

Why write a plan?

Writing a plan is the best way to formalise your ideas and structure them so that you can realistically assess the viability of the proposed project and to ensure that you are operating within the law.

A key part of the plan will be the market research that you carry out, to identify the needs of your target customers. This should help you assess how large the market is and whether the demand is high enough to make the project viable.

You will also need to research the costs involved and predict your future payments for at least the first year of operation. Preparing these forecasts will be an essential part of the plan, particularly if you are going to be applying for funding.

The plan template below can be used to guide you in preparing a plan and you will find hyperlinks to websites which can provide you with further information. We have provided examples of the sort of things you should include in each section - these are shown in italics - and some ideas about how to carry out the research and make your financial forecasts.

A plan is usually written in the third person, i.e.. "The project will be run at" rather than "We will run the project at "

Where relevant we have referred to the relevant section of the ICT and NOF application form and the application guide.

The organisation and project idea

This should be a brief description of your organisation and the proposed project. You should include information about the activities the project will undertake and who the customers will be and the project costs.

When applying for NOF or Learning Centre Initiative funding you will need to describe who will benefit from the proposed project. This should not be longer than 200 words and may be used for press summaries if your funding bid is successful (Section 1.5 of application form.) It should summarise the whole project concept, like the introduction to an essay and may well be written after you have assessed the viability of the project.

You will also need to provide the full legal name of the organisation (1.2), its registered address (1.3) and if you are part of a larger organisation or umbrella body you will need to state which one (1.4)

You will need to provide details of your main contact (Section 2 of the application form) for the application. The Chair or Chief Executive of the lead organisation cannot also be the main contact as he/she will have to sign the application.

If you have any partner organisations who are offering support to your project or those which will be involved in delivering lifelong learning activities you should provide their details and how they will be involved in the project in Section 5 of the application form.

Mission, Aims and Targets

A mission statement is the overview of what you are trying to achieve.

"The mission of is to provide a fully equipped resource centre to enable the local community, local businesses and individuals of all ages, to take advantage of developing Information and Communication Technologies by ensuring that businesses, the community and individuals can gain access to information technology and acquire the skills needed to take advantage of the employment opportunities provided by new technology."

Your aims explain what you hope to achieve and the targets explain how you hope to achieve those aims. They should be very clear and precise, ideally they should be SMART. This stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely, so you need to put figures in and state the time period over which you hope to achieve those targets. If you have several target groups you may want to break them down for each group. (ICT or NOF 7.1)

Aim To provide access to learning in information and communications technology to adults who have barriers to learning.

Target: to enable x people to become competent in basic computer skills in the first year.

Aim To provide access to office equipment for individuals, businesses and the community, (e.g. fax, photocopier, binding equipment etc.)

Target: To attract x regular users of the facilities over a period of 6 months.

The government expects you to set demanding targets for your centre which will be agreed with you. They also expect to see a number of targets for

- % of the local population and client groups who visit and use the centre
- % of visitors or potential learners who return on a regular basis to use the facility and/or develop their skills
- % of users who complete an introduction to the Internet/e-mail and are then able to access the Net
- % of users who move on to other learning, qualifications or jobs (see page 27 of the application guide)

For ICT and NOF applications you will also need to talk about how the project relates to your organisation's plans for future development after the life of the project.

Location and premises

The main focus of the initiative is the provision of ICT equipment, although the costs of building new premises or adapting existing buildings are eligible to be considered for funding. The balance between the funding requested for premises and for equipment will be a key factor when applications are assessed. (See p.26 of the application guide).

You will need to describe the area where the project is going to be situated. What is the population, does the area fall into one of the eligible categories (see below), is it a rural or urban environment, what local authority ward are you operating in?

The initiative is designed to support projects in disadvantaged communities defined as

- the 2000 most deprived local authority wards according to the DETR 1998 Index of Deprivation
- rural areas with significant transport and deprivation problems
- small areas of deprivation within more prosperous areas
- disadvantaged groups with no or low ICT skills

An updated Deprivation Index will be published in March 2000 and published on the website www.dfee.gov.uk/ict-learning-centres

The Countryside Agency is working on some new indicators of disadvantage that are appropriate to rural issues and are hoping to publish these by March 2000.

"XX is a small town in a rural area which meets the Countryside Agency's new indicators of disadvantage. The population of is sufficiently large to generate considerable demand for training in the use of information and communication technology."

