

# Framework for Action

A Partnership Response to the current economic downturn affecting both business and individuals



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## PURPOSE & SCOPE

In response to the current economic climate, regional partners have come together to develop a collective response to support business and individuals. This Framework has been developed for all partners who are working with businesses and individuals, including organisations such as Local Authorities, Sub Regional Partners and Business Support intermediaries. It describes the mechanism of rapid and integrated public sector response available to both businesses and their employees and will provide partners and stakeholders an overview as to the flexible approach and offer available. It provides details on how partners can link and contribute to the process and a list of partner contact details.

Businesses are facing differing degrees and types of challenges and will take action to stabilise and improve their commercial position. There is a range of public sector business support solutions available to assist them, accessed via a number of interfaces e.g. BLNW and Local Authorities. Likewise, there is a range of support available to individuals accessed through JCP and LSC.

Businesses may need to take exceptional steps to safeguard their current competitive position which may result in redundancies. For those employees concerned it is recognised that there is a need, and opportunity, to proactively assist with up-skilling and training. This will help them to find new employment as well as improving skills which, in the longer term, will enhance regional competitiveness for economic recovery.

There are many effective and proven routes to intervention already established and delivered by public and private sector organisations and these have been reviewed to ensure the collective response can be tailored and streamlined to meet the speed and scale of current circumstances. The framework underpins our collective ability to monitor the situation and intervene in the most timely and effective manner. A more detailed plan has been developed, by the Regional Skills and Employment Board, which specifically focuses on the service offer to individuals, not only for those people at risk of redundancy and newly redundant, but for the longer term unemployed and new entrants to the labour market.

The scope of this Framework includes:

- The establishment of a mechanism for collective sharing of intelligence to support business, partners and the Joint Economic Council<sup>1</sup>;
- Delivery of appropriate solutions to secure the competitive position of businesses and, where job losses are inevitable, to assist those made redundant;
- Supporting employers and employees faced with redundancy; and
- Ongoing monitoring and feedback on the effectiveness of our response.

The framework outlines two distinct but linked stages, that of (a) data capture and reporting and (b) delivery of appropriate support.

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<sup>1</sup> The Joint Economic Council has been set up, in response to the Prime Minister, to ensure the region's economy emerges from the current downturn stronger than before. The JEC North West's objectives are to:

- review information and intelligence on the economic and social impacts of changing economic circumstances;
- agree a regional response to them; and
- look at opportunities to push forward both existing and planned infrastructure projects that would benefit the North West economy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The UK is experiencing a sudden economic slowdown. Many companies, particularly SMEs, are already experiencing significant challenges in maintaining a viable business. Following a period of relatively strong growth and a continued shift towards service sectors, the North West has witnessed a notable increase in company closures and redundancies, a trend expected to continue. Recent data shows that employment is already falling in construction and private sector services. In particular, companies have experienced loss/reduction in credit lines and/or markets, resulting in redundancies and closures or the need to take exceptional steps to stabilise their businesses. The effects of the downturn are being felt in key sectors such as manufacturing, financial services, construction and real estate, professional services, retail, hospitality and leisure.

During the last economic recession, business failure rates were almost three times the normal rate of attrition, in today's terms this would equate to 35,000 closures per annum across the North West, compared with a trend figure of around 13,000. This provides a potential benchmark for the scale of the situation and therefore the need for coordinated, targeted and responsive action.

For an up to date picture of the current regional economy, data is being collated monthly and is available at <http://www.nwriu.co.uk/aboutus/2530.aspx>

This framework proposes how the North West partners might respond to this situation by developing existing partnerships to ensure that they offer a rapid, co-ordinated and effective response, incorporating best practice and targeting those companies directly affected.

The public sector partners include, but not exclusively, Northwest Development Agency (NWDA), Business Link North West (BLNW), Government Office NW (GONW), Local Authorities (LA), sub-regional partners and investment agencies (SRP), Regional Cluster Organisations (RCO), BERR, Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus (JCP). In addition, this co-ordinated response also seeks the engagement of HE and FE and private sector partners, including the CBI, Engineering Employers Federation (EEF), and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB). Many professional institutes and agencies eg FSB, Chambers of Commerce (CoC), provide legal services which include redundancy support and members need to actively engage with these bodies. Trade Unions and ACAS will be actively involved, especially in the case of major closures and their experience and contribution is also recognised and sought.

Partners will explore every avenue to address the current economic crisis by developing a common understanding of what is happening to our business community and taking appropriate action to mitigate the negative effects of the current crisis.

Broadly, this is comprised of two distinct but linked stages, that of data capture and reporting (Stage 1), and delivery of appropriate support (Stage 2) which may run in parallel or in series.

