



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills



Tees Valley
Community
Foundation

European Social Fund

About the European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) was set up to improve employment opportunities in the European Union and so help raise standards of living. Its aims to help people fulfill their potential by giving them better skills and better job prospects.

As one of the EU's Structural Funds, ESF seeks to reduce differences in prosperity across the EU and enhance economic and social cohesion. So although ESF funding is spread across the EU, most money goes to those countries and regions where economic development is less advanced.

The 2007-2013 England ESF programme is investing £5billion over seven years of which £2.5 billion is from the ESF and £2.5 billion is national funding.

The Priorities in the 2007 to 2013 ESF programme are designed to focus ESF spending on specific activates and to ensure that it reaches people in most need of support. There are two main priorities in England:

- Priority 1 is 'Extending employment opportunities'. It supports projects to tackle the barriers to work faced by unemployment and disadvantaged people. About £1.5 billion ESF money is available for this priority in 2007 – 2013.
- Priority 2 is 'Developing a skilled and adapted workforce'. It supports projects to train people who do not have basic skills and qualifications needed in the workplace. About £823 million of ESF money is available for this priority in 2007 – 2013.

Key target groups include:

- Disabled people
- Lone parents
- People aged over 50
- People from ethnic minorities
- People without good qualifications; and
- Young people not in education, employment or training.

Decision Making

Applications to ESF Community Grants 2011 – 2013 will be assessed by a panel every four months (June, October and February). The deadline for applications is six weeks before panel meeting (this is slightly different during round one). Successful applicants will be required to attend post-approval contract meeting one week after panel meeting – grant awards are dependent upon attendance at this meeting so please check the dates below to ensure you are available before applying.

Important Dates

Round one

Deadline for applications: 12th September 2011

Panel meeting: 31st October 2011

Post approval contract meeting: 7th November 2011

Round Two

Deadline for applications: 27th December 2011

Panel meeting: 8th February 2012

Post- approval contract meeting: 15th February 2012

Round Three

Deadline for applications: 26th April 2012

Panel Meeting: 6th June 2012

Post-approval contract meeting: 13th June 2012