

Women Returners Programme Specification 2021-2022 (plus optional 1 year extension period for 2022-2023)

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Version History

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Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
FIPS	Funding Information and Processing System
IA	Initial Assessment
ITA	Individual Training Account
ITT	Instructions to Tenderers
LP	Learning Plan
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SIA	Skills Investment Adviser
SSP	Strategic Skills Pipeline
TA	Training Agreement

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1 Context

1.1 Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills body supporting the people and businesses of Scotland. A non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government, SDS plays a key role in driving the success of Scotland's economic future through the delivery of the Scottish Government's Economic and Skills Strategies. Our services are shaped by the Scottish Government's Career Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) Strategy and its Youth Employment Strategy.

We help the skills and learning system to better respond to the needs of the economy and help individuals and businesses to benefit from learning and skills development opportunities.

Working in partnership at a national and local level we:

- support individuals to reach their potential through developing the skills they need to progress effectively in their working and learning lives
- help make skills work for employers, supporting businesses of all sizes to compete effectively by building, developing, and getting the best from their workforce
- improve the skills and learning system by ensuring our combined services are aligned, integrated and meet the needs of our customers.

SDS recognise the Strategic Skills Pipeline¹ model, which has been developed as a framework to support the effective delivery of employability services.

1.2 Labour Market conditions

Evidence suggests that many women struggle to return to work after a career break due to factors such as a lack of access to flexible working to support care commitments, lack of confidence due to lack of up-to-date work experience and lack relevant skills. As a result, they can find their job choices limited to lower paid, part time work and can experience pay inequality, under employment, job insecurity, and a lack of opportunities for development and career progression.²

In Jan 2020 to Dec 2020, the Scottish female underemployment rate (8.4%). Over the year, the female under employment rate in Scotland has increased by 0.9 percentage points while the UK rate increased by 0.6 percentage points. (Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2020, ONS)

In 2020 the largest gender pay gap was in sectors:³

- Professional Scientific and Technical Activities (24.7%)
- Financial and Insurance Activities (23.3%)

The employment rate for women with dependent children in Scotland was higher than for the UK (79.4% v 75.6%) and the second highest across the four countries of the UK; England (78.6%), Wales (72.9%) and Northern Ireland (81.5%) (Source: Labour Force Survey Household dataset, Oct-Dec 2020, ONS) .

¹ <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/employability-pipeline/>

² <https://www.closesthegap.org.uk/content/resources/The-Gender-Penalty-Feb-2018.pdf>

³ [Annual survey of hours and earnings: 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/annual-survey-of-hours-and-earnings-2020/pages/2-5-table-2-5.aspx) table 2.5

When looking at headline employment/unemployment/inactivity indicators, these show a greater impact for men than women in the last year. However, women's unemployment rate is slightly higher compared with men (4.3% v 4.2%), the employment rate is lower (72.2% v 76.7%) and the inactivity rate is higher (24.5% v 19.8%).⁴

In Scotland, the take-up rate of furlough was higher for women (14.2%) than men (13.4%) as at 31 March 2021. It is estimated that 170,800 women were in receipt of furlough compared to 156,300 men. Furlough rates for men and women have been similar throughout the crisis but analysis by HMRC found that men placed on the Job Retention Scheme have been more likely to be retained by their employer than women (Source: HMRC).

⁵As of June 2020, 16% of women in Great Britain who said that COVID-19 was affecting their work said this was because they were having to work around home school responsibilities (compared to 4% of men), 18% of women whose work was affected said that they would have to work around childcare responsibilities (compared to 4% of men).

1.3 Scottish Government Priorities and Data Collection

The Scottish Government is committed to maximising Scotland's Economic Growth, including addressing the disparity in employment levels between certain groups.

