



**European Union**  
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Social Fund

# **Growth Boroughs ESF ‘Unlocking Opportunities’ Programme**

## **Programme Handbook**

**Produced by the LB of Hackney Accountable Body**

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This guide has been put together by the Accountable Body and draws heavily on the government guideline document, [ESF Data Evidence Requirements – Eligibility and results](#). It also includes advice based on guidance from the EPMU and some best practice resources produced by the borough delivery partners. This handbook is designed to be as useful as possible and includes the AB's views on dealing with some issues that have not been clearly defined in the programme guidance. As such, the content within this handbook may be updated from time to time to reflect any clarifications in advice from the EPMU or to add additional examples from programme delivery, or responses to FAQs.

# **1. Definitions**

All boroughs working on the programme are aiming to deliver a target number of participant starts, job entries and sustained employment through this ESF Programme. These are defined as follows:

## **1.1 Starts**

A Start is a **new Participant** on the Delivery Partner's register. A Start is eligible to be claimed once the following activities have been undertaken with the Participant:-

- The registration of the Participant's details with the project
- The Participant has received an induction
- A one-to-one initial assessment, including employability needs
- Assessment of barriers to employment
- Provision of an agreed Individual Action Plan which details the actions to be undertaken by the Participant and project to support the goal of sustained employment
- Participant has received initial information, advice and guidance including development of a CV

## **1.2 Job Entries**

A Job Entry is a Participant who secures **paid** employment

- That the job is paid and is for at least 1 hour or more a week – this includes self-employed people as well as employees
- Employment can be in any sector (private, public or voluntary) but must be paid and subject to an Employment Agreement.

## **1.3 Sustained Employment**

Sustained employment means an eligible person who commences in one or more jobs, and remains in employment for a total of 26 weeks out of 32 weeks.

- The Participant must be in employment for at least 26 weeks of the 32 weeks
- Participants must have been in employment of at least 1 hour or more per week
- This includes self-employed people as well as employees

## **1.4 Priority Group Targets**

The following targets apply for all outputs

- 65% BAME
- 60% Women
- 10% Disabled and those with a limiting long term illness. (Please refer to the Checklist in Annex 1 for the list of conditions that may be covered by this group)
- 40% Parents
- 10% Lone parents
- 15% people aged over 50
- Residents in the 5% most deprived LSOAs

# **2. Eligibility**

## **2.1 Basic requirements**

To be considered for the programme, as a starting point, all participants must meet all of the following criteria at the point of registration

- be aged over 18
- have recourse to public funds (i.e. they must be either a UK or EU citizen or their resident permit or visa must not have a condition/endorsement barring them from accessing public funds)
- be a resident of one of the 5 delivery boroughs involved in the programme (Barking & Dagenham, Greenwich, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest)
- not currently employed and
- not a full time student (*part-time students can be considered on a case by case basis, see section 2.3 for more details on this*)

If a participant meets the criteria set out above, they must then be defined as either unemployed or economically inactive. This decision is always taken at the point somebody registers for the programme and is based on their circumstances at this start date.

## **2.2 Deciding if a participant should be classed as unemployed or economically inactive**

### **Unemployed:**

Unemployed participants are defined as people usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work.

To be considered as unemployed on this programme, a participant must be

- Over 25 years of age and should have been **unemployed for 12 months or more** – these will make up the majority of participants
- Over 18 but less than 25 and should have been unemployed **for 6 months or more**

### **Economically inactive:**

A participant will be defined as economically inactive if they are not in work and answer ‘no’ to either or both of the questions:

- 1) Have you been actively seeking work during the last 4 weeks and
- 2) Are you able to start work in the next 2 weeks?

The sole method of determining whether a participant is unemployed or economically inactive is by asking these questions. A yes to both will result in classifying the participant as unemployed, a no to either or both of the questions, will result in classifying the participant as economically inactive – this is demonstrated in the decision matrix below:

Scenario 1	Have you been actively seeking work in the last four weeks?	Answer ‘Yes’	Participant should be classified as UNEMPLOYED  If the person is aged 24 or under they need to have been unemployed for 6 months or more to be eligible.  If aged 24+ they need to have been unemployed for 12 months or more to be eligible.
	Are you available to start work in the next two weeks?	Answer ‘Yes’	
Scenario 2	Have you been actively seeking work in the last four weeks?	Answer ‘Yes’	Participant should be classified as ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE
	Are you available to start work in the next two weeks?	Answer ‘No’	

Scenario 3	Have you been actively seeking work in the last four weeks?	Answer 'No'	Participant should be classified as ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE
	Are you available to start work in the next two weeks?	Answer 'Yes'	
Scenario 4	Have you been actively seeking work in the last four weeks?	Answer 'No'	Participant should be classified as ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE
	Are you available to start work in the next two weeks?	Answer 'No'	

The LB of Tower Hamlets have put together a helpful flow chart to help you make a decision about whether or not a participant is eligible for the programme and if so, whether they should be classified as unemployed or economically inactive. This is included as an appendix to this document.