## 2. STAGE 1: INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

In the current economic climate, it is essential to have good intelligence to inform policy making and precipitate appropriate delivery action. It is important that the intelligence should aim to identify, as early as possible, when a business faces issues in order to facilitate the correct support for those businesses. It is a requirement that everyone, particularly those within the response team for a specific company, contribute to ongoing data capture and monitoring. The reasons behind the business challenges and their impact must be understood and recorded so that a tailored response can be delivered. The outcome of such interventions must be fed back to enable the partners to better respond to other businesses in a similar situation. The overall approach is presented below.

### 2.1 Sources of Business Intelligence

The region has a number of organisations which capture data and generate intelligence on current economic conditions. These include:

- The NWDA, which has direct relations with business and together with RCOs, works with strategically important businesses and their supply chains.
- JCP, which receives redundancy data from BERR in the form of HR1 forms, through engagement with local businesses and Local Authorities and receives on-flow and off-flow data measuring the number of claimants joining and leaving the unemployment register which provides a volumetric view of Labour Market activity. (N.B. For those companies intending to make less than 20 employees redundant, there is no legal requirement to make notification. Therefore there is a risk of not identifying small scale redundancies and of not having visibility of job losses within small and micro businesses).
- *It is mandatory for companies to notify the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry of a proposal to dismiss 20 or more employees as redundant, at one establishment, within a period of 90 days or less. Notification to BERR is via the HR1 which must be forwarded before any notices of dismissal are issued and a copy of the HRI must be given to the representatives of the employees being consulted.*
  - <http://www.insolvency.gov.uk/pdfs/rpforms/hr1.pdf>
  - *For between 20 and 99 redundancies at one establishment, the employer must notify BERR at least 30 days before the first dismissal.*
  - *For 100 or more redundancies at one establishment, the employer must notify BERR at least 90 days prior to the first dismissal.*
- BLNW maintains company details of over 100,000 businesses on their company database system, and additional data on a total of 500,000 North West enterprises which generates business indicators to track and monitor businesses performance.
- The LSC, which has contracts with over 200 Train to Gain training providers in the northwest and who, between them, engaged with over 12,000 employers in the region last academic year.
- Local Authorities, who are able to provide intelligence on their local employers through a range of business facing teams, ranging from their Economic Development teams through to Environmental and Planning teams.

- Sub Regional Partners who have strong links with businesses in their sub region, offering business support and membership schemes.
- The TUC who are often at the forefront of supporting both business and its members when difficulties are faced in the workplace. Trade Unions offer a range of services to members, primarily but not exclusively related to employees' rights and benefits and are involved in all major consultations regarding redundancies.
- ACAS, who leads on employment legislation including that relating to redundancies. ACAS National helpline handles calls from both businesses and individuals and captures data showing the subject matter and trends.
- The North West has sixteen Chambers of Commerce. Collectively, they represent 16,000 business member companies. The membership base varies from sole traders to major international companies, covers a very wide spectrum of sectors and includes many firms which have long historical associations with the region alongside brand new enterprises.
- The Bank of England interacts directly with about 400 significant companies across the Northwest and has made direct contact with over 1000 businesses in the last 12 months. Information gathered is not currently shared or made available, but a suitably confidential mechanism could be explored.
- Business Trade Associations who have a good understanding of their sectors and current economic conditions based on evidence from their members, and can provide a snapshot of their sub-set of the full business base.
- Other specific requirements, some statutory, are placed on public sector Agencies such as HMRC to gather intelligence. These bodies may already share data with NWDA and other public sector partners that will also provide important intelligence. Commercial data sources, including banks provide general trend information and financial data agencies provide specific detailed data which may be purchased.

The main aim is that all these sources of data and intelligence can be shared and interpreted by partners to ensure collective, timely support to the business and individuals. This is dependent on there being a repository for this information which partners can use to capture and input data, and an effective way to disseminate the data/intelligence.

## **2.2 Data Warehouse**

BLNW has the most comprehensive, region-wide and appropriate data warehouse for data capture, storage, access and dissemination of data. BLNW maintains company details of over 100,000 businesses on their company database system. BLNW also holds additional data, refreshed monthly, on a total of 500,000 North West enterprises (including the 100,000) collated from many indicators. These indicators are determined from a wide range of sources including credit data agencies and non-commercial/statistical bodies that generate business indicators to track and monitor businesses in difficulty, e.g. Experian's Commercial Delphi. BLNW are also currently in discussions with BERR to receive HR1 forms directly, identifying those companies who are preparing to make over 20 employees redundant.

This information is available to partners and business support agencies, including Local Authorities. However, clarification and legal advice is being sought on data protection and

sharing and exactly who can receive this information. This should be available at the end of March.

