

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Skills for Work Wales

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Introduction to Guidance

1. This is the programme specific guidance for Skills for Work (Wales).
2. You are required to use this guidance in conjunction with the [Framework Generic Guidance](#).

Background to Skills for Work (Wales)

3. The Coalition Agreement set out a number of major welfare to work reforms, including a core integrated welfare to work programme plus a number of additional measures, designed to support people in finding employment.
4. The Skills for Work (Wales) programme commenced on 15 October 2012 and will run until 31 March 2014. It will specifically support those claimants with a skills barrier (Essential Skills - literacy/numeracy or English as a Second Language - ESOL) that prevents them finding work. All referrals to the programme will be made on a mandatory basis.
5. The provision of both types of learning is delivered across Wales, structured around the network of Jobcentres in Wales, but the main demand for ESOL training is currently concentrated in the following areas:
 - Cardiff
 - Newport
 - Swansea
 - Llanelli
 - Rhyl
 - Wrexham
 - Pontypridd
 - Merthyr Tydfil
6. The programme will last up to eight weeks, for a minimum of 7.5 hours per week, but not exceeding 16, guided hours per week, over a **seven** day period (unless restrictions have been agreed in the claimant's Jobseekers Agreement - JSAG).

The Aims of Skills for Work (Wales)

7. Skills for Work (Wales) will provide support for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) work related activity group (WRAG) claimants who are identified by a Jobcentre Plus Personal Adviser to have a specific skills barrier preventing them from finding and sustaining work. This provision will help them progress towards, and achieve:
 - Essential Skills – Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3 and Level 1 as appropriate or
 - ESOL – Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3 and Level 1 as appropriate
8. The provider will conduct a welcome interview and initial essential Skills/ESOL assessment for all referrals and record the claimant's current level at the start of the Skills for Work (Wales) programme. Based on this assessment the provider will develop, with the claimant, an individual learning plan. Thereafter the provider will deliver regular (minimum of 7.5 hours a week but not exceeding 16 guided hours a week) support for claimants, with the Skills for Work (Wales) programme lasting a maximum of eight weeks in total. The Skills for Work (Wales) programme should be built around the world of work, and offer a flexible and innovative learning environment, with a clear focus on achieving outcomes.
9. Providers will be expected to work with all referrals and not be selective with those they may wish to take forward unless there is compelling evidence to support such a decision. Providers will be expected to work with a claimant group with a wide range of possible behaviours, including those who exhibit difficult, aggressive or sometimes violent behaviour.

Critical Success Factors

10. The key aim of the Skills for Work (Wales) programme is to address the identified skills barrier and for claimants to attain the relevant qualification within the maximum eight week period.
11. The key goal of the Skills for Work (Wales) programme is the achievement of a qualification at a higher level than that held at commencement of provision. The expectation is that 95% of claimants completing the training programme will achieve a qualification.
12. The provider is expected to:

- make contact via telephone with the claimant prior to the welcome meeting and initial assessment;
- offer claimants a welcome meeting and initial assessment within 10 days of referral;
- develop an individual learning plan for each claimant based on the initial assessment;
- provide eight weeks of training to support the claimant to achieve a qualification;
- update PRaP within 24 hours of starting or ending provision;
- update PRaP within 48 hours where a doubt is raised;
- liaise with Jobcentre Plus on claimant issues, for example, when raising a doubt or querying appropriateness of referral;
- complete and return appropriate forms, for example, Skills 11; and
- provide feedback on the claimant's progress on the programme within ten days of completion/leaving.