered on an individual or group basis; individuals wishing to participate should have the option of a one-to-one session in which to consider their training needs and identify appropriate learning.

- **Ongoing support:** For all learners participating in Train to Gain, there should be the option of ongoing IAG, including general learner support.

- **Exit:** IAG providers should arrange to see each learner, so as to review their learning experience; discuss how this learning might be of benefit in their current role; consider alternative options for continuing learning related to their current and future roles; and agree next steps.

Delivering IAG in Train to Gain is primarily the responsibility of the training provider, with agreed support from other IAG providers. Strategic direction as to how they should undertake this will be provided within regions to meet their particular needs and priorities. To this end, coherent delivery arrangements should be agreed locally between:

- the skills broker
- the employer (especially the supervisor or line manager) and the employees undertaking the learning
- the training providers involved in delivering and assessing the learning
- nextstep and other IAG providers
- additional people supporting individual learners (including union learning representatives).

For the LSC to meet its challenging targets, IAG arrangements within Train to Gain will need to build on the best that was achieved within Employer Training Pilots, and be seen by leading local partners as crucial to success and not an optional extra.
Developing effective information, advice and guidance services to support employees undertaking learning funded through Train to Gain.
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**Annex: Further Reading**
1: Overview of Train to Gain

What Is Train to Gain?

1 Train to Gain is a new service aimed at helping businesses get the training they need to succeed. It is based on the work undertaken through Employer Training Pilots (ETPs), which involved over 29,000 employers and almost 280,000 employees across England.

2 Train to Gain started in ETP areas in April 2006. It was rolled out to all other areas of the country in August 2006.

What Is it Expected to Deliver?

3 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is seeking to have 33,000 employer engagements in 2006/07 and a further 52,000 in 2007/08.

4 Whilst the service is employer-led, the anticipation is that there will be a major increase in learners gaining their first full Level 2 qualification. Train to Gain will be required to deliver first full Level 2 qualifications to 63,000 in 2006/07, 140,000 in 2007/08 and, by the time full service capacity is reached, 175,000 in 2008/09.

5 By the end of 2010, the intention is that over 500,000 learners will have gained their first full Level 2 qualification through Train to Gain.

6 Potentially, Train to Gain will stretch well beyond this aspiration by encouraging all businesses and individuals to value the benefits that learning and skills can bring, and to invest appropriately. To achieve this, it is important that Train to Gain is seen by employers as a valued service and not just another initiative or programme.

7 Train to Gain is available to businesses in each of the nine regions in England, within identified priority sectors.

8 Additionally, Train to Gain is particularly targeted at ‘hard-to-reach’ employers, who are likely to be mainly small- and medium-sized enterprises.

9 Hard-to-reach employers are defined as those who:
- have not undertaken training that has led to employees gaining a nationally recognised qualification in the last 12 months
- are not recognised as Investors in People.

10 There are believed to be over 3 million employers who fit this category. As a result, there is real potential for market growth that focuses on the needs of new employers, as well as encouraging further investment from employers who already understand the value of learning and skills.

11 The LSC intends that at least half of the employers engaged by skills brokers through Train to Gain will be classed as hard to reach.

What Is the Offer?

12 The offer is of an independent and impartial skills brokerage service to diagnose business needs and source appropriate training provision under Train to Gain. Skills brokers have been contracted to deliver this service in the nine regions, typically to agreed target groups and industries. Large national and multi-sited employers (those with more than 5,000 employees) are serviced by the LSC’s National Employer Service.

13 There are two distinct parts to the Train to Gain offer:
- the ‘core offer’, made up of national elements available in all areas
- the ‘supplementary offer’, made up of flexible elements tailored to regional priorities.

14 The national elements of the core offer include:
- analysis and recommendation of suitable skills training solutions
- access to relevant, high-quality training and advice on funding
- information and support in accessing a wide range of training packages, including higher-level qualifications and non-qualification-based training.

15 The flexible elements of the supplementary offer include:
- support for leadership and management training
- support for Level 3 priority groups and skills passports
- support for specified Foundation Degrees
- recruitment solutions through Jobcentre Plus
- support for individual skills development when moving from Welfare to Work into employment
- training for union learning representatives.

16 The key elements of Train to Gain, as it was originally conceived, are described in Box 1.
How Will Different Brokers Work Together?

17 Skills brokerage under Train to Gain is funded and managed by the LSC. Generalist information, diagnostic and brokerage services are managed by regional development agencies and provided under the Business Link brand. The aim is to give employers a seamless service.