There are a number of ways the information can be received:

- **Simple phone Hotline – 01772 790570**  
A dedicated response to supply simple pieces of information to partners and provide an accurate up to date record of businesses within their locality.
- **Via the web** [www.businesslink.gov.uk/northwest/creditcrunch](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/northwest/creditcrunch)  
A web-based system with regulated access to partners to limited live data and an analytical tool providing the ability to drill down into more detail about the company.
- Through a Complex Data Analytics service provided by BLNW Data Team, which can provide partners with more detailed information and bespoke projects. This service can provide summarised data and trends for various geographies and sectors.  
Accessed via the Hotline.

## 2.3 Data Capture

In order to ensure the most up to date information on a company is brought together, BLNW will provide a dedicated resource to assist with capturing data from other sources, including information and intelligence from partners.

BLNW will support the capturing of data in 2 ways:

- **Via the phone hotline 01772 790570**  
Data is collected during the course of the phone conversation and recorded on the BLNW CRM system. This information will specifically highlight the organisations that have been assisted and supply contact details for those who provided the support.
- Via the web site. This work is currently under development and will allow the input of data via the web page which automatically updates the data bases.

To work effectively, it is incumbent on everyone involved to be proactive in feeding data into the data warehouse so that the information held is current.

## 2.4 Regional Intelligence Unit

In the current Economic Climate the Regional Intelligence Unit (RIU) are providing a range of Regional economic data for BERR, Joint Economic Council and partners through their website. This information is being updated on a monthly basis and is currently at a regional level. Work is underway to develop links between this information and the data that Business Link capture through the data warehouse.

Monthly economic updates are available at <http://www.nwriu.co.uk/aboutus/2530.aspx>

### 3. STAGE 2: DELIVERY OF SUPPORT

There are three main avenues for action determined by the risk the business and individuals face;

- The first, a *comprehensive* approach, seeks to deliver appropriate business support measures to address specific company issues.
- The second is a more specific *people-based* intervention, when a business has made a notification of possible redundancies to BERR, (information which may not be in the public domain at this stage), primarily delivered by JCP with LSC.
- The third approach focuses on supporting individuals already unemployed through working with employers to provide potential employment opportunities, primarily delivered by JCP, but with an onus on public sector organisations to support this.

The comprehensive and people-based interventions are illustrated in Figure 1. The offers to both business and individuals are being worked up in more detail with all partners concerned, through the existing mechanisms of both the BSSP Regional Board and the Regional Skills and Employment Board (RSEB).

#### 3.1 Comprehensive Response

Each partner has established relationships with companies. This response specifically focuses upon a business facing a certain challenge from which it may or may not be able to recover. Through a more co-ordinated and collective response to the company, an appropriate package of support can be offered by partners working together, which ensures that business support is provided to the company to help re-establish its competitive position alongside support for those individuals most at risk of redundancy. The approach may differ in terms of nature and impact for large companies compared to that offered to SMEs.

The BLNW data warehouse can be used to record priorities for support to be deployed. Ideally this will establish the commercial position of the company and be effective in staving off or minimising potential redundancies. It may also be used to help stabilise businesses that have already made roles redundant, and thus mitigate against further losses which might lead to eventual closure. In addition, BLNW can provide assistance on the process required to close a business, should recovery be impossible.

The explanatory paragraphs below develop the scope of actions at each stage of the intervention;