The Women Returners Programme (the Programme) will support the delivery of the Scottish Government's [Programme for Government](#), [Gender Pay Gap Action Plan](#), [Fair Work Framework](#), [Race Equality Framework](#), [Disability Delivery Action Plan](#), [Scotland's Labour Market Strategy](#) and [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#). In addition, the Programme also supports the Scottish Government's [Child Poverty Action Plan](#), [A Fairer Scotland for Older People – A Framework for Action](#), [Disability Employment Action Plan](#), [Fair Work Action Plan](#) the [Equally Safe strategy](#) and [delivery plan](#), Scotland's strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls, and our [Strategy for tackling social isolation](#).

In order to assist the Scottish Government in its ambition to tackle the drivers of the gender pay gap the government would like to collect a range of data from all participants of the Women Returners programme in order to;

- assess whether programmes such as a Women Returners Programme effectively support women to re-enter the workplace,
- especially those with additional barriers to employment,
- identify which type of interventions work best and makes the most impact for individuals,
- assist the government's future policy decisions and help inform and design any future programmes.
- Assist the Scottish Government in its' ambitions to become a Fair Work Nation by 2025.

1.4 Aims

The aim of the programme is to contribute to reducing the gender pay gap in Scotland, improve women's economic position in the labour market and deliver fair and inclusive economic growth.

The programme is targeted at women across Scotland who have had a career break of more than 6 months due to childcare, other care or health commitments and have a particular focus on supporting women who experience multiple barriers to employment, e.g. women aged 50 and over

⁴ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Labour Force Survey responses are weighted to official population projections. The current projections pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic and ONS intend to make adjustments in the weighting process where appropriate. Rates published from the LFS remain robust; however, levels and changes in levels should be used with caution

⁵ Annual Population Survey 2019

disabled women, lone parents, minority ethnic women, women affected by domestic abuse⁶, women from rural or SIMD areas, female veterans/spouses of veterans and also focus on sectors where women are significantly underrepresented in the workforce and at senior levels.

The Programme will support activities that enable the participants to address the barriers that are preventing them from moving along the strategic skills pipeline and allow them to progress to the next stage e.g. employment, education, or training.

1.5 Timescale for Delivery

The Contract will last from commencement date to 31 March 2022 plus one optional 1-year extension period for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

If successful, the contract for Women Returners Participants will be awarded from commencement to 31 March 2022. SDS has also included, at SDS discretion an optional extension period of 1-year (2022-2023).

Please note that if SDS extend for the optional 1-year extension period, allocations will be based upon the confirmed volume/budget from Scottish Government. The Policy objectives for the 1-year extension and allocations will be calculated as follows:

- i. pro-rated in accordance with the volume allocation per supplier as allocated in the award for 2021-22, against volumes/budget available in the extended year, per bidder. Exceptions to this may be to withhold staff costs due to suspension
- ii. right to re-allocate to other bidders or reduce staff costs claimed for reasons such as:
 - bidder withdrawal,
 - SG policy aims change that impact reallocation of funding, should the age limit or length of time unemployed be amended;

1.6 Services

The Programme must facilitate the progression of Participants along the Strategic Skills Pipeline. The services should be differentiated to meet the needs of the individual Participants and the local labour market and should not duplicate other publicly funded provision.

The Programme will fund:

- Initial assessment to identify the Participant's skills and experience and any barriers to employment
- Production of a Learning Plan to address the barriers to employment
- Activity that offers tailored interventions that will support the removal of barriers to employment
- Activity that proactively supports and facilitates a seamless progression to other providers or stages of the strategic skills pipeline;
- Activity that can provide evidence of achievement of an outcome (employment, gaining a qualification or entering further or higher education) or evidence of progression to higher stages of the strategic skills pipeline.

Activity can include but is not limited to

- Mentoring
- Peer support

⁶ [Equally Safe strategy](#)

- Upskilling
- Confidence building
- Networking
- Signposting to advanced provision
- IT skills
- CV building
- Work placement appropriate to their previous employment history

Participation in the Programme must not exceed 30 hours per week in any combination of activity towards completion of the Participant's Learning Plan. If the Participant is in receipt of DWP benefits, you must work with DWP to understand any implications to the Participant's income and reduce the duration of training and/or hours per week if required.