What Kind of Training will be Available, and How Will it be Paid for?

18 As part of the core offer, employers who are willing to grant their employees paid time to train will be able to access free, high-quality training for their employees who lack basic skills and/or a first full Level 2 qualification.

19 Skills brokers can discuss with employers other subsidised training solutions, including Apprenticeships and Advanced Apprenticeships. In addition:
- further funding and support are available in different regions
- for the first two years of Train to Gain, extra funding has been secured to test the effect of contributing to the wage costs of employers with fewer than 50 employees.

20 Over and above support of this kind, the primary responsibility for funding the training of employees rests with the employer and the individuals concerned.

How Will Train to Gain Work?

Marketing and promotion

21 Skills brokers have developed plans through which they market and promote Train to Gain, especially to employers in agreed regional priority groups and sectors. Additionally, regional and national marketing – by the LSC and partners, including Business Link and sector skills councils – will respectively raise awareness of, and provide referrals to, appropriate services.

Skills advice and brokerage

22 Based on a clear understanding of a company’s business goals, a skills broker undertakes a free review and analysis of what skills the business has and what it might need in the future. The skills broker makes recommendations based on their skills analysis. Together with the employer, they:
- identify the type of training that best meets the company’s needs
- discuss and agree how and when the training is delivered
- consider funding options available to the employer
- determine which qualifications will benefit employees most
- agree a tailored training and support package, selecting the most suitable training providers.

Box 1: What are the key elements of Train to Gain for employers and employees?


The key elements of the programme were identified as:

a Ensuring training providers can successfully integrate basic skills in the delivery of wider training programmes.

b Improving the quality of the initial assessment of learners’ needs, and delivering the ‘assess–train–assess’ approach successfully in the workplace. That will ensure that learners get recognition for the skills they already have, and can effectively build their learning from there, rather than having to go back to square one and re-train for what they already know.

c Ensuring that learners are receiving genuinely developmental training rather than simply badging skills they already have; and that off-site training in underpinning knowledge and skills is well delivered.

d Providing information and guidance services at an early stage to influence the choice of programme and the opportunities for progression at the end of the programme.

DfES, 2005
Skills training and other services

23 The training package that employers undertake could:

- be wholly with a Train to Gain provider
- involve a number of training providers, using a mix and match of different funding sources, including the European Social Fund, regional funding and employers contributing directly
- involve other business support advisors (including Investors in People and information, advice and guidance providers).

Ongoing skills improvement

24 The skills broker provides ongoing support to the company. This includes following up companies who have made arrangements directly with an approved Train to Gain provider, in order to ensure that they are satisfied with the outcomes.

Working together

25 Once agreed, training plans are put in place, and employers and training providers work together without any mediation by skills brokers.
2: Supporting Employees Undertaking Learning Funded Through Train to Gain

Why Is Supporting Employees Important?

The aim of Train to Gain is to support employers, and the focus is on assisting them to achieve their business objectives. However, successfully developing employees’ skills requires a learning partnership between employers and employees. Employees need to be engaged in the process and to be helped in implementing training outcomes.

What Does Supporting Employees Consist of?

There are two main elements of supporting employees as learners in Train to Gain. The first is making certain that the training programmes they undertake are suited to them. The second is making sure that they are enabled to complete the courses successfully, and to consider how to build on their outcomes.

The purpose of information, advice and guidance (IAG) within Train to Gain is to ensure that the right individuals undertake the right learning and development activities, with the right levels of support, and so achieve the right outcomes in terms of maximising their own productivity, employability and progression prospects within the organisation.

Who Is Responsible for Supporting Employees Within Train to Gain?

The process of identifying the learning support needs of employees should start during the discussions that the employer has with the skills broker. It should arise naturally through the skills broker’s review and analysis of the skills that the company already has, and be reflected in their recommendations for a responsive and flexible training package (Box 2).

For example, through their everyday work, an employer may have identified that particular employees have difficulties in regard to issues such as literacy or numeracy. Similarly, there may be concerns about employees’ motivation or willingness to take on additional tasks or responsibilities. These issues will clearly need to be addressed if employees are going to benefit from, and complete, agreed training programmes.

In relation to IAG, skills brokers are responsible for raising employers’ awareness and promoting the benefits of IAG for both them and their employees. This includes signposting to appropriate services.

Who Is Responsible for Delivering Information, Advice and Guidance?

Research has shown that many employees look to their employers for IAG and wider career support (including through feedback in performance appraisals and through everyday performance).