You must provide clear and detailed information on where the project will operate from. (6.1) If you will be running projects at more than one site you must provide information on each of the places where you will operate. You must explain how you meet the eligibility criteria (6.2) and the local authority wards you will operate in (6.4).

You will need to describe the premises and should include a map of the location and a plan of the premises, showing how they will be used. If you are applying for funding to modify the premises you should provide plans of what they are like now and how they will be changed. You will need to include architectural plans when this is appropriate. (See p.28 application guide).

You will need to investigate whether planning permission is required for any modifications or whether there will be a change of use which requires planning consent. To check contact your local authority planning department.

If you are going to be providing food on the premises you will need to contact the local Environmental Health Department at the local council. General Food Hygiene Regulations 1995

You will need to provide information on the premises, whether you will own them, lease or hire them, and their availability. You may also want to look at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the premises (this is called a SWOT Analysis). For example a strength may be easy access for the disabled, a weakness could be poor public transport, cramped accommodation. An opportunity would be having identified funding for some modifications, a threat would be having limited room for growth.

The application guide states that centres must be accessible to people with disabilities and people with caring responsibilities. You must also demonstrate that you have addressed issues of heating, ventilation and lighting and that there is enough space for the workstations and equipment to allow people to work in comfort. (see p.28 of the application guide).

If you are signing a contract or lease you should take legal advice. For a free session with a solicitor contact Lawyers for your Business.

Equipment

Guidance on levels of ICT equipment needed is given in section 2 of the application guide, pages 15 - 20. For NOF funding you will need to ensure that your equipment meets the minimum technical standards and compatibility required under the National Grid for Learning (NGfL). For further information see www.dfee.gov.uk/grid/challenge/ngflchal.htm and NGfL Managed Services website www.managedservices.ngfl.gov.uk Further details of technical standards are available from BECTa - www.becta.org.uk/call

You will also need to consider the sort of software required, including taster software to introduce people to the technology. You will need to bear in mind the interests and concerns of your target client groups. See page 20-21 of the application guide.

What are the legal requirements?

You will need to consider all the legislative requirements which the business or project must meet.

Legal Status

There are a number of options for the operation of the business or project. The organisation will need to adopt a legal structure and trading status which will enable it to trade legally and enter into contracts with clients, partners and employees and allow it to access funding. For further information visit www.partnerships.org.uk/centres or contact ICOM.

You will need to state whether or not the organisation is a registered charity and state the charity registration number.

Insurance

The organisation must meet the legal requirements for insurance and be adequately protected. (Section 7.12)

The organisation will need Public Liability Insurance to protect the organisation from claims for damages from visitors to the premises.

Employer's Liability is legally required if you are employing staff and the certificate must be displayed.

Other insurances can be taken out to cover theft, fire, contents, professional liability and other risks as appropriate.

You will need to contact a registered insurance broker or independent financial advisor to obtain quotes for insurance and to ensure that the business or project is adequately covered.

Employment Law

If you will be employing staff you will have to consider the implications of employment legislation. Relevant Acts are: Employment Protection Act 1978, Equal Pay Act 1970, Employment Act 1988, Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Act 1978, Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Employment law covers Equal Opportunities, covering race, sex and disability. (www.disability.gov.uk). Employee rights cover terms and conditions of employment, fair and unfair dismissal, period of notice, unions, redundancy, illegal working and the national minimum wage. Information about all these aspects are available from the Department of Trade and Industry (www.dti.gov.uk/publications/sme)

If staff are employed for more than 1 month the employee must receive a written statement of employment within 13 weeks. Aspects covered must include: who the parties are, date of employment, rate of pay and when it will be made, working hours, holidays, length of notice, disciplinary and grievance procedures. Staff have the right to join a Trade Union.

Staff have the right not to be unfairly dismissed; the reason for dismissal must be one laid down in the Act (e.g. lack of qualifications, poor performance). Redundancy is also covered by this Act.

When you take on your first employee you must inform the Inland Revenue. They will then send you a New Employer's Starter Pack which contains all the instructions, tables and forms that you will need to operate a PAYE system to deduct tax and National Insurance Contributions from your employees wages. You must obtain a P45 from each employee or get them to fill in a P46. There is a New Employer's Helpline (0845 61 43 143) which you can ring to get advice and

an Employer's Helpline (0345 143 143). You can get further advice from the Inland Revenue website on www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

There are regulations about giving employees itemised pay statements and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) further information is available from the Inland Revenue.

