

Introduction

This Fund has been established to support participation from people with ASN who have been assessed as ready for EF Stages 2-4 and who require additional resources to access and succeed on the EF. This discretionary Fund is one possible source of support. Before making an application, Providers should refer to the ASN Resource Guide for Providers to ensure that all other sources of support have first been considered.

Who is eligible?

Question Many EF participants, particularly on Stage 2, have support needs so how do we decide who is eligible for **additional support** through this Fund?

Answer It is true that many EF participants present with issues and support needs. Programme design reflects this, as duration and attendance patterns can be varied, and Training Providers are accustomed to developing programme content that is appropriate and matched to participants' needs – for example, by including activities focused on building confidence, improving literacy, developing punctuality, moderating language, etc.

This ASN Fund is intended for use in overcoming specific barriers to participation and addressing the identifiable **additional needs** arising from a condition, disability or vulnerability in some participants. **The aim is to provide funding to support these individuals by contributing resources which meet these additional requirements for people who have been assessed as ready for EF Stage 2-4 provision. The ASN Fund will not be used to compensate for an individual's lack of suitability/readiness for the SSP stage to which they are referred.**

Question Is the fund just for participants in stage 2? Is there an age limit?

Answer The aim of the fund is to provide resources and/or support to meet the additional requirements of EF participants which arise from a condition, disability or vulnerability in any Stage of the EF and regardless of age of the participant.

What activity/equipment is in scope?

Question If the person requires assistance with travel costs is that covered?

Answer Travel costs will be covered **only in very specific circumstances** for example: where the individual is unable to use public transport and never will be able to due to a mobility issue, visual impairment or other condition but otherwise would be able to undertake the training and progress.

If the prospective participant is going on a short work taster or placement, assistance with travel costs may be considered if they have a condition which

would require some exceptional additional support to enable them to learn how to reach this specific destination and cope with this change e.g. being on the autistic spectrum or having a significant visual impairment.

Travel will not be paid from this fund if the request is because of a lack of public transport in a rural area or because the individual is in the process of learning to learn to travel independently.

Question Can I apply to this fund if the person requires **more time** to undertake the qualification or other training?

Answer The EF already allows the programme to be tailored to individual needs and delivered part time and/or over longer periods so this fund should not be utilised to routinely support individuals who require a longer period to complete their programme. However, there may be specific circumstances where the Needs Assessment identifies a specific issue which requires specialist support that will require extra time for completion.

Question If the support required is human support how would this work alongside the on-going support available from SDS work coaches?

Answer If the individual is receiving adequate support from an SDS work coach or other forms of personal support are already in place, it may not be necessary or appropriate to apply to the fund for personal support.

Question If someone is on EF and they are on a waiting list for eg counselling but it is a long wait for counselling, could the fund be used to get counselling quicker?

Answer Each case will be considered individually but where such support has been prescribed and is pending the person should have undertaken this before starting EF activity if the Needs Assessor considers that the condition for which this treatment has been prescribed would be a barrier to participation/success on the EF.

Evidence Requirement

Question If we are required to undertake a Needs Assessment and we request information from partners and it is not forthcoming would there be a problem?

Answer Every request for funding must be accompanied by robust evidence that the application is justified. Needs assessors should seek information from several sources, including from SDS advisers who may have access to relevant information on individuals' additional needs and on support/resources previously accessed.

Miscellaneous questions

- Question If a Needs Assessment is undertaken, the need for specialist equipment or support is identified and the resources are obtained, what happens if the person for whom the equipment/support was purchased finishes within a couple of weeks or leaves the programme early?
- Answer If the money has been used for the purpose agreed and the Provider has the receipt then no repayment to SDS would be required. In the case of equipment/software SDS will keep a register and may ask for it to be transferred to another Provider for the assistance of another participant. In this instance, SDS would meet carriage costs.
- Question Where equipment/software has been purchased who does it belong to? Can it be transferred between Providers? What happens when the person it was bought for completes/leaves the EF?
- Answer The Provider should notify SDS that the participant is nearing completion with them and return the "Evaluation form" (Appendix 4 of the Needs Assessor Handbook). SDS will keep a register of equipment/software. SDS will determine whether the Provider should retain the equipment/software or if the participant should keep it or if it should be transferred to another participant with another Provider, in this instance SDS would meet the carriage costs.
- Question What if someone is referred and it is indicated they have ASN and we undertake the Needs Assessment but this process identifies that the individual's needs mean that the EF is inappropriate for the person. **Could we claim for the time taken to do the Needs Assessment** if we agree to pass on the report to the SDS Work Coach or other agency (With the young person's permission)?"
- Answer The needs assessment process is seen as good practice for all young people referred to undertake pre-employment provision and from time to time it will be flagged up that the programme they are referred to is not for them for a variety of reasons. Where the young person has been registered as a start on the EF, there will be no compensation payment made for transferring to other provision.

Question If we are approached to take on a **group of young people with a similar specialist requirement** e.g. a group of deaf students, could we request support from a BSL interpreter to assist all these individuals in one application or do we have to undertake a Needs Assessment and report for each person?

Answer A separate application and NAR for each individual would be required to ensure we have robust evidence for audit purposes however on each application where cost is indicated both the total and the cost per participant, as in the example given in the question, should be indicated as of best value must be considered.