If a work placement is included in the Participant's Learning Plan it must be between 4 to 12 weeks duration and must not exceed 30 hours per week. Participants must be paid by the work placement employer at the National Minimum Wage or above. You must encourage employers to consider Fair Work Practices as outlined in [paragraph 3.5](#). It is your responsibility to negotiate and manage the Participants work placement. If the Participant is in receipt of DWP benefits you must recommend that the Participant seeks independent advice on how paid work experience may impact on their benefit entitlement e.g. Citizen Advice Scotland.

You must supply information to SDS on request detailing the range of activity you are offering. SDS will then share this information with SDS Careers Information and Guidance and DWP colleagues to encourage signposting to your provision.

2 Offer

2.1 Funding Model

The contract value for the Women Returners applications will be determined by calculating the value of Direct Staff Costs +40% to cover indirect costs.

- The only costs that will be considered eligible are Direct Staff Costs.
- Direct Staff are staff who work between 40% to 100% of their time on the delivery of Women Returners activity.
- This can either be on a full-time or part-time basis.
- Staff do not need to be in place for the full duration of an operation, as long as their role is fully defined as supporting the Women Returners activity, and they can evidence that they spend between 40% to 100% of their time for the period identified.
- Unpaid voluntary work is not eligible under direct staff costs.
- Staff travel should **not** be considered as a direct Staff Cost. It can be considered as an Indirect Cost.

In addition to the Direct Costs described above an additional uplift of 40% will be paid in respect of any Indirect Costs incurred in the delivery of the Women Returners Programme. Indirect costs are costs which are not or cannot be connected directly and exclusively to an individual activity of the entity in question. Such costs would include administrative expenses, for which it is difficult to determine precisely the amount attributable to a specific activity (for example premises costs, management costs, recruitment expenses, costs for the accountant or the cleaner, travel, telephone, water or electricity expenses and so on). Providers are not required to provide an audit trail/evidence relating to Indirect Costs.

2.2 Travel Expenses

Participants are eligible to claim travel expenses if costs are incurred whilst undertaking activity to complete their Learning Plan.

No expenses are payable to undertake the work placement activity.

Participants will be expected to contribute no more than the first £3 per week towards their own travel expenses. Any claims made to SDS must not include the £3 paid by the participant. You shall pay to each participant, the participant's reasonable travel costs.

2.2.1 Travel

You must seek the most cost-effective travel costs.

Air travel would be by exception and only if no alternative or cheaper option is available.

Ferry fares – full cost of ferry fare (Note: island residents are entitled to concessionary rates)

Air fares – full cost of air fare (note: air travel only to be used if no alternative option such as ferry travel is available for those travelling from islands to the mainland or island to island)

Train fares – full cost of standard train fare

Bus fare – full cost of bus fare

Taxi – only in exceptional circumstances and which require to be detailed when making claims

Car travel - mileage 22p per mile. Note: Where there is no or limited access to public transport or timetabling would require an overnight stay or journey times are reduced; car travel is permitted. If the cost of using public transport for the journey is less than mileage; payment will be restricted to the lesser amount. You must cost these options. If more than one participant is travelling in the car only the car owner is eligible to make a claim.

NOTE: COVID:19 – please be aware of and follow the current UK and Scottish government guidelines issued regarding travel.

2.2.2 Funding and evidence requirements

You will be allocated a sum of funds in addition to contract value, that allows you to make claims against agreed eligibility as outlined above.

You must retain evidence of costs to be reimbursed – i.e. copy of travel costs (tickets, receipts) along with accommodation costs (hotel, B&B invoices, and receipts) clearly showing the date of the journey or accommodation.

You will claim as part of your monthly claim via FIPS.

2.3 Individual Training Accounts

Participants may not use SDS Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) - and any replacement programme - to fund training delivered as part of the Women Returners Services or for any elements of the Learning Plan. Participants in the Women Returners programme may not apply for SDS ITA funding (or any replacement programme) or to renew an existing account for SDS ITA funding whilst participating in the Women Returners Programme.