There are also limits on working time (Working Time Regulation) which limit working hours, and give staff rights about rest periods, breaks and annual leave, there is additional protection for night workers and you people. The Sunday Trading Act 1994 restricts Sunday opening and there are limits on driving periods.

As an employer you must take out Employer's liability Insurance and display the certificate. You are also responsible for the health and safety of your employees. You should also register the business with either the HSE (most factories, workshops etc.) or the local authority (for offices, shops and catering businesses). HSE Infoline 0541 545 500 or www.HSE.gov.uk

Care should be taken when advertising vacant positions not to contravene the Sex/Race Discrimination Act (e.g. 'Girl Friday', 'Manageress' are not acceptable). Requirements cannot be made if they are not necessary to carry out the job.

Freelance Staff

Great care must be taken to distinguish between a Contract of Service (i.e. employment, where tax is deducted under the PAYE system) and a Contract for Services (i.e. issued to an independent supplier).

Rules are not clear cut; employment and self-employment are not defined in law. You can contact your local Tax Office and ask for their comments on sample contracts to be issued to freelance trainers, to home workers or to micro businesses. These contracts, if for self-employed suppliers, should stress the supplier's independence, responsibilities and autonomy over management, time and place of work (within deadline and other sensible constraints) and over the equipment used to do the work.

There is new legislation being introduced about Personal Service Companies to stop the avoidance of tax and national insurance contributions through the use of personal service companies (i.e.. a company set up by one or more individuals who then hire out their services through the company they control). The Inland Revenue will be publishing detailed guidance in the near future but have not done so to date. Look on www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Sole trader suppliers should be bona-fide micro-businesses serving a range of clients, registered for Schedule D Tax and able to quote their Schedule D number. They should not be placed by on a third party site unless they are paid on PAYE.

Health and Safety

Relevant Acts: Office Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963, amended by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (www.HSE.gov.uk)

The building should be passed for Health and Safety purposes by the Local Authority. The most important Health and Safety guidelines to implement include: Cleanliness, hygiene and welfare, safety, comfort. Areas of special relevance to ICT businesses will include: adequate heating, ventilation and lighting; correct use of machinery; care over wiring, trailing leads and sockets; safety and suitability of furniture, including type and height of desks and work surfaces, type of chair, use of VDUs.

A First Aid Kit should be held on the premises and an Accident Book maintained. Fire procedures should be displayed and exits clearly marked in accordance with the appropriate legislation; fire extinguishers should be mounted and maintained as advised by the Fire Officer. A maximum number of people within the building at any one time will be applied and must be observed.(Section 7.12

Legislation relating to the to services offered

Relevant Acts: Sale of Goods Act, Consumer Protection Act, Descriptions Act 1968, Data Protection Act, and Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988

Goods must be fit for the purpose for which they are sold, and must be as they are described.

Care should be taken in describing the services supplied and the machines available for hire. A clear statement of prices and payment terms should be displayed.

Holding information on the computer and the Data Protection Act

If names and addresses of living persons are kept on computer, it will be necessary to register under the Data Protection Act with the Data Protection Registrar . Tel 01625 545 740

Your organisation may need a policy on the use of hardware and software which should be displayed. Clients should not be permitted to copy or install software (except shareware), though they may bring and take away their own data or data which is in the public domain.

You will need to ensure that you hold adequate copies/licences of programmes in the organisation's own name for public use and training. It may be possible to obtain cheaper, educational licences for some packages.

It is suggested that copyright guidelines are displayed above or close to the photocopier. A good guideline is that a single copy of no more than 10% of a publication, or 20 pages or one chapter, may be copied, which ever is less. A poster explaining these restrictions is available from ASLIB.

VAT Registration

If the turnover of the project exceeds the current limit (see www.hmce.gov.uk) you will need to register for VAT and charge VAT on all sales, where appropriate. You may also consider a voluntary registration to be able to reclaim VAT on purchases.

This section is intended as a guide only and does not constitute legal advice or replace or supersede any advice or rulings from Statutory Authorities or the Legal Profession. Reference must be made to all the appropriate authorities to ensure that you comply with all the appropriate legislation.