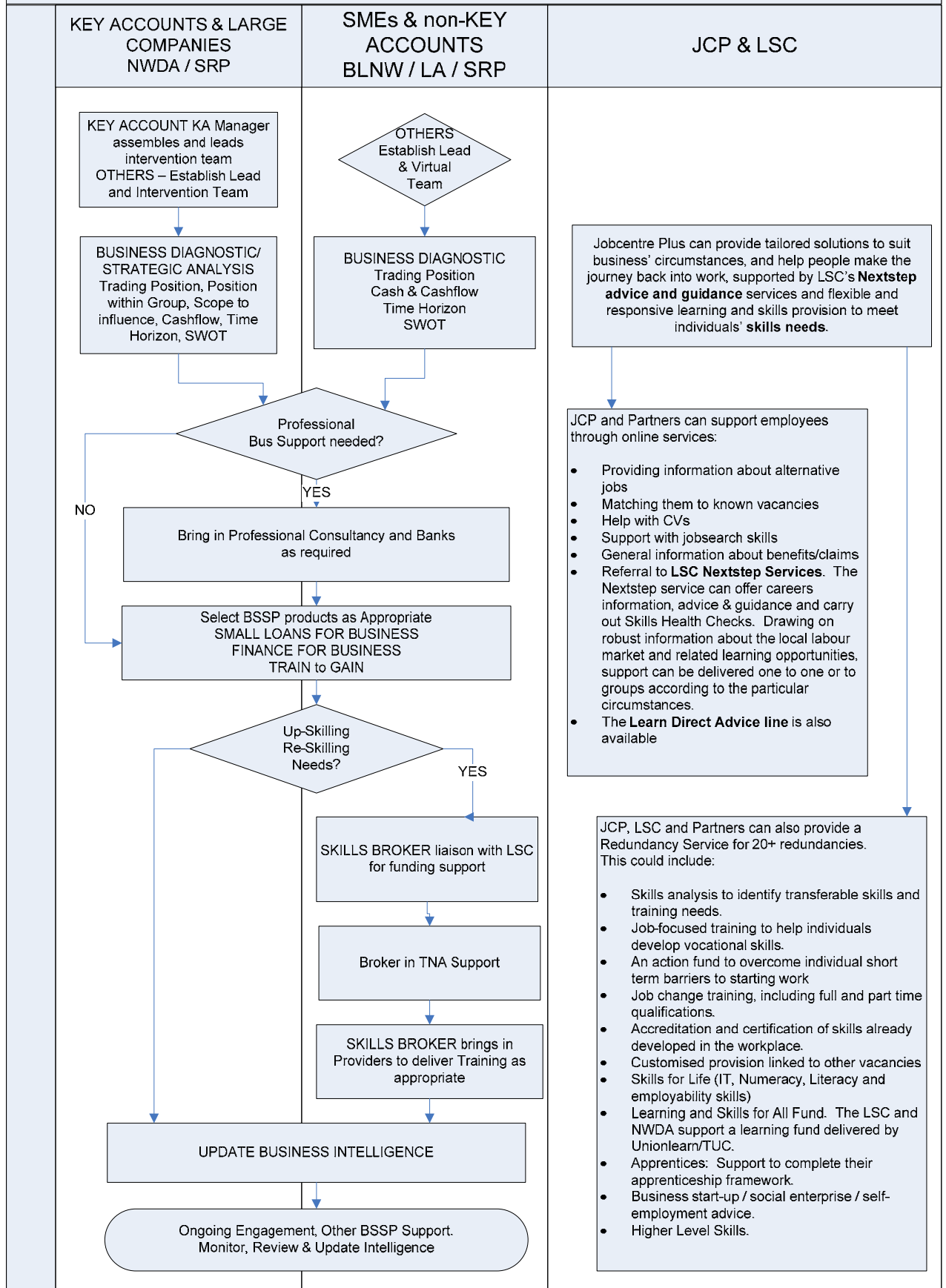
- Where the initial support for the company is related to stabilising the business, the initial contact and subsequent client management will be provided by NWDA, BLNW, Local Authorities and sub regional investment agencies as appropriate, dependent on size and nature of key accounts. When the initial support for the company is related to significant redundancies being unavoidable, the support will be led by JCP. Where necessary, in the case of especially large or sensitive redundancies, the NWDA is likely to take the lead.
- The lead partner will then broker support from other appropriate partners, or in some instances, establish a (virtual) rapid response team, which brings together the appropriate partners to offer business support and people based interventions.
- In the case of redundancy notification, JCP receives copies of all HR1 forms and contacts all companies to discuss and agree the type and level of support required

to handle the redundancy situation. This is handled by the JCP district which has a lead redundancy coordinator. This coordinator will broker links with partners to ensure all avenues of support and funding are accessed as appropriate, including the rapid response service. See later for the specific offers and support available.

- The lead partner will ensure that a suitable Business Diagnostic is carried out on the business. This will build on the initial company record information and anything already known about cash position, root cause and time horizon. The diagnostic should be comprehensive, capturing information in a structured form – any established Key Account Plan from existing ongoing activity could be used with little/no modification for this purpose. This will help to establish the type of support required which can be accessed through partner organisations.
- BLNW will provide a comprehensive portfolio of support, utilising the standard suite of Business Support Products, and acting as the main gateway of access to these products. The full list of BSSP Products is available in Appendix 1 and at [http://www.nwda.co.uk/pdf/BSSP\\_ProductSummaries.pdf](http://www.nwda.co.uk/pdf/BSSP_ProductSummaries.pdf) and should be selected according to need and time horizon. The flexibilities announced with skills support through Train to Gain will allow support for SMEs to continue to invest in their people during the current economic conditions.
- It is important that partners reference all available forms of support to business during their engagement with them:
  - ACAS provides independent and impartial advice, guidance and training in all aspects of redundancy handling and the development of effective policy and procedures, along with in-depth advisory support in the "management of change" process to mitigate job losses and improve efficiencies (ACAS helpline 08457 47 47 47).
  - The BERR public helpline (0845 145 0004) offers a service to individuals and employers around entitlement, and will only refer through to ACAS.
  - Trade Unions can provide specialised support, they offer a skills support service through Union Learn which can support individuals facing redundancy.
  - Trade Associations and private sector bodies including the CBI, EEF, Federation of Small Businesses and professional organisations engage directly with companies and individual members and provide a wide range of information, services and advice. These established relationships are highly valued and provide a further channel to signpost members to all additional sources of support.
  - There is a wide range of local support available from Local Authorities, private training providers and Connexions/ adult information advice and guidance services.