3 Policies, procedures, and systems

3.1 Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedures

Under the Equality Act 2020, SDS has a Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality of opportunity in its products and services. This applies to all protected groups under the legislation. SDS also promotes and supports the needs of care experienced young people through our duties under the Children and Young People Act 2014. You must ensure that in delivering the Women Returners programme no acts of discrimination take place (as defined in the Equality Act 2010),

and that you take steps to ensure equality of opportunity regarding the recruitment and achievement of customer groups.

<https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/46266/ntp-equality-support-guide-2019.pdf>

3.2 Health and Safety

3.2.1 The Provider's obligations regarding Health & Safety are set out in detail within the SDS NTP Health, Safety and Wellbeing Standard for Learning Providers and its subsidiary documents. The Standard and its subsidiary documents may be found in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Requirements section of the [SDS Provider Web Pages](#), within the health and safety section. The Provider must read these documents and ensure that it fully complies with all applicable requirements, including retaining appropriate documentary evidence.

3.2.2 Providers shall have responsibility for the health & safety of Participants as if they were employees of the Provider.

3.2.3 Providers shall have in place for the duration of the Women Returners Contract and each Contract Schedule thereunder: -

- (a) a named, competent person to advise on health and safety issues;
- (b) documented policies, procedures and any other additional arrangements which are necessary in order to meet the detailed obligations described within the SDS NTP Health, Safety and Wellbeing Standard for Training Providers and its subsidiary documents;
- (c) up to date documentation/other evidence of compliance with health, safety, and wellbeing requirements. These documents and /or other evidence must be made available to SDS promptly upon request;

3.2.4 Other health, safety, and wellbeing requirements

3.2.4.1 If an incident occurs whilst a Participant is conducting Services identified in their Learning Plan or which are relevant to the Women Returners Services, the Provider must follow the requirements of the Incident Reporting and Investigation Procedure..

3.2.4.2 The condition in 3.2.4.1 is without prejudice to any statutory duty of any person to make notification of a death, injury, case of disease or dangerous occurrence.

3.2.4.3 The Provider shall ensure that in matching Participants to Women Returners Services and in ensuring their well-being in Provider premises or on Placement appropriate health monitoring shall be undertaken, including medical examinations, if required.

3.2.4.4 The Provider shall take appropriate actions to ensure that all Participants understand the necessity of disclosing medical conditions in order to comply with legislation and to remain safe in the workplace and that their colleagues are also safe in the workplace. Evidence of having done so must be retained in accordance with Condition 28 of the Women Returners Conditions, for the duration of each Contract Schedule, and made available to SDS staff promptly on request. All information so obtained must be securely stored and disclosed only as appropriate and with the Participant's consent, where appropriate.

3.2.4.5 The Provider shall have a separate written contract with the Subcontractor and include clauses covering:

- the health, safety and wellbeing duties which have been delegated to the Subcontractor;
- Participant induction;
- the requirement that Employers' Liability Insurance is in place at all times;
- the reporting to the Provider of incidents involving Participants;
- access to subcontractor premises for all authorised SDS staff.

3.3 Funding Information and Processing System

Funding for Women Returners Programme will be administered through FIPS in line with SDS requirements. Through duly authorised and appropriately qualified staff you must ensure all the information collected for FIPS and input to FIPS is up to date, is accurate, is entered in to FIPS in good time and complies with SDS FIPS Guidance (as amended from time to time).

To use FIPS as prescribed in the Women Returners Contract awarded, you must obtain for the Contract, a User Permission for each user of the FIPS Software. SDS will give you all information about each User Permission including the terms and conditions, and charges and guidance on how to request/grant/amend the permission. SDS will make User Permissions available to you or, at our discretion, set them out in SDS Provider Web Pages available through <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/fipsfunding-information-and-processing-system/>.

You must complete a FIPS Delegated Authority form and notify SDS of any changes in line with the User Permission guidance. You must always keep to SDS security guidance and ensure FIPS passwords are reviewed regularly and updated in case of changes to staff or contacts (or both).