Within Train to Gain, the training provider has been given the lead responsibility and funding to provide relevant support to the individual learner, particularly at the pre-entry stage and during the programme.

Box 2: Standards for skills brokers

A National Common Standards Framework has been established for all business support and brokerage. Within this framework, there is a specialist skills broker standard. The standard has 14 key elements set out under 3 main headings. These headings cover what a skills broker needs to show they can do, to know about and to bring in terms of experience.

As for what the skills broker needs to show they can do, the standard specifies:

how to broker deals with a training provider on behalf of clients, to ensure that the training provider puts together a responsive and flexible package that adds real value in meeting the skills needs of the client and their employees.

As for what the skills broker needs to know about, the standard includes local and national sources of IAG, such as union learning representatives, learndirect and nextstep.
However, experience within ETPs, as well as broader research evidence, suggests that delivering support to learners effectively requires close inter-agency co-operation. Within Train to Gain, coherent delivery arrangements for supporting learners should be agreed locally between:

- the skills broker
- the employer (especially the supervisor or line manager) and the employees undertaking the learning
- the training providers involved in delivering and assessing the learning
- nextstep and other IAG providers (in each of the local LSC areas, there is a nextstep IAG service, which is managed by a single contractor through a network of subcontractors — a number of contractors have considerable experience of delivering IAG services in the workplace)
- additional people supporting individual learners (including union learning representatives).

How are Information, Advice and Guidance Quality Assured?

It is a contractual requirement that Train to Gain training providers are accredited with, or working at an agreed pace towards achieving, the matrix Standard.

Matrix is the nationally recognised quality assurance standard for IAG services. The standard requires that designated staff are competent to undertake work in specified areas. Matrix-accredited organisations also need to be committed to continuous quality improvement, including ongoing staff development.

As concerns Train to Gain, the matrix Standard must have been attained by those departments of learning or providers of training that are delivering Train to Gain (such as work-based learning sections), and not just by a central service that may not be directly involved (such as student services).

Where this is not the case, until such time as services meet the matrix Standard, training providers are advised to enter into arrangements with organisations that are matrix accredited, so that the IAG delivered can be of the required quality.

What Information, Advice and Guidance are Required?

The evaluation of ETPs emphasised the importance of learner support and IAG, and the benefits that come when learners receive the right support (Box 3). The evaluation team recommended that IAG should be provided by different agencies at key points during an individual’s learning journey, particularly when:

- **getting in:** in terms of understanding what the training is about, overcoming any concerns, ensuring the proposed course is applicable, having current skills assessed or accredited and any barriers to learning properly identified
- **getting on:** in terms of support with the learning and development process, including maintaining pace and momentum through giving or receiving feedback on progress
- **moving on:** in terms of progression on achievement, including considering what further learning or development would be beneficial.

Building on the formative evaluation of the ETPs, some of the key messages included in the final evaluation report (Hillage, Loukas, Newton and Tamkin, 2006) were as follows.

- Active provider management (making certain through good initial assessment that the training is provided at a suitable pace, and that learners receive the support they need to complete their training) is one of the keys to ensuring high completion rates.
- Employer surveys indicated that many employers welcomed the idea of free IAG being available to learners. However, pilots struggled to establish a clear and integrated IAG offer.
- Just over a third of learners received some form of IAG, mostly from someone in their workplace or (less often) their training provider. These learners found the information, advice and (if offered) guidance they received helpful, and they were likely to be more satisfied than average with their ETP experience.
- It is important, for momentum to be maintained, that learners are offered the opportunity to progress, and there is an important role for IAG to identify further learning and available funding.
- The evaluation found that 9 out of 10 learners who had received information and advice about further training said they were very likely or fairly likely to do it in the next 2 or 3 years, significantly higher than the sample as a whole.
As already described in Box 1, from the outset the thinking in regard to Train to Gain has been that IAG should be offered at an early stage, so as to confirm that employees are on the right course, and thereafter should be part of the learning review process and available at the end to support progression.

The LSC’s Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Version 3 2006/07 supports this approach, suggesting that IAG should be available ‘pre-entry’, through ‘ongoing support’ during employees’ learning and at the ‘exit stage’.

How Should Information, Advice and Guidance be Delivered?

Figure 1 sets out in broad terms how IAG in Train to Gain should be delivered.

As indicated, the starting point is for the skills broker to discuss with the employer appropriate ways of supporting employees who are going to be undertaking training.

For those employees not accessing learning funded through Train to Gain, skills brokers need to be aware of, and to recommend, other suitable services that may be available on a charged basis.