### **2.3 Eligibility of part-time students**

When it comes to full time students, the advice on eligibility for this programme is very clear – full time students are not eligible for support. However, for part time students it is less clear cut and should be determined on a case by case basis.

Our advice is to consider all part-time students individually to allow you make a sensible judgement. If a student is studying for a further education qualification part-time and should be spending the rest of their time supporting their study, they are unlikely to be considered eligible. However, someone in part time training with additional barriers to employment, e.g. someone enrolled on a part-time course to improve their English language skills, would be considered eligible as long as they meet all other essential criteria. In essence, if you think there is a genuine case to be made that the person has barriers to employment or is further from the labour market, you need to document this when enrolling them on the programme so you can reasonably explain the decision to the AB at monitoring visits or the EPMU / auditors following a claim.

## **3. Evidence of Eligibility**

It is up to advisors working on behalf of each of the delivering Council's to assess a person's eligibility for the programme and evidence this, at the point of enrolment. In an ideal situation, all evidence will be collected at the point of enrolment and kept on record to make evidencing the outputs during the claim procedure, easier.

In some cases, it may not be possible to collect all the evidence up front – this is not a problem as long as this evidence is collected while you are working with the participant.

Remember, you cannot claim for ineligible outputs and the only way to prove eligibility is to collect and clearly record evidence of each participant's eligibility – best practice would see you collect this as you enrol a participant but if you can't, make sure you do this during the course of your work with them or you won't be able to claim for this output.

### **3.1 Evidencing basic eligibility when enrolling a participant**

At the point of enrolling a new participant onto the programme, proof must be obtained to evidence that:

1. The participant is legally able to reside in the UK (and work in the UK) during the period of the ESF support; and
2. The project's eligibility criteria are met (the entry conditions that individuals or entities must meet to qualify for support)

### **Enrolment checklist**

In practice, this means you need to be able to decide on, collect and evidence each of the following for every new participant:

- ✓ Right to work in the UK/Recourse to public funds – e.g. passport or visa / resident permit
- ✓ Resident of the borough – e.g. proof of address such as Council tax bill, bank statement, utility bill
- ✓ Economic status confirmed - details on this follow in section 3.2
- ✓ Evidence of economic status – details on this follow in section 3.2
- ✓ Enrolment form fully completed, signed and dated by participant and advisor
- ✓ A note of any barriers to employment – e.g. advisor's notes on the system
- ✓ Completed action plan
- ✓ Up to date CV on file
- ✓ Advisor's notes updated on system

Section 3.5 provides more detail on preferred evidence for many of these.

### **3.2 Four step methodology for obtaining evidence of ESF Eligibility**

The four steps to follow to collect evidence are set out below:

**Step 1:** First establish that the participant meets the essential criteria set out in section 2.1. You must then identify which eligibility criteria to be evidenced (either unemployed or economic inactive status) see section 2.2 for more information on how to make this decision.

**Step 2:** The aim of this step is to demonstrate that the participant qualifies for support, without imposing a significant burden on the participant or refusing support to those most in need. The intention is to obtain documents that are readily available to the participant or an introduction / referral from a relevant third party organisation that the individual is already engaged with. The idea is not to ask the participant to spend additional time, effort or costs trying to obtain something they don't currently have.

You should, in the first instance, request items from the preferred list of evidence (see section 3.5). Where the participant does have the preferred evidence but has not brought the item along for the enrolment assessment, they should be asked to return with the evidence at a convenient time. It would be inappropriate to consider alternative (weaker) evidence (step 3) or justify an exception (step 4) until this step is complete. Try to select an item of evidence that will verify more than one eligibility condition , e.g. one recent payslip will confirm that participant is in work and is likely to contain a national insurance number.