A list of all intermediaries' contact details is available in Appendix 2, in order that we maximise the support available to businesses in an area, especially for micro-businesses.

**Figure 1 Business and People based Intervention – Comprehensive Response Differs in terms of nature and impact for Large Companies and SMEs**



### 3.2 People-based Intervention

Individuals can receive support and advice, either as a consequence of their employer notifying a threat of redundancy or because they are redundant. The offer to individuals is based on:

- Individuals under threat or notice of redundancy and the scale of that redundancy
- Individuals who have recently become unemployed
- Individuals who are unemployed and in receipt of Jobseeker allowance
- Individuals who are in receipt of other benefits

A detailed plan has been developed by the RSEB which sets out what the service offer will be in the North West. This will be available mid February 2009. JCP, LSC and the NWDA will align their investment to deliver this offer. Where there are gaps (spatial, product or unmet demand) partners will work through existing joint planning and commissioning processes to procure additional resources, through ESF and other flexible sources of funding. Local partners also need to be able to prioritise the investment of discretionary resources at their disposal (e.g. Working Neighbourhoods Fund) to ensure that local needs are most effectively met.

Further support is being developed through JCP, which provides individuals access to appropriate advice services that can assist them with financial planning, and if necessary, debt management.

#### For notified redundancies

JCP has a well-established and co-ordinated process to deal with notified redundancies. This is dependent upon a range of factors including the degree of outplacement support made available by the company, whether or not the redundant workers have skills that are readily transferable to the local labour market and to address the direct needs of those being made redundant.

The local District Manager for JCP will determine which interventions are applicable for each redundancy situation, size of a redundancy not always being the sole determinant for the level of support prescribed. The table below gives examples of the type of support that can be offered.

<p>For workers likely to move quickly into work and those already supported by contracted Outplacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signposting to self-help channels &amp; existing JCP services</li> </ul>	<p>For workers likely to move quickly into work and not already supported by contracted Outplacement</p> <p>Additional support might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• on-site benefit talks</li> <li>• Next Step CV</li> <li>• interview workshops</li> <li>• Referral to intermediaries</li> </ul>	<p>For workers likely to need help to move back into work and not already supported by contracted Outplacement</p> <p>Additional support might include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource centre, Next Step 1-1</li> <li>• Career advice, recruitment &amp; training events</li> <li>• Business start</li> </ul>	<p>Rapid Response Support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For workers where a training need is identified support is essential to secure sustainable employment</li> <li>• Skills Transfer Analysis to evaluate transferable skills and up-skilling</li> </ul>
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		up, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to basic skills training</li> <li>• Day 1 eligibility for JCP programmes if deemed to have significant local impact (Large Scale Redundancy)</li> </ul>	needs followed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to existing JCP/LSC funded provision or procurement of external training</li> </ul>
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JCP will co-ordinate all activities to help those affected into alternative employment, liaising with partners as described earlier.

**The Offer (JCP and LSC) - for those at risk of redundancy or newly redundant** (See Appendices 3 & 4 for detailed offer)

Support will be customised to the needs of the individuals and can include:-

- **JCP Rapid Response Fund and Services**, Including signposting to self-help channels and existing partnership services for those likely to move quickly into work; on site benefit advice; Day 1 eligibility for JCP programmes etc.
- **Careers Advice**, through the Next Step service. Where required, individuals can be supported by a **Skills Health Check**.
- **Vocational Training**, where individuals will be able to access training which can be customised to their individual circumstances and the local labour market conditions.
- **Skills for Life**, where individuals would benefit from support in developing their IT, numeracy, literacy and employability skills.
- **Learning and Skills for All Fund**  
The LSC and NWDA support a learning fund delivered under the auspices of Union Learn/TUC. Under certain circumstance this fund may be called upon to support individuals threatened with redundancy.
- **Apprentices**  
Where apprentices are threatened with redundancy, a range of support measures are in place to find these individuals alternative employment and to complete their apprenticeship framework.
- **Business start up/social enterprise/self employment advice**

For individuals who are newly unemployed and looking to claim Jobseeker's Allowance, JCP provides:

- Financial support - available through Jobseeker's Allowance for those who are available for work and actively seeking work
- Advisers - who will help people make their claim and discuss labour market opportunities and options, drawing up a bespoke jobsearch plan and offering practical help and support (on applying for jobs, writing CVs, interview techniques and, in some cases, financial help with travel to interviews)

- Ongoing contact with Jobcentre Plus - through fortnightly jobsearch reviews and a series of increasingly intensive interviews at key stages of a claim, providing access to skills training.