In devising a flexible and responsive training plan, training providers will be able to review with external IAG providers (for example, nextstep) how they can support particular learners.

To ensure it is responsive, funded IAG delivery within Train to Gain has to comply with the response times outlined in national IAG policy (Box 4).
Box 4: Making information, advice and guidance services responsive

The National Policy Framework and Action Plan for IAG sets out a statement of the quality and range of IAG services that should be available in all areas for adults aged over 20. The requirements of the policy statement apply to the IAG service within Train to Gain.

Under the policy statement (DFES, 2003), all requests for IAG must meet the following response times:

- There should be a 24-hour response to requests for information. The response should take the form of a text message, a telephone call, an email or a face-to-face discussion.
- Where users request signposting to alternative or further sources of IAG, this should be within 24 hours of the original enquiry.
- If information has to be sought elsewhere, the user should be advised of this within three working days.
- Appointments for advice should be available within five working days of the date of receipt of the original request.

What Needs Might Individual Employees Have at Different Stages of Their Learning?

Getting in: Pre-entry information, advice and guidance

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A key target for Train to Gain is to engage hard-to-reach employers. As indicated, many of these will be small- and medium-sized enterprises, who are unlikely to employ specialist personnel or training staff. As a consequence, once engaged, these employers may require particular support in helping learners to succeed. Vital questions that employees may have pre-entry include the following.

- How will the training help me in my job? This issue will need to be addressed by the employer, with appropriate support from the skills broker and selected training providers.
- What will the training involve? All learners will want to know about the training that their employer wishes them to undertake (hopefully in discussion and agreement with them). This will clearly include information about the assessment and accreditation of work-based learning through National Vocational Qualifications. Issues such as the pace of training, the learning mode (including the possibility of e-learning) and the development of underpinning knowledge will also have to be dealt with.
- What will I need to do to achieve the qualification? Some learners will have particular support needs that should be identified through an initial assessment. There is research evidence within ETPs to show that where initial assessment was undertaken well, and an appropriate support structure developed, learner-completion rates were higher.
- How will I be supported? Many of the employees who do not yet hold a full Level 2 qualification could well be described as hard to reach, since they may have limited experience of undertaking work-based training. They might feel that learning is going back to school, and may well value support at the start of the process from an independent source, such as a nextstep advisor, as well as ongoing help from their training provider and employer.

49

Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Version 3 2006/07 makes it clear that, in terms of pre-entry guidance, there should be a general information session for employees interested in training, providing details of the learning available. This session can be delivered on an individual or group basis.

50

Additionally, individuals wishing to participate should have the option of a one-to-one session with their training provider, in order to:

- consider their training needs and identify appropriate learning (including screening for Skills for Life needs)
- discuss the benefits of learning
- seek advice on any issues and concerns (including course expectations and study skills).

51

Training providers are tasked, too, with explaining what ongoing support is available to employees who undertake learning funded through Train to Gain. Following agreements with other parties, such as union learning representatives and nextstep contractors, this could include a wider package of value-added support.
Tip
Some learners may welcome advice on the benefits of gaining the agreed qualification at the start, or early in the training, to boost their motivation.

Trap
There is a temptation for training providers to focus on getting learners on to a programme to achieve operational targets. However, those coming on to the wrong programme are likely to discontinue, so even if the figures look good at the beginning, they may not later on.

Getting on: Ongoing information, advice and guidance

52
Assuming the initial assessment and IAG have been effective, ongoing support should mainly be about keeping learners on track.

53
*Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Version 3 2006/07* (the *Requirements*) makes it plain that all learners participating in Train to Gain should have the option of ongoing IAG.

54
The *Requirements* indicates that support should include general learner support, so as to overcome any barriers to learning that, if not addressed, could lead to individuals dropping out.

55
The *Requirements* also recommends that support can be requested through a variety of means, including email, telephone and web mail, as well as in person. The means of delivery of this support is clearly something for local agreement by relevant stakeholders.

56
Learners can discontinue, or drop out of, their training for a range of reasons. For example, they may lose heart, may not be supported by their employer or may move on to work with somebody else.

57
All areas will want to consider how they support discontinuing learners, and build in appropriate mechanisms.

Talking points

“Look, I agree with you about the importance of training up my workforce. We’ve been doing more and more in the last year or so. The problem is that I’m going to have health and safety all over me unless we get our staff in the factory to understand the new food hygiene regulations. They’re really hard workers, but they’ve not been in the country long and their English isn’t up to speed yet. We need somebody to explain how they can do something about this. The trouble is that if we do so, it will look as though we don’t think they’re up to the job.”