**Where referrals / introductions from third parties are accepted:** The referrer should provide a written statement which must be signed, dated and contain the name of participant and the eligibility criteria being confirmed (if possible, it should also mention the 'Unlocking Opportunities ESF Programme' but this is not essential).

If a participant's eligibility is confirmed by an introduction / referral or correspondence from DWP / Jobcentre Plus or National Careers Services, or Local Authority the referral document can be accepted in good faith at face value in the absence of any information to the contrary (such referrals are not considered to be participant 'self-declarations'). You do not need to obtain additional evidence

on how that organisation was able to provide such confirmation but the referral should confirm that the eligibility criteria have been met and should also name the individual (and preferably be addressed to the ESF project). The onus on checking eligibility rests ultimately with the ESF project / provider – you just have to be confident that the evidence produced, provides a solid indication of eligibility for the project.

**Step 3:** If no preferred evidence is available, consider credible alternative documents. Again, the intention is to obtain documents that are readily available to the participant or an introduction / referral from a relevant third party organisation that the individual is already engaged with and is familiar with their personal circumstances. The participant should not be asked to spend additional time, effort or costs trying to obtain something that they don't currently have.

Examples of alternative evidence include:

- documents from the 'preferred evidence' list that are too old / expired
- documents with partial information e.g. surname but no forename or,
- a combination of documents not listed as 'preferred' evidence e.g. TV licence correspondence; digital TV subscription letters etc.

Where satisfied with such alternative evidence, document the justification for proceeding and include reasons why the participant does not have any preferred evidence available and confirmation that credible and plausible reason have been provided and are acceptable. You should explain why the alternative items provide persuasive evidence that the participant meets the criteria.

**Step 4:** If no alternative documents are available, you need to consider whether an exception to the evidence requirements can be justified. You must be satisfied at this point that the participant qualifies for support and make a note of your reasons for coming to that conclusion despite the lack of evidence. You must include in your notes:

- Reasons why the participant does not have any preferred or alternative evidence available. Document the steps you have taken in attempting to collect the required evidence.
- Explain how / why you are satisfied that the reasons provided by participant are credible / plausible. If there is no case to justify an exception then the individual will not qualify for ESF support.

You should always request the 'preferred evidence' in the first instance. If there is a circumstance where no preferred evidence is available, you will still need to demonstrate that you have followed the 4 steps listed above in order to apply any exception to the requirement for evidence. Self-declaration as an exclusive source of evidence collection is not sufficient, if you do not follow the four steps and document them on the client's file, they will be considered ineligible for the programme and you will not be able to claim them as an output.

### **3.3 List of preferred evidence for demonstrating participant eligibility**

<b>Eligibility requirements</b> <i>(each customer must satisfy all 3 criteria listed below)</i>	<b>Evidence required</b> This is a list of preferred evidence – copies should be taken and stored on the customer's file
1. Resident of a Growth Borough	One of the following must be scanned and a copy stored on the customer file: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter / confirmation from home owner (family / lodging)</li> <li>• Full driving licence (EU)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent statement from bank / building society / credit card company / credit union</li> <li>• Evidence of registration on electoral roll</li> <li>• Benefits / State Pension notification letter</li> <li>• Recent utility bill or council tax demand / correspondence Tenancy agreement / documents</li> <li>• Mortgage statement / correspondence</li> <li>• HMRC correspondence</li> <li>• Rent card / statement</li> <li>• Solicitors correspondence</li> </ul> <p><b>PLEASE NOTE: Copies of all eligibility evidence should be taken and stored on the customer file</b></p>
2. Economic Status	<p><b><u>Unemployed:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed enrolment form with relevant information ticked/ noted</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If customer is in receipt of benefits – benefits letter dated within 12 months</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If customer not in receipt of benefits – a completed proforma from a referral partner</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Economically Inactive:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed enrolment form with relevant information ticked / noted</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant benefits letter within 12 months</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proforma completed by referral partner</li> </ul> <p><b>PLEASE NOTE: Copies of all eligibility evidence should be taken and stored on the customer file</b></p>
3. Right to Work in UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NI number (copy of NI card or official letter)</li> <li>• Copy of Passport – British or EU member state</li> </ul>
4. Registered Participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed and dated enrolment form</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility evidence seen and copies on file</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Action Plan signed and complete</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Plan Review complete</li> </ul>

*\*It should be noted that some documents are never out of date (e.g. qualification certificates) but information related to a participant's current circumstances need to be supported by recent evidence:*

*Recent payslip = means one issued in the last 3 months.*

*Documents produced annually (tax related, tax credits) = latest issued (should be no older than 12 months).*

*Award letters (grants, benefits, student loans) – original letter acceptable unless recurring award letters are issued (e.g. annual tax credits notification).*

*Other correspondence (non-recurring in nature) = no longer than 12 months old.*

*Introductions / referrals from relevant third party = within last 3 months*

### **3.2 Evidencing economic status**

While some elements of eligibility are clear cut to evidence, demonstrating how you have reached a decision on the economic status of new participants is more difficult.