In addition, **Flexible New Deal (FND)**, a tailored package of support suited to individual jobseeker needs will be phased in from April 2009 and will include:

- Skills screening and Skills Health Checks leading to training if needed;
- Fast-track to intensive support for people facing greater barriers to work;
- Up to 12 months of intensive support from a back to work service provider, who will be paid for getting customers into jobs and
- The guarantee of at least four weeks of work-focused activity to help an individual increase their chances of finding employment

### 3.3 Long term unemployed and worklessness

The number of people claiming out of work benefits remains very high and continues to be highly concentrated for certain benefits (Incapacity Benefit in particular), in many local neighbourhoods, and amongst particular labour market groups, (especially older workers, those with no qualifications and some minority ethnic groups).

Through a joint investment approach and with a variety of aligned funding streams partners are already providing a significant amount of additional provision and support for long term unemployed individuals to effectively access the provision and then allow progression from pre-employment through to Train to Gain. As the economic downturn bites those further from the labour market such as the long term unemployed/inactive are in danger of becoming more isolated as better qualified and those with employability skills are prepared to take lower level jobs.

In the Northwest, partners recognise the necessity to continue with the strategy to support the long term unemployed.

Work in local areas to ensure a comprehensive offer is already underway, particularly in the Greater Manchester area where the IES trial includes mapping investment/provision/support in a Local Authority area, and analysing duplication, need for future investment and system fixes required to make access and progression easier. This information will be invaluable to get the offer right and to provide next step advisors with the range of information they need to advise clients and refer to relevant provision.

In the longer term, there will continue to be strong demand which will provide opportunities for claimants, provided they are able to gain employability and basic occupational skills.

For those people who have been unemployed and claiming benefit for some time, JCP is working with businesses to provide potential employment opportunities. This is through:

- **Local Employment Partnerships** – a deal between Government and employers to tackle the increasing recruitment and skills challenges of our labour market and economy;
- **New Deal** – which offers subsidies to employers and grants to cover the cost of training as part of the support package to help individuals prepare for their return to work;
- **Work Trials** – a risk free way for employers to try out a potential employee for up to 30 days at no cost for the business and
- **Access to Work** – support for employers and individuals with disabilities to help them return to or stay in work.

## Appendix 1 BSSP Products

PRODUCT NAME	DESCRIPTION
<b>BUSINESS FINANCE</b>	
<b>Loans for Small Businesses</b>	<p>Loans to help small business owners, entrepreneurs and social enterprises start up and expand their business.</p> <p>Loans range between £3,000 - £50,000.</p> <p>Available to SMEs across the North West with a viable business plan, who have been unable to access finance from commercial sources.</p>
<b>Grant for Business Investment</b>	<p>A grant to support the acquisition of key assets such as buildings, plant and machinery and to support the creation of new jobs or to safeguard existing ones.</p> <p>The level of grant ranges from 10-35% of the total project cost depending on the location and size of the business. The minimum project size is £100,000.</p> <p>Available to SMEs across the North West and to larger companies in 'Assisted Areas'.</p>
<b>Venture Capital and Loan Funding</b>	<p>A combination of loan, equity and mezzanine funding to support business growth.</p> <p>Loans range between £50,000 - £250,000. Equity and Mezzanine finance is up to £2 million.</p> <p>Available to SMEs across the North West, with a viable business plan who have been unable to secure commercial finance.</p>
<b>Northwest Business Angels</b>	<p>A network of private equity investors who invest in new or expanding businesses.</p> <p>The level of investment ranges between £10,000 - £500,000.</p> <p>Available to entrepreneurs and SMEs across the North West.</p>
<b>ADVICE FOR NEW AND HIGH GROWTH BUSINESSES</b>	
<b>Start-Up</b>	<p>Free of charge assistance and advice to help people start up a business.</p> <p>Provides advice and mentoring on all aspects of setting up and running a successful business from an assessment of a business idea to advice on business planning and finance. Also includes post start-up guidance.</p> <p>Available to all potential entrepreneurs.</p>

<p><b>High Growth Coaching</b></p>	<p>Free of charge support to create and develop new and existing businesses with high growth potential.</p> <p>Intensive individual coaching through workshops, networks and online resources to help businesses achieve rapid expansion and growth.</p> <p>Available to new businesses with a potential to create a turnover of £500k within three years, and established SMEs capable of achieving a minimum of 20% growth per annum.</p>
<p><b>INNOVATION &amp; EFFICIENCY</b></p>	
<p><b>Knowledge to Innovate</b></p>	<p>Free of charge support to firms who wish to introduce new or improved products, processes or services.</p> <p>Provides specialist advice and practical assistance to successfully implement innovation which could also involve the development of leadership skills as well as organisational and supply chain transformation.</p>
<p><b>Grant for Research &amp; Development</b></p>	<p>A grant to assist businesses with the cost of research and development of innovative products and processes. It can contribute to the cost of protecting intellectual property, staff costs, research trials, product testing as well as the development and demonstration of innovative low carbon technologies.</p> <p>Grants range between £20,000 - £500,000</p> <p>Available to SMEs across the North West</p>
<p><b>Innovation Vouchers</b></p>	<p>A voucher to enable businesses to fund research and development from a knowledge base institution (e.g. universities, colleges or private sector research establishment).</p> <p>Provides business with a voucher worth up to £3,000. This can be 'pooled' with other businesses to create a larger research project.</p> <p>Available to SMEs across the North West</p>
<p><b>Knowledge Transfer Partnership</b></p>	<p>Provides a postgraduate, for between 6 months and 2-3 years, to help a company deliver a new product, process or service, with the support of the 'parent' university or further education colleges.</p> <p>Available to all companies across the North West and provides a % subsidy towards the project costs.</p>
<p><b>Manufacturing Advisory Service</b></p>	<p>Assistance and funding to implement cost reduction and productivity improvements.</p> <p>Up to 50% funding for up to 30 days onsite consultancy and training support to implement process improvements for</p>