“That’s fine. We’ve got somebody who specialises in talking to staff before they start courses, so that they know exactly what it is they will be doing, how it relates to their job and how they will be supported in their learning. It would probably be best if we could get them in to have a word at the beginning or end of the shift, and then your staff can raise any individual queries they’ve got as well.”
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These could include:

- ensuring that all learners who start on a full Level 2 qualification are aware that they can contact or be referred to nextstep, and that they and others can take advantage of the telephone service operated by learndirect as part of the national integrated IAG service for adults
- asking union learning representatives to provide frontline support and make appropriate referrals to IAG services
- agreeing referral protocols to independent IAG services for those learners who have discontinued or are at risk of doing so (especially nextstep for those yet to achieve their first full Level 2 qualification).

Inter-agency arrangements will need to take account of issues such as:

- local needs and priorities
- the competence and capability of different agencies in addressing learning-support needs.

Tip
Effective referral is more than just signposting. It involves understanding how services complement each other and help meet individuals’ needs.

Trap
Learning is about more than assessment and accreditation. It is very easy for learners to get bogged down in collecting evidence and building portfolios.

Encouraging employees to learn at work changes them, and can help change and develop the company they work for.

The issue for both the employer and the employee is how to build on the investment that has been made and to ‘keep the change’.

At the end of the learning funded through Train to Gain, it will be important for individuals to consider with their employers how they can progress.

Talking points

“I’m sorry, boss, but I’ve got to tell you that three of the warehouse team who we got started on that customer care course a couple of months back haven’t made much progress.

“Roopa tells me they’ve been dragging their feet and saying it’s getting in the way of them doing their jobs. I think it’s got more to do with the fact that they don’t seem to be getting on with the tutor. Do you think we should have a word with the person who helped us set up the scheme?”

“It’s OK, Peter. I’d got wind of the fact that we may have a problem from the NVQ assessor who popped her head into the office when she was in last Wednesday.

“She says there is somebody in their team who could come out and have a word with the lads, and find out what the problem is.

“I’ve got his card here somewhere. Yup, he’s called George from nextstep in town. He’s due to give me a buzz this afternoon, and we’ll take it from there.”
For example, for those who have achieved their full Level 2 qualification, there may be a real sense of personal pride and achievement that they want to build on.

Progression options for them could include either of the following.

- **Developing competence and capability in their existing job role:** The learning undertaken may simply help in enabling an individual to be more effective in their existing role. However, within this role, a progression interview could consider other unmet needs, or indeed things that the individual might wish to take forward alongside that role.

- **Developing competence to take on a different role:** The learning may enable the employee to move to a higher level, which may, for example, require a Level 3 qualification. A progression interview could consider the different routes that might be taken and how these might be funded.

The issue of discussing progression options with an employee is a sensitive one, and there is always a danger of unrealistic expectations being raised. However, it is crucial that individual employees are enabled both to review the learning they have undertaken and to consider their wider career development.

The Requirements explains that the key to employees continuing in learning and developing their skills further is the provision of IAG at the end of the period of learning.

The Requirements tasks IAG providers with arranging to see each learner, in order to:

- review their learning experience
- discuss how this may be of benefit in their current role
- complete an evaluation of their learning
- consider other options for continuing learning related to their current and future roles
- agree next steps.

Clearly, the important question of which IAG provider takes this task forward with particular employees is best decided at a local and/or regional level.

**Tip**

A number of the ETPs gave learners who completed their programmes an achievement pack with advice on progression options and sources of help. The theme of a number of these packs was ‘Don’t Stop Now!’ The packs were found to be very helpful in encouraging individuals to consider what they could do next.

**Trap**

Learning is sometimes just thought of in terms of accreditation. There may be plenty of ways of continuing learning through informal routes (including projects and assignments) to supplement whatever is undertaken through more formal learning.

"You know, Aziz has really come on since he finished his supervisor’s course. He was good at what he did, but just lacked confidence. What it’s done has reminded him what he’s good at and really encouraged him to progress."

"The thing is that, with the new units coming on stream, we could use him in a number of ways."

"I’m sure he’d value having a chat with somebody about what he could do next. Could you have a word?"

"You’re right. I was talking to Head Office about him last week, when we were looking at whether we should recruit outside or train up some of our own staff further."

"I’ll have a chat with him on Thursday and see how we can take things forward."
3: Making it Happen

What Needs to be Done?