The key principle is for all providers to demonstrate that they have followed the 4 step process set out above and have a written record of how they have tried to get evidence in order to justify the approach to an auditor.

Self-declaration should only be considered as a last resort after exhausting all other options.

A combination of different types of alternative evidence (e.g. confirmation from housing, a completed third party referral form, bank statement, receipt/invoice for childcare provision etc.) would be a good addition to any self-declaration in order for the auditor to get a full picture of the participants' situation. The rule of thumb is – follow the steps and collect the maximum evidence that you can to evidence the state and length of unemployment. In case self-declaration is the only way to evidence the length of unemployment, the provider should try and collect any alternative evidence to support the individual's declaration.

### **3.3 Using benefits status to help evidence your decision**

The EPMU are very clear that a participant's benefits status does not determine their economic status. However, evidence of receipt of benefits can be used as evidence of why you have reached a decision and to demonstrate length of unemployment. Although benefits have a role to play in evidencing the economic status of a participant on this programme, it does not determine the status – the only way to determine economic status is by asking the questions set out in section 2.3 above.

In some cases, the decision about the economic status of the participant as determined by asking the questions set out in section 2.3, will not match the benefits status of the person. For example, a participant could be in receipt of ESA or IS but still be actively seeking work and ready to start work when they register with the programme - this makes them unemployed rather than economically inactive. The same applies when considering a participant who is on JSA when they start the programme - if for some reason they are unable to start work in the next 2 weeks they would be classified as economically inactive for the purposes of this programme, rather than unemployed.

Despite this, evidence of receipt of benefits can be used as evidence to support the decision on economic status and length of unemployment – e.g. for a participant who is aged 25 and classed as unemployed based on their answers to the 2 questions in section 2.3, evidence of their history of claiming JSA could be used as evidence of how long they have been unemployed.

## **4. Evidencing results**

In the same way as evidence eligibility for the programme when you enrol a participant, it is also necessary to evidence the results you have achieved in working with a participant.

### **4.1 Summary of evidence required to demonstrate results**

The table below provides a summary of the evidence required to demonstrate results, more detail follows in sections 4.2 – 4.3.

<b>Results</b>	<b>Evidence required</b>  This is a list of preferred evidence – copies should be taken and stored on the customer's file
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Progression to job search	
Progression into employment	<p><b>ESF Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of employment from employer ( this could be a letter, email or a template)</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage slip (this could also be linked to other conditions where appropriate – e.g. wage slips covering a specific time period)</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contract of employment</li> </ul> <p>Also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GB-UOP outcomes form (<i>not a contract requirement but helps collate details of the job and employer for tracking and sustainment</i>)</li> </ul>
Progression into self-employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirmation of self- employment – e.g. HMRC letter evidencing registration</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bank statement for business account</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registration with Companies House</li> </ul>
Number of participants gaining basic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of recognised Qualification in numeracy, literacy or ESOL confirming level attained and date of qualification</li> </ul>
Number of participants sustained in employment (26 weeks out of 32 weeks)	<p><b>(i) Where there has been one continuous employer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GB-UOP outcomes form to confirm employer details at end of sustained period</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">this could be a letter, email or a template)</p> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wage slip covering the 26<sup>th</sup> week of employment</li> </ul> <p><b>(ii) Where there has been one or more employers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GB-UOP outcomes form for each employer and time period which clearly demonstrates 26 out of 32 weeks employed</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p><b>ESF acceptable evidence for <u>each</u> employer which could include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Confirmation of employment from employer ( this could be a letter, email or a payslips)</li> </ul>

## **4.2 Detailed advice on evidencing a job entry**

A Job Entry is a Participant who secures **paid** employment and should be claimed if it meets the following criteria:-

- That the job is paid and is for at least 1 hour or more a week – this includes self-employed people as well as employees
- Employment can be in any sector (private, public or voluntary) but must be paid and subject to an Employment Agreement.