	<p>example LEAN and Six Sigma.</p> <p>Available to manufacturing SMEs across the North West</p>
<b>Resource Efficiency</b>	<p>Assistance to manage resources, reduce operating costs and environmental risks.</p> <p>On-site support and guidance by a qualified advisor to identify and implement cost savings associated with resource efficiency.</p> <p>Available to all businesses across the North West.</p> <p>From January 2009 a grant of up to 50% of project costs (to a maximum award of £160,000) for the purchase of low carbon technologies.</p>
<b>TRAINING &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Train to Gain: People Development</b>	<p>Funded provision of accredited training and development.</p> <p>Includes full or partial funding of vocational qualification up to NVQ4 level, subject to specific eligibility criteria and existing skills of the employee.</p> <p>Available to all businesses across the North West</p>
<b>Train to Gain: Leadership &amp; Management</b>	<p>Funded provision of training and development for leaders and managers.</p> <p>Following a personal development plan, up to six leaders and managers per business, can receive a grant of up to £1,000 each (matched by £500 from the business) to spend on development provision.</p> <p>Available to businesses between 5 and 999 employees across in the North West.</p>
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>	
<b>International Trade Services</b>	<p>Assistance and funding to support preparation, entry and expansion into overseas markets.</p> <p>Individual coaching, access to workshops and networks, tailored information and online resources to help businesses prepare to trade internationally. Financial support towards the cost of participation in trade fairs,</p> <p>Introductions to overseas buyers, and foreign market intelligence.</p> <p>Available to all, UK based businesses across the North West. Where financial assistance is provided, for example with overseas visits, this is restricted to SMEs.</p>
<b>Export Credit</b>	Insurance policies for contracts involving the export of capital

<b>Guarantee Scheme</b>	<p>equipment and project related goods and services.</p> <p>Insurance is provided to UK exporters against risks such as non-payment by overseas buyers.</p> <p>Available to all, UK based businesses across the North West.</p>
<b>SECTOR DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Sector Development</b>	<p>Sector specific information, networking, supply chain and business development opportunities for businesses in the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerospace <a href="http://www.aerospace.co.uk">www.aerospace.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Automotive <a href="http://www.nwautoalliance.com">www.nwautoalliance.com</a></li> <li>• Advanced flexible materials <a href="http://www.nwtexnet.co.uk">www.nwtexnet.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Chemicals <a href="http://www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk">www.chemicalsnorthwest.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Food &amp; Drink <a href="http://www.foodnw.co.uk">www.foodnw.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Biotechnology, pharmaceuticals &amp; healthcare <a href="http://www.bionow.co.uk">www.bionow.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Energy and environmental technologies and services <a href="http://www.envirolinknorthwest.co.uk">www.envirolinknorthwest.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Digital and Creative <a href="http://www.visionandmedia.co.uk">www.visionandmedia.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Financial &amp; Professional Services <a href="http://www.pro-manchester.co.uk">www.pro-manchester.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.professionalliverpool.com">www.professionalliverpool.com</a></li> <li>• Business &amp; Professional Services (Call &amp; Contact Centres) <a href="http://www.callnorthwest.org.uk">www.callnorthwest.org.uk</a></li> </ul>

## Appendix 2 Partner Contact Details

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## Appendix 3 JCP Summary Offer

### **Jobcentre Plus universal offer for businesses needing to recruit:**

- a no charge vacancy handling service through Jobcentre Plus which allows access to a range of practical measures and financial support to help employers of any size meet their recruitment needs
- the facility for employers to manage their own vacancies through Employer Direct On-line

The enhanced offer for businesses prepared to work with regional partners to offer employment opportunities to people who have been claiming benefits for some time:

- Local Employment Partnerships – a deal between Government and employers to tackle the increasing recruitment and skills challenges of our labour market and economy.
- New Deal – offers subsidies to employers and grants to cover the cost of training as part of the support package to help individuals prepare for their return to work.
- Work Trials – a risk free way for employers to try out a potential employee for up to 30 days at no cost for the business.
- Access to Work – support for employers and individuals with disabilities to help them return to or stay in work

### **Jobcentre Plus universal offer for individuals:** ... looking for work, whether employed or unemployed

- [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk) – the UK's largest on-line jobs bank, with over 15,000 new jobs notified every working day
- Jobseeker Direct (0845 60 60 234) – telephone job broking service where trained advisers will offer supported jobsearch
- Jobpoints – touch-screen access to all our vacancies (and training opportunities) in all Jobcentres and in some selected other locations.

