

**17 March 2022**

## **1.0 Background**

Over the course of this Parliament, the Government is providing £2.5 billion (£3 billion when including Barnett funding for devolved administrations) for the National Skills Fund, meeting a commitment made in the Conservative manifesto (2019). *‘The fund will help businesses find and hire the workers they need; as well as supporting adults to flourish and fulfil their potential through high quality training’.*

Skills Bootcamps aim to secure benefits for adults by giving them access to in-demand skills training and a guaranteed interview for a more sustainable, higher-skilled job and higher wages over time. The benefits for employers include helping them fill specific skills shortage vacancies, enabling them to become more productive, more quickly.

The Department for Education are interested in testing models where employers are directly involved in the delivery of Skills Bootcamps and prospective providers are required to demonstrate extensive evidence of employer involvement in the design and proposed delivery of their Skills Bootcamp provision. This could include involvement in the provision of behavioural skills support, work experience, coaching and mentoring, or the delivery of content.

All Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have been invited by the Department for Education (DfE) to submit proposals to deliver Skills Bootcamps across their area, based on analysis of skills demand in specific sectors or by specific employers. The aims of these skills bootcamps are detailed below.

### **Skills Bootcamps aims:**

- deliver flexible training programmes lasting up to 16 weeks, based on employer / sector ‘in-demand’ skills needs which may be either regulated (i.e. qualification based) or non-regulated (e.g. based on alignment with industry standards) enabling adults to do training around work and other commitments, looking to gain work, additional responsibilities, or access new opportunities and will offer a guaranteed job interview (in the case of a new job) to individual participants on completion of the course.
- to address the needs of adults (19+) who are full-time and part-time employed, unemployed, returning to work after a break or self-employed, and provide individuals with wider access to opportunities to retrain, update or formalise their skills or acquire specialist skills
- to address the needs of employers and the wider economy, to deliver targeted interventions to meet short-medium term demand to fill vacancies and drive productivity. They will help fill medium-higher level vacancies and bring individuals closer to better jobs, by linking them with line of sight to a job/ different role, additional

responsibilities or new opportunities/contracts

- to help fill vacancies and bring individuals closer to better jobs (including those currently in employment), by linking them with line of sight to a job / different role, additional responsibilities or new opportunities / contracts

### **Level of Delivery**

- Skills Bootcamps must be delivered at Level 3-5 or equivalent. Level 2 or equivalent Skills Bootcamps can only be delivered in Construction, Green Skills and Logistics (HGV driving).

### **Course Length**

- Courses are expected to be a minimum of 60 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and a maximum of 16 weeks. Guided Learning Hours are the time a learner spends being taught or instructed by – or otherwise participating in education or training under the immediate (live) guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training whether this is in person or online.

### **Course Content and Flexibility**

- Skills Bootcamps should be reasonably delivered to a participant concurrently employed in either a full-time or part-time role or around other commitments. Courses should also be accessible to learners and adjustments must be made, as appropriate for those learners with Protected Characteristics (as defined by the Equalities Act (2010)). Suppliers must also demonstrate the provision of a 'wraparound service' of learner support (for example, using a coaching and mentoring approach, from programme application stage, during, and post programme, to move people into jobs/new roles and opportunities).
- This should include upfront screening of applicants, soft skills (or work readiness) training to support the occupational skills training, vacancy/role/opportunity identification, providing pastoral services to help participants complete the program, and follow-up services to participants and employers to support job placement (mentorship, pastoral support) and high-quality advice and guidance to support the learner into a positive employment outcome (for example, CV writing support, mock interviews).
- All learners are expected to progress on to a guaranteed job interview upon the completion of the Skills Bootcamp, (in the case of a new job).
- Provision may be delivered remotely online or face to face or a blended approach.

## **2.0 Research**

### **Need for the project and vision**

The North East LEP have developed a Green Skills Bootcamp proposal against the **3 prioritised sectors** as they align to the growth sectors in our Strategic Economic Plan. Working with sector stakeholders, we have undertaken research to evidence skills demand and have well developed strategies and actions plans to meet these evidenced skills needs. A common theme of this research is that the current skills provision in the North East LEP area requires support in order to meet the skills needs and recruitment requirements of these

sectors, by stimulating the market and bridging the gap between mainstream provision and small-scale bespoke provision available only on a more costly commercial basis.

**Green Construction and building - The North East LEP's Domestic Energy and Retrofit assessment:** The North East LEP's assessment of skills in domestic energy identified an urgent need for scaling up skills provision in order to meet the region's net zero targets. In the North East LEP area in 2019/20 there were 223 full time equivalent workers employed in Domestic Retrofit and to achieve net zero by 2030 the requirement is 19,000 workers.