3.4 Information Security Policy and Procedures

You must have due regard to data protection and the security of information. You must comply with SDS Information Security and Data Handling Requirements (Appendix 4 of the Women Returners Conditions) as amended by SDS from time to time, including the encryption of data being transferred electronically.

3.5 Promotion of Fair Work Practices

The public sector in Scotland is committed to delivering high-quality public services. It recognises that this depends on a workforce that is well rewarded, well-motivated, and well led, has access to appropriate opportunities for developing training and skills, is diverse and is engaged in decision making. These factors are also important for workforce recruitment and retention and continuity of service. Public bodies in Scotland are adopting Fair Work Practices. The Scottish Government has set out a Fair Work Action Plan <http://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/fair-work>.

Further information on SDS' Fair Work Practices is as follows:

SDS' Corporate Plan includes our ambition to become an exemplar of Fair Work, in line with the work of the Fair Work Convention <http://www.fairworkconvention.scot/>. This includes our commitment to fair pay and reward as a Scottish Living Wage accredited employer <http://scottishlivingwage.org/> and https://scottishlivingwage.org/accredited/skills_development_scotland/

To ensure the highest standards of service quality in this contract, you must take a similarly positive approach to fair work practices with performing your Services, as part of a fair and equitable employment and reward package.

When marketing your services to employers and Participants, you must take appropriate action to promote the benefits to employers of operating fair work practices. Best practice guidance is available at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/10/2086/0>.

In this promotional activity, you are expected to mention any wage rates agreed by relevant industry bodies.

3.6 Promotion of other SDS Initiatives

- My World of Work

You must use your best efforts to encourage each Participant to register on the SDS My World of Work web service at <http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/> during the Participants induction to the

programme. From time to time, SDS will compare the number of your Participants registered on FIPS against the number registered on My World of Work.

- Modern Apprenticeships, Foundation Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships

You must use your best efforts to promote SDS's Apprenticeship family to employers and suitable Participants.

- Other SDS Products and Services

Stay up to date with the latest news from SDS by signing up to our Provider newsletter <http://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/for-training-providers/> You must use your best efforts to promote other relevant SDS products and services that we will bring to your attention from time to time.

3.7 Quality Assurance

To assist with your continuous improvement, the SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework sets out standards designed to assess how far you deliver quality learning and assessment services that focus on the needs of Participants and employers. A copy of the current [SDS Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework is available on the Work Based Learning Quality Assurance and Improvement Hub](#)

The Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework may be amended from time to time by SDS and the revised version made available on the SDS website.

3.8 Provider Controls and Assurance

You must always have in place management processes and controls to ensure that: you are meeting your contracted obligations; all your staff involved with the Women Returners programme are aware of all its requirements; you promptly identify and disclose to SDS any actual or potential conflict of interest; and there is clear segregation of duties that provide a check that the Women Returners Programme Specification and Conditions are followed.

If you are no longer providing training or assessment services to Participants and have no outstanding claims for payment under the Women Returners contract, you must comply with your contracted obligations for the rest of the retention period as set out in the Records, Audit Access and General Assistance condition contained in the Conditions.

3.9 Signatures

We constantly monitor and review the use of electronic signatures and we may provide updated requirements and guidance from time to time.

You must ensure that all required signatures are original on all of our documentation. By original, we mean a signature used where there is knowledge of and an intent to sign a specific document. You must also ensure that key controls are in place to ensure that all signatures on all forms and documentation are genuine.

We accept:

- wet signatures.
- stylus signatures.
- signatures gathered using electronic signature software.

We do not accept copied and pasted signatures.

Typed signatures will only be accepted where these are completed using electronic signature software that provides you with an audit trail. You must retain any electronic signature audit trail with the relevant document and make it available to us on request.

Any irregularity in required signatures may be deemed a breach of your Women Returners Contract.