The development of effective support for employees undertaking learning funded through Train to Gain is going to be a challenging task.

For this to happen, a number of key actions are going to be necessary.

What Are the Key Actions?

Dissemination of information, advice and guidance

There needs to be an enhanced understanding of what IAG is, and how it can support learners to succeed in learning funded through Train to Gain. This should be assisted by training and development work with major players, such as skills brokers and training providers.

Local planning and networking

In the context of regional goals and priorities agreed through skills partnerships, IAG delivery arrangements must be made between the principal parties. In many areas, there are long-standing networking arrangements between the main bodies. It is likely that these arrangements can be built on further to enable regional plans and priorities to be implemented.

Useful mechanisms are likely to include networks and forums; joint training and awareness-raising events; inter-agency IAG referral protocols in Train to Gain; and actively making referrals.

Working with employers

In practice, within wider national and regional guidelines, work needs to be developed in respect to particular companies to meet the needs of individual employers.

75 In the first instance, skills brokers must diagnose what an employer’s needs are, how employees can be supported through their learning in an optimal way and make appropriate referrals to IAG services. To do this effectively, as specified in the skills broker standard, they should be aware of what IAG services are available. These can include commercial services a company might have to pay for (such as in regard to recruitment and human resource development; psychometric testing; and outplacement), as well as publicly available services (principally through nextstep).

Talking points

“It’s a bit of a no-brainer really. We’re all working with employers in the patch on different aspects of workforce development and Train to Gain.

“We know that they get fed up with different people contacting them about similar things. We need to be clear about who’s doing what, especially in regard to Train to Gain, and work as a team.

“I know it’s tricky, because we’ve all got different bosses to answer to and targets to meet, but it surely makes sense to present a ‘joint front’ and agree to catch up with each other to share where we’ve got to.”

“Sounds good to me...

“I guess the first step will be deciding how this can work, and maybe thinking out where the pressure points are likely to be.

“Would you be up for a catch-up meeting once a month or so? One of the main things we’d better get on to is referrals … They’ve always caused a few hassles in the past.”
For the LSC to meet its challenging targets – both with respect to the number of qualifications to be achieved and the increasing rates of completion of National Vocational Qualifications – IAG arrangements will need to build on the best that was achieved within ETPs, and be seen by leading local partners as crucial to success and not an optional extra.

What Are the Benefits?

The benefits of the effective delivery of Train to Gain are likely to be numerous, affecting training and IAG providers as well as employers and employees (Box 5).

**Box 5: The benefits of Train to Gain**

For employers the benefits include:
- a focused business support and skills advice service
- flexible and responsive training, offered at a time and a place to suit the business
- a contribution to wage costs for eligible businesses with under 50 employees, so as to extend available training
- improved productivity and competitiveness.

For individual employees the benefits include:
- encouraging and supporting individuals to learn at work
- enabling individuals to upskill in their roles
- enabling individuals to gain further qualifications at Levels 2 and 3
- enhancing individuals’ employability and progression opportunities.

For training providers the benefits include:
- engaging more employers and learners, and growing the market
- developing flexible and market-relevant approaches
- working with new partners to develop work-based learning and learner support.

For IAG providers the benefits include (where public or private funding permits):
- extending services further to individuals in the workplace
- developing links further with organisations such as Business Link, Jobcentre Plus and unionlearn
- providing ongoing services to those who have been helped into work through Welfare to Work programmes.
Developing effective information, advice and guidance services to support employees undertaking learning funded through Train to Gain

Annex: Further Reading

References


LSC Publications

The following are obtainable from LSC Publications (0870 900 6800).

Delivering Information, Advice and Guidance Services in the Workplace: Research Report (Publication reference LSC-P-NAT-060436).

Developing Information, Advice and Guidance Services in the Workplace: A rough guide for skills brokers and other intermediaries (Publication reference LSC-P-NAT-060319).

Doing the Business: A resource pack for practitioners delivering information, advice and guidance in the workplace (Publication reference LSC-P-NAT-060320).


Requirements for Funding Train to Gain Version 3 2006/07.

Websites

advice-resources
www.advice-resources.co.uk

Centre for Enterprise
www.cfe.org.uk

Department for Education and Skills
www.dfes.gov.uk

learndirect advice
www.learndirect-advice.co.uk

Learning and Skills Council
www.lsc.gov.uk

National Employer Service
http://nes.lsc.gov.uk

nextstep
www.nextstepstakeholder.co.uk

Train to Gain
www.traintogain.gov.uk