

# What Government Funding is Available for Training?

The UK government, through the Learning and Skills Council, commits considerable amounts of money to foster and encourage training to improve workforce skills. The total budget for 2008-09 was just over £12bn. Policy is influenced by the Leitch report (December 2006), and adopts a 'demand-led' approach. This means businesses initiate requests for training, which may receive government funding.

The following notes apply to England. There are separate funding arrangements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, however the principle is similar.

## Support for small businesses

The best way to seek government funding for training is to talk to a local skills broker in the Learning Skills Council (LSC). They will be able to advise you so you can take best advantage of the current funding options. Funding arrangements change from time to time and some initiatives, like 'Train To Gain', include schemes designed to meet the particular needs of a regional economy.

You can find your local LSC office contact details through this link:  
[http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus/regional\\_local\\_office\\_locator.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus/regional_local_office_locator.htm). Note that from April 2010, this will be transferred to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

The major work-related qualifications and schemes supported by government funding are:

- National apprenticeships. A combination of study and practical work experience, which results in a level 2 or 3 qualification over 12-18 months. Government funding (£1.1bn in 2008-09) is available and the trainee receives a wage at the same time.
- NVQs. Registered training providers can claim 100% funding for learners meeting certain criteria.
- Train to Gain. A more flexible series of schemes offering part funding and matched funding for different sorts of training, particularly for small businesses. Total Train to Gain funding was £876m in 2008-09.

## Additional support for learners

In addition to the above, the government also offers financial help for adult learners in specific circumstances. These grants tend to be awarded to individual learners:

- Free access for literacy and numeracy courses and first qualifications equivalent to GCSEs or A levels.
- Help with training costs for over 50s starting a new job.
- Help with childcare costs while training.
- Adult Learning Grant (ALG), for adults going back to college to do qualifications like BTECs, NVQs, GCSEs and A-levels.
- Professional and Career Development loans, available to those studying at higher levels (degree, higher degree, technical or management training, professional qualification).

For more details, see the DirectGov website:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/index.htm>

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