3.9.1 Alternative to signatures during COVID-19

If you are unable to gain signatures in the ways listed above due to COVID-19 restrictions, then as a last resort, you should follow the guidance below:

You must send an email to the Participant with the relevant E-Mail Confirmation Statement (found below) and the relevant document attached or inserted to the email.

You can send all relevant documents and email confirmations statements within the one email.

There must be prior contact with both parties to collect the information to enable the documentation to be fully completed.

This sent email acts as the Providers signature for the named document(s).

The Participant must then positively respond to the email to confirm they have read, understood and contributed as appropriate to each named document. This email acts as the Participants signature and must be retained with the named document as evidence.

The named document is not compliant unless accompanied with the relevant e-mail confirmation statement

You are required to use the following statements for each document:

Equalities Monitoring Form

Required signatures: Participant signature

Description: This email contains the Equalities Monitoring Form. If you respond positively to this email you confirm that you have read and completed this and understand that for equality monitoring purposes, the Provider will input the information to an SDS system and then destroy the hard copy of the form. Your data will be held securely and confidentially, and will only be used for reporting purposes, further information can be found in the [SDS Privacy Notice](#).

All other forms

Required signatures: Participant signature, Provider signature

Description: This email contains a (insert the name of the document) for the Women Returners Programme. If you respond positively to this email, you confirm that you have agreed the content (either at the start of training, review or completion of training) of the (insert the name of the document) with the support of your Provider and that you have read and understood the (insert the name of the document).

3.10 Awarding Body Notification and Reports

If you are offering certification as part of your Women Returners services, you must notify your SDS assigned SIA immediately when either of the following arise:-

- Any hold is placed on accreditation you have with an Awarding Body.
- Any sanction is imposed on you by an Awarding Body that may affect a Participants achievement.

Each Awarding Body External Verifier's Report must be made available to the appointed SDS assigned SIA, for quality monitoring and compliance purposes, within seven calendar days of your receiving it if the report contains any formal actions, and otherwise, immediately on demand by SDS.

4 Programme Delivery

4.1 Eligibility

A person is eligible for the Women Returners Programme if they fulfil all the criteria below:

- They are a woman
- They are aged 25 or over;
- They have been unemployed for at least the last 6 months
- They have been employed in the past
- They are able to participate fully in the Women Returners programme and attend as required by the Provider;
- They live in Scotland

You are responsible for ensuring that the Participant at all times meets the eligibility criteria and must notify SDS in the event that a Participant is no longer eligible in order to determine whether the individual may continue. SDS shall not be liable for any payments claimed in respect of any Participant who was not eligible to participate in the Women Returners programme for which any claim is made, except to the extent the SDS assigned Skills Investment Advisor has provided prior written approval (to be granted entirely at SDS' discretion). Eligibility must be confirmed in the Training Agreement (Appendix 1). The Training Agreement is a mandatory document.

The following groups are not eligible for the Women Returners Programme:

- An overseas national who is subject to an employment restriction or to a time limit on their stay in Great Britain or both except where the individual is a refugee or overseas national where the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) which is provided by the Home Office shows they have the right to work regardless of the time shown;
- A person at the same time on any employment, education, training, or enterprise programme funded by any Government department or by SDS (subject to any exceptions published by SDS from time to time);
- A person in custody as a prisoner or on remand in custody;
- An overseas national who is subject to any funding restriction which would apply to the Women Returners Programme;
- Those in employment.

4.2 Initial Assessment and Learning Plan

Each Participant must undergo an Initial Assessment (IA) to demonstrate that they have good prospects of success in completing the agreed Women Returners programme, with the appropriate training and support from you, and where appropriate, the work placement employer. This is a mandatory requirement for all Participants.

The IA should take account of the proposed Participants career pathway and associated requirements for skills development. During the IA, you should utilise relevant evidence (e.g. from aptitude and/or skills test, interview, FIPS (for any historic NTP activity), report from SDS or DWP

work/careers coach or other agency worker). You must share the results of the IA with the proposed Participant and use the outcome results to develop the Learning Plan (LP).