The assessment clearly identifies a lack of provision in the region. The Retrofit Readiness online survey of Further Education Colleges in the North East LEP area and wider found that 82% of FE colleges needed to increase provision in retrofitting. 64% FE Colleges identified the key constraints and challenges to growth in this area were funding model constraints which make it difficult to unlock funding for retrofit. 62% of training provision is currently manufacturing led training for installation of new technologies in the North East LEP area, however this training has been found by organisations such as the Energy Systems Catapult to be compressed and condensed. They are short 1-3 day course covering the specific technology of the manufacturer and there is a need to provide more extended provision.

The biggest number of workers required is for Retrofit Installers which include wall insulation installers, there is a need for installers to update their skills and for training providers to add specific course units on the new technologies. In 2019/20 there were 139 full time equivalent workers. To deliver net zero by 2030 in domestic retrofit, the North East LEP are will need to have 11,804. The new Roles of Retrofit Co-ordinator and Retrofit Assessor are also critical to delivering Whole House Retrofit. In 2019/20 there were only 13 FTE Retrofit Co-ordinators and this 772 are required. For Retrofit Assessors the corresponding figures are 6 to 618. Additionally, the North East LEP's domestic energy demand study estimates there will be an increase in requirement for gas engineers. There will also be demand for this role in relation to associated systems efficiency measures installations such as control systems to be upgraded without full boiler replacement.

North East LEP's skills assessment is using this evidence to develop a 10 year Action Plan, focused on developing existing training infrastructure, updating existing training, developing new provision to address the new Retrofit Roles and connecting local demand more closely to skills supply.

**Green Power – The North East LEP's Energi Coast strategy and action plan:** The North East is a leading location in England in the wind energy, oil, and gas sectors with a thriving cluster of supply chain businesses to the offshore energy and subsea industry, supporting 15,000 jobs. There is a shortage of skilled workers with the appropriate industry relevant technical skills and understanding of the HSE and regulatory environment offshore wind requires. This is exacerbated by increased demand for skills as the industry grows and the loss of skills and talent through an ageing workforce. The LEP works closely with the Energi Coast industry cluster and facilitates the Energi Coast skills group which is a partnership between education and industry working collaboratively to address these skills challenges. Our understanding of the local labour market, skills supply and demand and relationships across the industry and education, mean we are well placed to lead green skills bootcamps to develop the skills employers in our region require.

Further insights into the scale and scope of the demand for these skills in the region can be found via these links:

[Offshore wind provision](#)

[Skills Impact on the Green Economy and Digital Skills](#)

[Employment and Skills needs in Offshore Wind](#)

[Energi Coast Skills](#)

**Green transport - Electrification:** The North East LEP is currently carrying out a full assessment of skills shortages across electric transportation. The data is currently in the final stages of a quality review, but initial findings show there is a gap in provision of courses to upskills technicians to work with electric and hybrid vehicles. In particular, there is a lack of provision in diagnostics, repair and replacement and maintenance of hybrid and electric vehicles.

A common theme of this research is that the current skills provision in the North East LEP area requires support in order to meet the evidence skills needs and recruitment requirements of these sectors. We expect that the proposed skills bootcamps will help boost the provision of skilled workers in these critical sectors and help ensure the North East meets its net zero targets.

### **3.0 Report**

The North East LEP's proposal covers the full North East LEP geography. We have engaged with over 157 stakeholders and employers through a series of market events. The specification asks for innovative and employer designed and delivered bootcamp models. In our proposal we intend to test new providers and develop collaborations to enable employer/providers to deliver accredited and non-accredited programmes to meet their own skills needs. We will be supporting these providers to enable them to meet DfE and ESFA funding requirements, building their capability to meet future sector skills needs.

The North East LEP current proposal includes:-

- indicative provision of circa £5m, with over 1200 learners based on initial EoI's from our provider base
- a breakdown of key milestones
- a timeline for delivery and
- a full risk assessment.

The role of the LEP is to procure provision, the procurement exercise will be competitive, monitor and manage the contract in accordance with the guidance set out by the Department for Education, engage employers and evaluate the provision over the period of the contract.

The Department for Education is currently in discussions with all LEPs who submitted proposals. The outcome and allocation of the grant award is dependent on the DfE's priorities, however as Green Skills is a key priority we anticipate being made an award, and although there is uncertainty around the value of the grant award, in anticipation and in accordance with the scheme of delegation, that delegated approval is also being sought by NTCA due to the potential value of the contracts.

### **4.0 Recommendation**

#### **4.1 The Board is recommended to:**

- i. Note the details provided in the paper and the outline proposal for Green Skills Bootcamps.

- ii. Confirm their approval and authority to commence the procurement process that will determine the appointment of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (North East LEP) Green Skills Bootcamp delivery partners, via the North of Tyne Combined Authority procurement portal.
- iii. Confirm their approval for delegated authority to the Chief Executive and NTCA's Interim Chief Finance Officer (section 73 officer) to enter into and approve two delivery contracts with the successful bidder, who will deliver skills bootcamps up to the value of £5m.