

# **HCA employment and skills guidance for partners**

1 April 2011

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## **Our Commitment**

The Government has confirmed a clear role for the HCA in supporting local authorities to achieve their ambitions for housing and economic development.

In addition the Agency is committed to supporting the creation of employment and skills opportunities across all areas of its capital investment.

As an enabling, investment, and from April 2012, a regulation agency, the HCA's role will be driven by what local areas need as set out in their local investment plan, where these are in place. A local approach to delivery of employment and skills runs through all of the HCA's core activities:

1. Investment
2. Enabling support
3. Maximising assets for local benefit
4. Supporting local delivery and services through regulation

The HCA will continue to use its role and investment in places to maximise employment opportunities and improve skills levels. We have gathered a number of compelling case studies on the benefits of our work for both individuals and communities and want to build upon these achievements and stretch partner's ambitions even further.

## **Our Approach**

We recognise that addressing employment and skills needs is an area where many delivery partners already have a very positive delivery track record. We are therefore not looking for the development of new strategies but proposals for how the HCA investment will continue to support and sustain existing programmes. Much has been achieved on employment and training over the last few years and it is important that we don't lose sight of the significant economic benefits that have been delivered. Partners have reported that for 2008-11 more than four thousand apprenticeships have been either safeguarded or created as a result of HCA's investment programmes.

It is not our intention to be prescriptive about the creation of employment and/or skills opportunities at a national level. The aim of this guidance document is to adopt a unified strategy across all of our investment programmes, whilst recognising individual approaches can be negotiated locally; determined by the priorities identified within Local Investment plans or by Local Enterprise Partnerships where these are in place. For 2008-11 the provision of apprenticeships was contractual across some programmes. From 2011 onwards the HCA has no national apprenticeship target; instead it is for individual areas to decide locally on the approach they wish to adopt

For the 2011-15 period HCA is asking recipients of our funding to share information on their intentions around employment and skills initiatives. Partners working in consortia are encouraged to take a group approach to the provision of employment and skills opportunities including the creation and safeguarding of apprenticeships. The HCA will work with partners to review progress on employment and skills as part of our engagement processes with a focus on capturing strong qualitative information about outcomes.

## **Local Investment Plans**

A core aim of the Local Investment Planning process is to ensure partners understand and support the employment and skills agenda and context for their localities. Partners are encouraged to refer to Local Investment Plans to understand and develop strategies to reflect the local aspirations for employment and skills.

Local Investment Plans are not legally binding and where outputs are specified they would only become contractual through subsequent agreement.

## **Employment and skills statement**

Partners will be asked to provide an employment and skills statement of up to 500 words for all capital investment programmes.

The Affordable Homes Framework, published on 14 February 2011, is an example where we are asking registered providers to include a brief employment and skills statement (of no more than 500 words) as part of their offer, outlining in particular how they will create or support apprenticeships, reflecting the Government priority for apprenticeships at level 3.

As part of this statement, providers are encouraged to indicate employment and skills initiatives including the creation of new and safeguarding apprentices they are likely to deliver over the 4 year programme.

The employment and skills statement does not need to be limited to new build delivery, but can take account of the wider range of provider activity such as on existing stock, maintenance contracts and support services. We encourage providers to include details of collaborative approaches with local partners (particularly local authorities) and take account of local priorities where available, through Local Investment Plans and Local Enterprise Partnerships where these are in place.

The statements should capture what the partner is already doing whilst also aiming to cover:

- What plans are in place to maintain or build upon this whilst sharing good practice with others
- Details of any initiatives and in particular how collaborative approaches are being used to drive these forward
- The levels of the apprenticeships and the types of wider training on offer
- The steps being taken to embed employment and skills within the supply chain

A suggested structure for employment and skills statements can be found in **Appendix A**.

## **Reviewing Progress**

Employment and Skills monitoring forms part of the HCA's regular local engagement processes. In the case of the Affordable Homes Programme for example, progress and achievements on employment and skills initiatives will feature as part of the

quarterly review meeting. In other instances employment and skills may feature as part of Local Investment Plan reviews.

It is expected that the focus is on capturing strong qualitative information about outcomes to enable the sector to demonstrate the added value and impact on people and communities that investment in housing and regeneration delivers.