... when made newly unemployed and during a claim for Jobseeker's Allowance

- financial support is available through Jobseeker's Allowance for those who are available for work and actively seeking work
- advisers will help people make their claim and discuss labour market opportunities and options, drawing up a bespoke jobsearch plan and offering practical help and support (on applying for jobs, writing CVs, interview techniques and, in some cases, financial help with travel to interviews)
- ongoing contact with Jobcentre Plus, through fortnightly jobsearch reviews and a series of increasingly intensive interviews at key stages of a claim, providing access to skills training

### **Jobcentre Plus enhanced offer for businesses and employees affected by redundancies:**

- Rapid Response Service (RRS) - offered to every employer with 20 or more redundancies or employers in local communities who have been disproportionately affected by multiple smaller scale redundancies

- RRS will provide information about other jobs in the labour market, support workers to draw up CVs, improve their jobsearch skills and provide general information about claiming benefits
- A skills analysis to help identify transferable skills and training needs relevant to the labour market and provide job focused training to develop vocational skills.

## **Appendix 4 LSC Summary Offer**

### **The LSC Offer in Significant Redundancy Situations**

Where a significant redundancy situation arises the LSC will identify a manager to work with Jobcentre plus, the relevant Local Authority and other relevant agencies and partnerships. They will work as part of a multi-agency team to agree and coordinate interventions. LSC funded support will be customised to the needs of the individuals under threat and to the company in question. Support can include:-

#### **Careers Advice**

The Next Step service can offer careers information, advice and guidance. Drawing on robust information about the local labour market and related learning opportunities, support can be delivered one to one or to groups according to the particular circumstances.

#### **Vocational Training**

Individuals will be able to access training which can be customised to their individual circumstances and the local labour market conditions. Training could include:-

- Job-change training including full and part qualifications at levels 2 and 3. This type of provision may be appropriate for individuals seeking employment in a new sector.
- Accreditation and certification of skills already developed in the work place including full and part qualifications at levels 2 and 3. This type of provision may be appropriate for individuals who wish to continue employment in the same sector.
- Customised provision linked to other vacancies. Where alternative job opportunities in another employer have been identified, the LSC will fund customised provision (typically short interventions of between 2 and 8 weeks) to help individuals under threat of redundancy acquire the skills the employer needs.

#### **Skills for Life**

Where individuals would benefit from support in developing their IT, numeracy and literacy skills, the LSC can fund this type of provision

#### **Learning and Skills for All Fund**

The LSC and NWDA support a learning fund delivered under the auspices of Unionlearn/TUC. Under certain circumstance this fund may be called upon to support individuals threatened with redundancy.

#### **Apprentices**

Where apprentices are threatened with redundancy, a range of support measures are in place to find these individuals alternative employment and to complete their apprenticeship framework.

## **Appendix 5 Acas Summary Offer**

### **Support available from Acas North West**

Arrange a confidential face to face discussion with an experienced Adviser to talk through the implications of varying contracts, lay offs, short time working, redundancy and tightening up on your Procedures. If you would prefer to do this offsite we are arranging advisory surgeries and **both these services are free of charge.**

If you need to make efficiency savings we can help you work through what these might be, involving your employees and their representatives at all stages to minimise difficulties later on.

We can talk through examples of work we have done elsewhere to help organisations identify and implement savings for example by changing shift patterns, overtime arrangements, or eliminating inefficient working methods.

We can work with you to improve productivity for example by managing attendance more effectively, managing performance and managing change, working with employees to identify efficiencies.

**If you have decided on a course of action, we can provide advice and support on implementation.**

#### **This includes:**

Confidential discussions on best practice in dealing with redundancies and contractual changes.

Training for representatives involved in consultation processes

Facilitating discussions with trade union or employee representatives, supporting you in reaching agreement on change

Training for Managers and Employee representatives in handling redundancies including the redundancy process, alternatives, selection, support and dismissal including varying contracts.

Training for Managers in holding difficult conversations

**Once you have implemented the action you need to take, Acas can help you tackle emerging issues.**

#### **This includes:**

Training for managers taking on new responsibilities such as handling disciplinary issues or managing absence problems and capability issues not tackled by previous managers.

Handling change arising from reorganisation

Building a stronger culture to face future challenges by maintaining good employment relations and employee engagement; developing and improving policies and procedures in light of the experience gained.



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