The results of the IA should help to develop a tailored Learning Plan for the Participant and be shared with them. The findings of the IA and the Learning Plan should be consistent with the Training Agreement, inform the planned training and support the Participant Progress Reviews.

If the findings of the IA suggest that the Women Returners Programme is not the most suitable provision to meet the needs of the individual, then it is your responsibility to signpost to alternative local SSP provision.

When documenting the IA, you should ensure the following: -

- The Participants' prior learning is adequately reflected.
- The Participants' needs are assessed, and any support required is documented.
- The duration is specified which is reasonable considering the Participants' assessed needs.
- The support required, and the nature and level of any Qualification aimed at are specified.

When developing the Learning Plan, you should ensure the following: -

- The content of the Learning Plan corresponds to the findings of the IA;
- Goals and objectives are set which relate to progression towards and into employment and these are made clear to the Participant and documented by you;
- The Participant plays a key role in the development of their Learning Plan and can contribute towards it, understand their goals and reflect on their achievements;
- Any details of attendance and learning that takes place in the workplace is captured.

The IA and the development of the Learning Plan must be undertaken, agreed and signed by you and the Participant within nine calendar days of the Participants' Start Date as entered on FIPS. You must retain the documents you use for the Initial Assessment and Learning Plan to evidence that you have undertaken this activity and for your own quality assurance purposes and be able to provide this to SDS if requested.

4.3 Training Agreement (TA)

The TA in Appendix 1 must be fully completed and agreed between you and the Participant within nine calendar days of the Participants' Start Date as entered on FIPS. The TA must be completed and signed before any information is input on FIPS. You must use only the SDS issued form of TA.

For each Participant, you must:

- Make a copy of SDS' current Privacy Notice (available on <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/about/policies/privacy/>), available to the Participant and ensure the Participant has an appropriate opportunity to consider its contents before signing the TA;
- Ensure the Participant accurately completes, signs, and dates the TA.

You must ensure that the TA is kept accurate and up-to-date and amended to reflect any subsequently agreed variation in content or timescale, and where any variations are made to the Participants NI number, start date, date of birth the TA shall be immediately updated, signed and dated by you and the Participant and the changes updated immediately on FIPS. Where any variation is made to any other information contained in the TA such as email address or work experience employer details, the Provider must ensure that the changes are updated on FIPS and recorded on the LP at the next formal review.

4.4 Equality Monitoring Form

The Equality Monitoring Form in Appendix 2 must be given to all Participants to complete at the same time as the TA. This should be recorded and disposed of in line with the requirements set out in Appendix 2.

4.5 Entering an Assignment on FIPS

As soon as the TA has been completed, agreed, signed, and dated by all parties, you must enter the Participant details required in FIPS. These include the mobile/phone number and unique email addresses of the Participant. A unique email address is a personal email address used and accessed only by the intended recipient. The TA must be uploaded to FIPS within 9 calendar days of the Participant Start Date.

If you are offering certification as part of your Women Returners services, you must not register a proposed Participant as a Start on FIPS unless you hold a current accreditation relevant to the proposed Participants qualification, from the relevant Awarding Bodies.

A person becomes a Participant only when an assignment has been approved on FIPS. SDS may require each start to be validated by email for each Participant.

4.6 Induction to the Programme

It is essential that you carry out an induction to the Women Returners programme with the Participant to ensure they understand their commitment and contribution to the completion of the qualification, as well as SDS' and the Providers.

Induction should include, for quality purposes:

- A meaningful and informative introduction to the Women Returners programme, i.e. what is it, how does it work, what does it mean to be on Women Returners Programme?
- Familiarisation to the Women Returners programme, i.e. how this will be delivered, who their main contacts are
- Behaviours and expectations from all parties
- Ensuring the Participant is aware of your equal opportunities policy and the actions they should take if they feel they are being bullied or discriminated against

You should also ensure the Participant is aware of the role of SDS relating to the programme, including details of the financial contribution by SDS.