Verification of employment following the ESF funded intervention is by providing evidence of one of the following;

- Latest payslip

- Latest annual P60
- Latest benefits-in-kind statement
- Employment contract
- Confirmation from the employer(s) in writing on their letterhead OR
- Confirmation from the employer via email from a business address and with an e-signature

Confirmation stencils must include:

- The Participant's start date with the employer
- Salary/wages
- Job title/role

Sole confirmation of employment by a participant (e.g. via the participant's work email) is insufficient, this also needs to be corroborated by provision of one of the approved verification documents listed above.

#### **Evidencing a job outcome for someone who becomes self-employed:**

- A submitted HMRC 'SA302' self-assessment tax declaration with acknowledgement receipt. SA302s can be requested from the HMRC
- Where the first SA302 has not yet been submitted, other documentation to show that the trade/business activity is registered with HMRC for tax and national insurance purposes
- Records to show actual payment of Class 2 National Insurance contributions
- Business records in the name of the business- i.e. evidence that a business has been established and is active/operating e.g. lease on premises; purchase/lease of equipment; publicity materials; business invoices; correspondence with Local Authority; legal correspondence
- If listed as a limited company: Companies House records/listed as Company Director
- Confirmation letter from accountant
- VAT registration confirmation from HMRC

### **4.3 Detailed advice on evidencing sustained employment**

Sustained Employment is defined as an unemployed (12 months or more if they were aged over 25 or 6 months or more if under the age of 25) or economically inactive participant who commences in one or more jobs, and remains in employment for a total of 26 weeks out of 32 weeks.

- The Participant must be in employment for at least 26 weeks of the 32 weeks
- Participants must have been in employment of at least 1 hour or more per week
- This includes self-employed people as well as employees

Sustained employment is counted from the day employment commences for the first time and can be claimed for both employees and self-employed people as long as the job is paid and is for at least 1 hour or more per week.

Evidencing that an ESF participant has moved into sustained employment as an employee should be demonstrated through the collection of either:

- Latest payslip
- Latest annual P60
- Latest benefits-in-kind statement
- Employment contract
- Confirmation from the employer(s) in writing on their letterhead OR
- Confirmation from the employer via email from a business address and with an e-signature

For those who move into sustained self-employment, you should collect a copy of either:

- A submitted HMRC 'SA302' self-assessment tax declaration with acknowledgement receipt. SA302s can be requested from HMRC
- Where the first SA302 has not yet been submitted, other documentation to show that the trade/business activity is registered with HMRC for tax and national insurance purposes
- Records to show actual payment of Class 2 National Insurance contributions
- Business records in the name of the business-evidence that a business has been established and is active/operating e.g. lease on premises; purchase/lease of equipment; publicity materials; business invoices; correspondence with Local Authority; legal correspondence
- Confirmation letter from accountant

For both of the above, the sustained employment stencil must include:

- The participant's start date with the employer
- The number of contractual hours they work
- The number of weeks the participant has been continuously employed
- Salary/wages
- Job title/role

Please note that all stencils must feature the ESF logo.

## **5. Employability Support**

The project activities will provide specific support to address barriers to work. Employability Support is not prescriptive and should be personalised to the needs of individuals to enhance their prospects of achieving and sustaining employment or moving closer to the job market.

The list of potential activities outlined below are an example of the type that can be funded – this is not prescriptive but designed as a starting point:

- Basic skills including literacy and numeracy
- Debt advice and money management
- Advice on childcare arrangements and costs
- Links to benefits advice
- Links to children's centres
- Signposting to drugs and alcohol support centres
- Vocational training and skills relevant to sector opportunities
- Soft skills to improve job readiness
- Links to public health and well-being support

## **6. Leaving the Programme**

To be counted as an output for this programme, the result should have been achieved within 4 weeks of the date when the participant left the programme.

The EPMU have advised that it is up to the Unlocking Opportunities programme that it is up to us to decide at which date someone has left the programme (i.e. it could be decided that the leaving date is the first day of a job for the participant or it could be a date that is 4 weeks after they have been in a job that is sustained for 6 months).

There is no need for this to be the same for each borough in the programme but it is advisable that each borough takes a consistent view e.g. one borough may choose a leave date of the first day of a new job and another may choose the later date – this is ok but we recommend that both boroughs consistently apply this to all of their participants. There are pros and cons for either choice - the 6-month sustained rule was set by London Works and was not an ESF outcome. Where boroughs opt to record the leave date as 4 weeks after a job is sustained, they may be required to provide evidence of intensity of support between the job outcome and job sustainment.

