



**Consultation on the  
proposal to integrate  
additional disability support  
within the Department for  
the Economy's training  
programmes at Entry  
Level and Level One**

**ADDENDUM**

## ADDENDUM

This addendum sets out additional information on the Disability Support Services provided to Skills for Life and Work participants and should be read in conjunction with the consultation document.

### Disability Support Services for Skills for Life and Work participants

For those young people with a disability who may require further support, in addition to that provided by their training organisation, the Department currently commissions, manages and funds a separate Disability Support Services (DSS) contract.

DSS provides **additional and tailored support** to participants on Skills for Life and Work (SfLW) to help them overcome any disability related barriers to developing vocational skills and achieving qualifications.

There are two support elements to DSS: Pre-Entry Training Support and In-Training Disability Support.

**Pre-Entry Training Support** is intended for young people who, through engagement with a Careers Advisor, have indicated a desire to potentially join SfLW. This support aims to identify and assess potential support needs prior to training entry, so that those support needs can be addressed before or as soon as possible after they commence training.

A Careers Advisor meets with the young person and/or parents and completes a referral for Pre-Entry Training Support to be forwarded to one of the three providers funded to provide Disability Support Services. The support provided at pre-entry can include:

- advice on benefit entitlements and other financial support;
- assistance that may be provided in relation to their learning;
- information on equipment that could be provided whilst they are in training;
- information to Training Provider staff/tutors on specific disability(ies) and how these might impact on a potential participant's ability to train; and
- information and advice on reasonable adjustments that need to be in place prior to entering training.

This is a stand-alone support element and is not linked directly to in-training disability support. **Ahead of the September 2023 intake, 65 young people availed of Pre-Entry Training Support, and of those, 61 went on to participate in SfLW.**

**In-Training Disability Support** is intended for young people who have commenced participation on SfLW. This is a stand-alone support element and does not rely on Pre-Entry Training Support having been completed. This is specialist support, tailored to the participant's individual needs, that is **demonstrably additional** to the support that the Training Provider is already resourced to provide.

## Current provision

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At the end of January 2024, there were approximately 456 young people in receipt of Disability Support Services (In-Training). This covers all three intakes of the SfLW programme and at the end of January 2024 there were 2,334 young people on the programme<sup>1</sup>.

DSS is currently delivered by three organisations who are contracted to provide support to SfLW participants. Within each Disability Area the specialist disability support may extend to:

- involvement with the Training Provider in the preparation of the participant's PTP (Personal Training Plan) with a view to reflecting the participant's specialist support requirements;
- specialist learning support aligned with the particular needs arising from disabilities/ conditions including, where required, for particular curriculum areas – e.g. Essential Skills, professional/technical;
- assistance (*to Training Provider*) with job/placement matching;
- mentoring (*alongside what is already provided by the Training Provider*);
- 'job' coaching and other employability support (in the work placement context);
- assistance to the placement employer for SfLW (*alongside what is already provided by the Training Provider*);
- support and training for Training Providers that includes provision of impartial advice on compliance in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act and other legislative issues; and
- pastoral care to help to ensure that appropriate child protection and equality policies are provided and observed (*alongside what is already provided by the Training Provider*).

## DSS contract Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)<sup>2</sup>

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**KPI 1 - Pre-entry support** – 95% of support to be instigated within 5 working days of referral form being emailed by Client's Careers Service / CSB.

**KPI 2 - In-Training support** – 95% of assessments to be completed within 10 working days of referral form being emailed by Training Provider.

**KPI 3 - In-Training support** – 95% of referral forms to be returned to the Training Provider within 5 working days of completion of assessment, detailing support required.

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<sup>1</sup> [Skills for Life and Work statistics September 2022 to January 2024 | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> Performance against the KPIs is commercially sensitive information and as such has not been included here.

## Process for approving additional disability support

**Young people join SfLW via a Training Credit obtained from a Careers Adviser, which indicates if the young person has a disability.**



**The Training Provider assesses the needs of the participants and identifies if their needs can be fully met by the Training Provider or if additional disability support is required.**



**Where a need for additional support is identified, the Training Provider completes an In-Training Referral along with participant and or parent/guardian and refers to the Disability Support Services Contractor.**



**Disability Support Services Contractor meets participant and carries out assessment of their needs, taking into account information provided by the Training provider and then completes the In-Training Referral clearly stating what support they will provide and returns to Training Provider.**



**The Training Provider and participant review the In-Training Referral and if content with the support offered will sign and forward to DfE, copying the Disability Support Services Contractor into the email.**



**The In-Training Referral is checked by DfE and once approved, will advise both Disability Support Services Contractor and Training Provider. Support begins immediately.**