4.7 Participant Progress Review

The Participants progress must be regularly reviewed and assessed. You must carry out reviews with the Participant at least every 14 calendar days throughout the programme, until the end date is recorded and evidenced on FIPS. The information recorded in the review should relate to the activity undertaken at the IA and learning plan stage and should act as a review against the findings, with particular focus on the goals and objectives set out initially in their learning plan.

You must retain the documents you use for the Participant Progress Review to evidence the activity undertaken by the Participant, the distance travelled by the Participant and for your own quality assurance purposes and be able to provide this to SDS if requested.

4.8 Exit

A Participant is regarded as having left the Women Returners Programme if:

- the aim of the Learning Plan has been achieved and you have received all supporting evidence to support the payments or

- the Participant states they have left the Women Returners Programme

You must enter the leaving details immediately in to FIPS using the appropriate leaving codes.

4.8.1 Leaving Codes

The Leaving Codes for Women Returner Participants are listed in the table below.

Main Heading	Sub-heading
Progression for Women Returner Participant	Entered other forms of training Progression or return to College Progression or return to University Progression to Modern Apprenticeship Progression to a job Found Voluntary Work Self-Employed
Personal and health issues	Health Issues Serious injury or accident at work/placement Homeless Detained in custody Financial Reasons Called up to armed forces Relocated/moved away Parental/caring responsibilities Travel difficulties Other personal reasons
Unemployed	Completed and now in negative destination
Difficulties with course/attendance	Poor time-keeping Poor attendance Did not attend work placement Course no longer related to plans Disliked the course content Was not ready to undertake course Not achieving in line with training plan Difficulties with workload
Death	Death
Maternity/Paternity Period (temporary leave)	Maternity Period (temporary leave)

5 Payment and claims

All payment and claims will be made via FIPS monthly in arrears. The evidence to support the claims must be uploaded onto FIPS at the time of making the claim in a form provided by SDS. SDS FIPS Guidance (as amended from time to time) for the Women Returners programme will be available on the SDS Provider web pages.

6. Delivery Reporting Against Profiles

Delivery ratings will be calculated at the end of each calendar month during the period of the Women Returner Contract including any optional extension periods. SDS will use the ITT response (subject to any amendments referred to in the Letter of Award, or any variations in accordance with the terms of the Women Returner Contract), to gauge progress against the delivery profiles set out below. SDS will apply a RAG rating against each valid monthly delivery report received and Providers will be notified of the relevant RAG rating with their monthly claim value confirmation. The RAG rating will be applied as follows:

RAG Rating	Tolerance Values
RED	Total verified delivery from the commencement date of the Women Returner Contract to the end of the calendar month in which the report is being given, is less than 50% of the cumulative delivery figure for that same period projected in the Proposal
AMBER	Total verified delivery from the commencement date of the Women Returner Contract to the end of the calendar month in which the report is being given, is between 51% and 70% of the cumulative delivery figure for that same period projected in the Proposal
GREEN	Total verified delivery from the commencement date of the Women Returner Contract to the end of the calendar month in which the report is being given, is above 70% of the cumulative delivery figure for that same period projected in the Proposal

Providers must maintain a GREEN rating throughout the period of the Women Returner Contract.

Appendix Information Sheet

Appendix 1: Training Agreement

Appendix 1 must be completed within nine calendar days of the Participants' start date as entered on FIPS. This appendix is required prior to any data being processed in FIPS (see part 4.3 in Women Returners Specification). It includes:

- participant details
- training details
- participant history

This Appendix requires signatures from the Participant and the Provider to support the start claim.

Appendix 2: Equality Monitoring Form

Appendix 2 must be given to all Participants to complete at the same time as Appendix 1: Training Agreement. The information gathered in Appendix 2 should be input to FIPS, a new participant cannot be registered on FIPS without this information. Information provided on Appendix 2 should always be on the basis of self-disclosure from the participant. It includes:

- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender
- Care Experience
- Disability

There is also a Privacy Statement which should be retained for audit purposes. Providers should destroy the other information securely once it has been entered into FIPS.