*So far, the AB is aware of the leaving date of the following boroughs:*

*Barking & Dagenham – Sustained*

*Greenwich – Sustained*

*Waltham Forest – Sustained*

*Once further information becomes available, we will share it so boroughs taking a similar approach can discuss together if required.*

## **7. Monitoring Visits**

The AB will carry out monitoring visits every quarter and a monitoring schedule will be circulated and agreed with partners through the regular Steering Group meetings. All Programme Information (both match funded and ESF) must be retained and made available for audit and monitoring purposes and the monitoring visits will ensure that this information is fit for purpose and also provide an opportunity for the boroughs to ask questions of the AB and seek clarification on any issues.

To ensure that boroughs and the AB are able to maximise the benefits of these visits, boroughs are asked to:

- Ensure that an Authorised Officer is available during the visit (this means a member of staff who has been empowered by the borough in question, to conduct business on the Unlocking Opportunities programme)
- Have all programme information available on hand for verification
- Ensure all outputs are presented in the approved format e.g. the beneficiaries template, salary transaction list, etc.

As part of the monitoring visit, the AB will carry out a spot check of a sample of claimed outputs (a minimum of 5%). The check will look at the supporting documentation for each claimed output; the delivery for the period against the borough's profile and any marketing information.

If the sample indicates a significant level of variance from approved guidance, a further sample may be requested by the ESF Programme Manager and or Project Accountant.

## **8. Reporting Outputs and Results**

ESF Outputs will only be deemed eligible if they meet the requirements set out in the following guidance documents:

- Output & Result Indicator Definitions Guidance for the European Social Fund
- ESF Data Evidence Requirements: Eligibility and Results Guidance
- National Eligibility Rules for the 2014 to 2020 European Social Fund

Please click on the link below to access the guidance documents:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-eligibility-documents>
2. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/506534/MI\\_definitions\\_Final\\_V1\\_20160210.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506534/MI_definitions_Final_V1_20160210.pdf)
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esf-claim-applications-and-self-declared-adjustments>

## **9. Claim timetable and information required from delivery partners**

### **9.1 Claim timetable**

As of October 2017, we are now required to follow the EPMU's ESF claim timetable for the monthly and quarterly submissions. This is to ensure the AB has sufficient time to review submissions and quality check information before finalising the claim for the EPMU.

**An up to date claim timetable is available on the Growth Boroughs website.**

The AB is required to submit the quarterly claims by emails within 25 working days to the EPMU of the end of the preceding claim instalment period.

### **9.2 Regular reporting to AB**

In order to prepare for quarterly claims and to allow the AB to track programme progress across all borough delivery partners, each borough is required to provide a range of information.

The following information is required on a monthly basis, and should be submitted by email to the AB, using the required templates, within 15 working days of the end of each month:

1. The actual outputs for the previous month and the forecast for the next month
2. Completed Salary Expenditure Template (Payroll and Agency staff)
3. An updated Delivery Plan
4. Updated Risk Register
5. Beneficiaries Template
6. ESF Interim dual forecast and submission forms (including ESF claim form signed by senior finance office, Expenditure Forecast, Output Forecast, Result Forecast, and Procurement Annex xx & xx)

Quarterly claims are to be submitted by email using the required templates within 10 working days of the end of the preceding claim instalment period:

1. Communications Plan
2. Case Studies
3. Required Defrayed Expenditure evidence-monthly/Quarterly
4. Grant Claim sign-off Form (Appendix xx)

This list is not exhaustive and the EMPU / AB may request additional items of information on occasion to demonstrate programme performance / deal with claim anomalies.