## **Employment and skills outputs**

**Annex B** sets out standard definitions on employment and skills outputs that may be applied for new commitments arising from HCA investment including new and safeguarded apprenticeships. These definitions have been agreed with the National Apprenticeship Service. Providers are encouraged to demonstrate how they will create and/or support apprenticeships reflecting the Government drive for apprenticeships at level 3.

In all cases, the outputs can be applied more widely than construction and include the whole range of provider activity such as management of stock, empty homes and conversions of existing homes. For example delivery partners should include customer services, IT, sales etc. and partners will be further encouraged to roll out this practice through their supply chains.

## **Employment and skills support and further guidance**

To assist partners in continuing the embedding of employment and skills in their programmes and supply chains, the HCA has produced two sector specific guides for registered provider and developer partners. Detailed guidance on how providers can plan their approach to employment and skills is contained in the toolkits which can be found on the HCA Website. These include benchmarks and site specific employment and skills plan templates which partners may find useful in developing their detailed approach to employment and skills delivery.

Further advice and guidance can be obtained from your local HCA contact or from specialist employment and skills organisations listed below.

The **following section** provides information on useful internal and external contacts and resources.

## **Homes and Communities Agency**

### **Employment and Skills Toolkits for both developers and registered providers**

#### **Best practice case studies**

A number of case studies have been produced which demonstrate best practice across the country in delivering employment and skills opportunities.

All available at:

<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/Employment>

## **National organisations providing support and guidance**

**National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)** ([www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk))

NAS has responsibility for promoting apprenticeships among employers and individuals, and for the overall effectiveness of apprenticeships in England. It provides advice on apprenticeships plus practical support to both employers and individuals. It engages with individuals via Connexions and schools and works with employers either through intermediary organisations e.g. Business Link or directly upon request. It also offers a free apprenticeship vacancy service.

### **Sector Skills Councils**

Sector skills councils are employer led organisations responsible for tackling the skills and productivity needs of their industry sectors across the UK and have been set up to decide how training is delivered and funded. They cover all areas of the skills agenda from grants to college places. Relevant Skills Councils for the HCA are:

- **ConstructionSkills ([www.constructionskills.net](http://www.constructionskills.net))** represents every part of the construction industry, from architects to bricklayers, across the UK.
- **Asset Skills ([www.assetskills.org](http://www.assetskills.org))** is the skills council for facilities management, housing, property, planning, cleaning and parking.
- **Lantra ([www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk))** is the industry body supporting skills, education and training for the UK's environmental and land based industries.
- **Summit Skills ([www.summitskills.org.uk](http://www.summitskills.org.uk))** is the skills council for the building services engineering sector.

**Job Centre Plus ([www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk))** Job Centre Plus is the government agency responsible for supporting people of working age from welfare into work and helping employers/developers with their recruitment needs. Each Jobcentre Plus district has links to training providers and partners to deliver extra support to meet employer's needs, including access to work clubs and work experience which should enable unemployed individuals to gain the necessary experience to work for employers.

### **Skills Funding Agency**

**(Previously Learning and Skills Council) [www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk](http://www.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk)**

The Skills Funding Agency is an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). Its job is to fund and regulate adult Further Education and skills training in England. They are part of a network of organisations in the country that commission, manage and market training for adults. Its mission is to ensure that people and businesses can access the skills training they need to succeed in playing their part in society and in growing England's economy. SFA do this in the context of policy set by BIS and informed by the needs of businesses, communities and regions, and sector and industry bodies.

**Young People's Learning Agency ([www.ypla.gov.uk](http://www.ypla.gov.uk))**

The Young Peoples Learning Agency acts as a strategic funding body, not a delivery agency, supporting learning opportunities for 16-19 year olds, which are now the responsibility of local authorities.

**Connexions Service ([www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com))**

The Connexions service provides support for both 16-19 year olds and adults. It provides high quality impartial information, advice and careers guidance. It also provides personal development opportunities, to help remove barriers to learning and progression to ensure young people make a smooth transition into adulthood and working life.

## **Appendices**

- A** Suggested template for employment and skills statement
- B** Standard employment and skills output definitions
- C** Frequently asked questions



## Appendix A - Suggested template for the employment and skills statement

The **Employment and Skills Statement** (of not more than 500 words) sets out your approach to how your outputs will be delivered.

It should be noted that for the Affordable Housing Programme the standard framework contract will outline requirements for provider reporting including for example addressing the employment and skills agenda.

To help structure your **Employment and Skills Statement** you may wish to address the following questions:

Who in the organisation / partnership is the principle contact for employment and skills delivery?

Which trades or occupational area will be offering apprenticeship opportunities?

Can you provide details of individual initiatives and where they will be taking place?

Are all apprenticeships reaching level 3 and if not what are the levels of the apprenticeships?

What types of accredited and non-accredited training do you expect to offer?

How are the target outputs incorporated into your project management systems?

Please give details of and describe any collaborative working with Local Authority partners, Local Enterprise Partnerships or other organisations.

What success has been achieved in employment & skills to date?  
How are you planning to maintain or build upon this momentum?  
How are you planning to share good practice with the contractor's supply chain?

In essence, the **Employment and Skills Statement** should provide an **overview** of your organisation's track record and forward approach over the period of the programme.

You can use the above questions as sub-headings or as prompts to structure your paragraphs.

## Appendix B – Standard employment and skills output definitions

These employment and skills definitions are based on the National Skills Academy for Construction (NSAfC) model, which has been endorsed by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC).

<b>No. of apprenticeships created or safeguarded through HCA investment</b>	
<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
Apprenticeship - Created	Newly created apprenticeships are apprenticeship places with the delivery partner or its supply chain which commence during the programme period. The expectation is that the delivery partner will commit to employing the apprentice at least until they complete their apprenticeship, which may go on beyond the HCA project.
Apprenticeship - Safeguarded	The apprentice is part way through their apprenticeship qualification and the delivery partner's programme is supporting the apprentice to gain necessary work based evidence. The apprentice may already be an employee of a supply chain company. The employment of any displaced apprentices, as identified by the ConstructionSkills apprenticeships matching service, will also count towards this target.
Other	In some rare cases formal training programmes will be in place that are not equivalent to Level 3 apprenticeships. Where there is local agreement that these programmes are the most appropriate means of delivering Employment and Skills outcomes, local flexibility will allow partners to agree a method of measuring and monitoring these outputs within the quarterly review process.
Notes	<p>Apprenticeship</p> <p>A form of vocational training whereby the apprentice follows a sector skills council approved framework to develop skills and knowledge and then demonstrates and evidences the application of these in a work setting. In order to complete an apprenticeship, the apprentice must have been employed during the apprenticeship, have evidenced competence in the specified range of vocational skills and have an employed status at the time of completion.</p> <p>Apprenticeship types</p> <p>There are over 180 <u>approved framework</u> apprenticeships available and listed on the National Apprenticeships Service (NAS) website. <a href="http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk">www.apprenticeships.org.uk</a>. Any of these apprenticeships, which can be delivered in the context of the construction and the built environment sector, would be appropriate. For example: All construction related apprenticeships covering such areas as wood occupations, trowel occupations, interior systems, decorative occupations, plant operations, plant mechanics, general construction, access, flooring, roofing occupations, civil engineering. Others may include, building services engineering, electrical, plumbing, gas installation, heating, ventilation,</p>