## **10. Defrayal evidence required**

The following information must be provided as defrayal evidence of expenditure on the programme:

## **10.1 Payroll Staff**

- Bank statements for Net Salary, Employer's NI and Employer's Pension costs;
- Transaction/GL reports
- Payroll reports
- BACS run
- Timesheets (Appendix B) for staff working on the programme part time;
- Completed Salary Expenditure Template (Appendix C)
- Any other supporting reports/documents/evidence may be required for auditing purpose

## **10.2 Agency Staff**

- Invoices;
- Weekly timesheets required by Delivery Partner's own system;
- ESF timesheets if the staff is working on the programme part-time;
- Bank statements;
- Transaction/GL reports;
- Completed Salary Expenditure Template (Appendix xx)
- Any other supporting reports/documents/evidence may be required

## **10.3 Timesheets**

All ESF staff working on the programme part-time are required to record the hours worked on the programme. ESF timesheets need to meet the following requirements:

- All the details on the timesheets should be clear and legible;
- Activity descriptions should be as detailed as possible. Any general descriptions such as "ESF registration or administration" may not be accepted. Auditors should be able to understand what each person did on each day from the descriptions;
- Hours for Non-ESF Activities should be also recorded on the timesheets and the descriptions could be "Non-ESF Activities";
- All the non-original defrayed expenditure evidence and documents including timesheets submitted for the claims should be certified by the **programme/compliance lead officer** of each borough. (Please click the link below for the **ESF Document Retention Guidance** for details. Please see section 18 on page 6 for the suggested certification wording [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/591617/ESF\\_Guidance\\_on\\_document\\_retention.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/591617/ESF_Guidance_on_document_retention.pdf) )
- Up to date hourly rates should be provided on each timesheet.
- Total salary cost for the ESF activities should be included (i.e. hourly rate X total monthly ESF hours)
- Each timesheet should be signed by the staff and the line manager within a reasonable time. (ideally within one week)

## **10.4 Cost Terminologies**

**Direct Staff Cost** is the salary costs of staff directly engaged on ESF activity

**Other Project Costs** are any none Direct Staff Costs incurred on the project

**Other Project Costs (Overhead)** are any none Direct Staff Costs incurred on the project

These costs may include but are not limited to:

- central/support staff and personnel costs - where the ESF element of their duties cannot be extracted from general duties and put on timesheets – e.g. reception, central finance and ICT
- premises costs where these are not used wholly for ESF activity

- telephone and postage costs
- electricity, gas and water
- insurance participant costs

**Simplified Cost Options** - For the 2014-20 Programme, the European Commission has introduced Simplified Cost Options (SCO) for indirect costs. Indirect costs can only be claimed on a flat rate basis (as opposed to the actual apportioned costs being claimed), at a rate of either 15% or 40%. The Growth Boroughs ESF Programme has opted for the 40% flat rate. This flat rate will apply for the life of the Programme.

An example of how the 40% flat rate calculation is applied is given below:

**Direct staff costs:** £30,000

**Other project costs:** £30,000 x 40% = **£12,000**

(other direct costs and indirect costs)

**Total eligible costs:** (direct staff costs + other costs) £42,000

**ESF contribution (50%):** £21,000

**Evidence Requirements:** Partners are only required to produce evidence to support direct staff costs. Examples of the kind of evidence that may be produced include but are not limited to:

- Appointment Letters to confirm that the person is working on the ESF programme;
- Timesheets (for staff who only spend a fraction of their time on the programme);
- Job description that clearly states start and finish dates (if appropriate) and makes clear that they will be wholly employed on ESF related activity. Job description to have ESF logo.
- All the evidence stated in Section 11.

## 11. Communication/Marketing Policy

Each borough is responsible for complying with the contractual requirements on information and publicity measures set by the ESF, DWP and the EPMU. They are also responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing their own plans for activity to meet ESF information and publicity requirements.

This activity will mainly take place at a local level and include, though not be restricted to:

- Displaying ESF poster (no smaller than A3) at the project premises
- Displaying the ESF logo and a reference to ESF support on all information, publicity and marketing materials including websites, advertisements and other media targeted materials and any document related to project delivery
- Informing Participants and the general public of ESF support
- Providing case studies as requested and
- Working with the Managing Authority and LBH AB on other specific information and publicity measures to publicise the programme

The AB will undertake thorough monitoring and evaluation of all communications activity to measure the impact of information and publicity measures in terms of transparency and awareness of the ESF Programme.

### **11.1 Use of the ESF Logo**

It is mandatory that the logo is used and applied correctly, prominently and consistently on all websites, publicity materials and project documentation produced by a project.

If used alongside other logos, then the fund Logo has to be at least equal in size to the largest of the other Logos and appropriate to the scale of the material and documents being used.

There are two logo options (portrait and landscape) available to use for the Programme in colour, black and white or white-out which can be used to suit your document.

There are some useful resources available on the [GOV.UK ESF webpage](#) where you can access the ESF logos and the guidance which outlines the parameters for its use.