## No. of apprenticeships created or safeguarded through HCA investment

Terms	Definitions
	<p>air conditioning and refrigeration.</p> <p>Other approved framework apprenticeships may also be appropriate for delivery within the footprint of construction and the built environment. For example: IT and telecoms, accounting, business and administration, customer service, marketing and communications, team leading and management.</p> <p>This is by no means an exhaustive list – it is however important that the apprenticeship is an approved framework qualification as per the definition below.</p> <p>Apprenticeship frameworks</p> <p>There are two different types of apprenticeship frameworks - traditional and programme led (PLA) apprenticeships.</p> <p>A traditional apprenticeship is where the apprentice is employed from day one and carries out their 'off the job' and 'on the job' training simultaneously. Off the job training is normally delivered in a college and covers several qualification elements of the overall framework qualification. These elements are the relevant diploma, key skills or functional skills and employee rights and responsibilities (ERR). These elements are delivered on a block or day release programme. At the same time, the apprentice will be working on achieving their NVQ level 2 or 3 qualification through work on site and the building of a portfolio of evidence. On average in England and Wales it takes 2 years to achieve an apprenticeship and a further 1 year to achieve an advanced apprenticeship.</p> <p>A PLA (as defined by ConstructionSkills - the Sector Skills Council for Construction) is where an apprentice completes their training on the off the job elements of the framework in, typically, a college on a full time basis. The delivery of this training may take between 1 – 2 years depending on the provider. Having completed these elements the apprentice needs only to complete their NVQ onsite. It is at this point that an employer will take the apprentice on as an employee and support them to complete their NVQ and subsequently their apprenticeship framework. On average it takes between 9 months and a year for the apprentice to achieve their NVQ, depending on the quality of work offered, experience gained and the evidencing of such.</p> <p>Other forms of apprenticeship framework delivery may exist and be developed in the near future. The important point is that “apprentices” are registered to an approved apprenticeship framework and are employed status, as per the definition above.</p>

## Beneficiaries of employment initiatives

Terms	Definitions
	<p>Number of individuals who have taken up full time equivalent employment This could include JobCentre Plus employment initiatives, which can often include incentive payments and contributions towards training.</p> <p>This does <u>not</u> include apprenticeships and does not include Residual jobs that have been created following completion of employment floorspace.</p> <p>The outputs can be counted as achieved on all programmes when the beneficiary commences their employment contract.</p>
Notes	<p>Employment Initiative outputs are limited to those that have been created to set up or deliver the project during the project delivery period and are employed as a direct result of the project or programme, which is supported by the HCA through investment or land. Opportunities can be in any sector, at any level and throughout the supply chain including property, housing, facilities management, cleaning and parking, building services, engineering, environmental and land based industries. Other considerations from Information and Communication Technology, Business Administration to Law can be included, subject to the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The employer must be able to demonstrate that the position is a direct result of the project or programme and would not have been created otherwise (e.g. contract signed post HCA funding agreement)</li> <li>- Full time is 35 hours per week over 45 weeks of the year</li> </ul>

Types of training initiatives	
Terms	Definitions
<b>Training Initiatives</b> - <b>New Entrants</b>	<p><b>School / College / University site visits</b> – number of students visiting the site to support their learning.</p> <p><b>School workshops</b> – number of students taking part in educational workshop activities that are delivered by the contractor and / or their supply chain within the school or college, or on site. This can support the Construction &amp; Built Environment Diploma and other relevant areas of the educational curriculum.</p> <p><b>Work experience - 14-16 years</b> – number of people undertaking work experience placements with the site team or trade contractors. This can include block placements of one week or more, or one / two days per week. A work experience placement is to be a minimum of 5 days in total.</p> <p><b>Work experience 16+ years</b> – number of people undertaking work experience placements with the site team or trade contractors. This can include block placements of one week or more, or one / two days per week. Can also include Entry to Employment and university student placements, which will be particularly relevant for the larger projects. A work experience placement is to be a minimum of 20 days.</p>
Types of training initiatives	
Terms	Definitions
<b>Training Initiatives</b> - <b>Existing Workforce</b>	<p><b>National Vocational Qualifications and other Vocational Qualifications</b> – number of workers inducted on an NVQ or starting a further or higher education qualification including National Certificates, Higher National Certificates and Foundation Degrees</p> <p><b>Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) Skills Cards</b> – number of workers in the month who have been issued with a CSCS Skills Card with the appropriate vocational qualification (this excludes cards that have been issued as renewals). Details can be found at <a href="http://www.cskills.org/supportbusiness/cardschemes/index.aspx">www.cskills.org/supportbusiness/cardschemes/index.aspx</a></p>
<b>Training Initiatives</b> - <b>Skills Culture</b>	<p><b>Short Courses</b> – number of individuals who have undertaken short courses. Can include topics such as leadership and management, basic skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), waste management, work-based recorder training etc. One person is equivalent to 1 day of training i.e. one person training for 2 hours is equivalent to 0.25 persons.</p>

## **Appendix C - EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

### **Q – What do we mean by employment and skills?**

A – The HCA's definition of employment and skills are based on the National Skills Academy for Construction model, which has been endorsed by the Office of Government Commerce, and covers:

Apprenticeships	e.g. newly created and safeguarded apprenticeships
Jobs	e.g. temporary and permanent jobs created
Training	e.g. work placements, school visits

See **Appendix B** of the guidance for further information.

### **Q – What are the main changes in the HCA's approach to Employment and Skills?**

A – The key changes are that from April 2011 there will not be a contractual requirement for E&S outputs as a condition of HCA investment and there will not be a requirement for monitoring of output data at a national level. Instead the focus is on qualitative outcomes and monitoring in line with local priorities.

### **Q – Why has HCA shifted from requiring contractual outputs?**

A – HCA no longer has any national targets for employment and skills set by government and we do not wish to be prescriptive about the creation of employment and/or skills opportunities at a national level. Delivery of employment and skills will be determined by the priorities identified by partners at the local level – through Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Local Investment Planning process. Whilst there is no contractual requirement from HCA investment, partners are encouraged to set requirements for employment and skills outputs from contractors as part of their contractual negotiations. HCA's existing toolkit for Registered Providers and Developers on Employment and Skills provides guidance on contracts, procurement, benchmarks etc.

### **Q – How will Employment and Skills Statements contribute to the assessment of bids and offers?**

A – As set out in the Affordable Homes Programme Framework, the Employment and Skills Statements (max 500 words) will form part of the supplementary information to Providers' delivery proposals for the 2011-2015 Spending Review period. Employment and Skills proposals will be considered alongside other information provided. The assessment process will consider how offers meet local needs and priorities and will verify fit with the local authority(ies) in whose area new supply is proposed. Employment and skills should form part of these discussions and requirements will be determined by local priorities.

The revised Employment and Skills guidance provides a suggested structure for employment and skills statements at **Appendix A**.

### **Q – What is meant by Level 3 apprenticeships?**

A – Level 3 is regarded as an Advanced Level Apprenticeship. Advanced apprentices work towards work-based learning qualifications such as NVQ Level 3, Key Skills and, in most cases, a relevant knowledge based certificate such as a BTEC. To start this programme, apprentices should ideally have five GCSEs (grade C or above) or have already completed an Apprenticeship thereby developing further experience and qualifications in their chosen sector.

**Q – If outputs are not a contractual requirement, what level of monitoring is required?**

A – Employment and Skills monitoring forms part of the HCA's regular local engagement processes (for example through the quarterly AHP review) It is expected that the focus is on capturing strong qualitative information about outcomes to enable the HCA to demonstrate the added value and impact on people and communities of its investment. It may also be agreed at the local level that output capturing is useful. **Appendix B** of the guidance sets out standard definitions for this.

**Q – Is there still a requirement for monitoring forms to be completed?**

A – No, Employment and Skills is a non-core output for the Agency and there is no requirement at a national level to collect data from April 2011. Monitoring sheets will not be required for existing or new schemes from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 unless agreed locally, with the exception of Kickstart (see below).

**Q – What are the requirements for schemes approved before 2011/12 (e.g. P &R, Kickstart, NAHP)**

A – **NAHP/LANB:** No further monitoring requirement at national level. Monitoring will be part of local/individually agreed compliance arrangements and any individual funding agreement.

**KICKSTART:** partners should continue to complete the existing project monitoring returns established for that programme via the HCA Extranet to the HCA Kickstart Programme Office.

**PROPERTY AND REGENERATION:** Monitoring of contractual outputs will be part of local/individually agreed compliance arrangements (e.g. funding agreements)

**Working with Partners**

**Q – How can JCP help local partnerships?**

A – JCP provides help to both employers and potential employees and is committed to supporting the HCA and its revised approach. All JCP provision is currently under review and further information on programmes will be available later in the year.

**Q – How will the HCA's employment and skills work fit with the work of existing regional partnerships?**

A – The employment and skills work should continue through existing regional partnership arrangements. However, in areas where such partnerships do not exist then it will be up to local partners to decide whether any group or partnership arrangement is helpful for delivering their local priorities.