Market research and collecting information

A key factor in obtaining funding is to be able to demonstrate that you have carried out adequate market research and identified that there is a demand for the products or services you are offering. You will need to find out information about your client groups, costs and competitors.

The ICT initiative is specifically designed to meet the needs of particular target groups who have low or no ICT skills and who do not have access to ICT equipment at their home or work. (see page 9 of the application guide).

- people who need help with basic skills
- lone parents
- People from ethnic minorities
- Unemployed people,
- People with disabilities
- People who are over 60 and are not involved in learning activities

You will need to find out which target groups there are in your area, what barriers they have which prevent them from gaining new skills. This can include cost, access, transport, childcare, confidence and many other barriers. You will also need to find out what skills employers are looking for.

You will need to find out about your competitors and assess how much of a threat they are. You can draw up a table to look at their strengths and weaknesses, are there opportunities for your project to do better? Can you turn their weaknesses into your strengths? You may decide that instead of regarding them as competitors you can work in partnership with them to provide a better service to the target client groups. The proposed project must add to the provision which is currently available in your area and Section 7.3 asks you to state how your project will support or complement the existing provision in your area.

There are two main types of research, **desk or secondary research** where you look at information that has already been published, such as reports, statistics, census information, newspaper articles, information from journals or directories.

A summary of some relevant, published research is given on pages 42-48 of the application guide. This will provide you with background information and you can use this information to raise issues with your target client groups. Desk research will enable you to make factual statements e.g.

"Figures from the 1991 census indicate about 1,000 female residents are economically active which gives potential size of the market for women returners' training as 375 women (approximately). This figure agrees broadly with figures for Surrey, which show that about 7 in 10 women are now in work.

"Of the local women who do work, it is estimated that 40% work part-time (up to 30 hours a week). This would give a further target group of up to 400 women for computer or other work-centred training."

"In line with national trends, the services sector is the biggest local employer (approximately 27%, 600 people). Taken together with financial services and distribution/catering, this sector makes up 62% of the employment market."

"There is an Internet cafe open on Saturday mornings at The distance from means it will not offer direct competition. It would be worth visiting for ideas. No other access known at present although liaison with the Library Service on its future plans would be useful."

You will also need to carry out **field or primary research**, which involves talking to the people who will be your potential customers and asking them what they require.

This can be done in a number of ways, for example, holding a public meeting to discuss proposals with the local community and to find out what they need, this could include group feedback and participation.

You might interview key local people and organisations, for example groups offering complementary training or support, statutory bodies, Lifelong Learning Partnerships, community or voluntary groups. You could ask local businesses about what skills they would like employees to have and you could talk to other key people in the area. You will need to explain how you identified the need for your project and who you talked to in section 7.2 of the application form.

For DfEE or NOF funding you will also need to explain how your project could support or complement other lifelong learning and ICT strategies (7.3) and how your project will create new opportunities or enhance existing provision for lifelong learning in you community (7.4)

How to write a questionnaire

You could design a questionnaire, or a series of questionnaires for different groups. You will then need to analyse the results of your questionnaire and present them in either tables or charts or in written form and draw conclusions from the results.

Before you start writing questions you need to think through exactly what you are trying to find out.

1. Length

Keep it short - people get bored, don't answer questions properly or may refuse to continue. It shouldn't take more than 10 minutes (unless you are offering an incentive), and many textbooks say you should limit it to between 10 and 20 questions.

2. Clarity

KISS - keep your questions short and simple. Don't use technical terms, or complicated language, bear in mind the target clients' abilities. Make it as easy for the respondent as you can by asking for as little time and effort as possible.

The easiest questions are **closed questions** - where you provide a choice of replies. These may take the form of Yes/No questions or multiple choice questions. They are easy and quick to answer, and easier to analyse, but prevent any spontaneous and unlooked for answers. Sometimes you leave a space for don't know or no answer. or leave the option to add something else.

eg. If you went abroad last year did you travel by:

<i>air</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>ferry</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>eurostar</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>rail</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>other</i>	_____

Don't use loaded questions - These are questions which invite a particular answer.

eg. Would you use us if we offered the best courses?

You need to be aware that people do not always answer questions honestly, sometimes they will answer in a particular way to make them look better.

eg. Do you give your children a cooked breakfast every morning?

A mother may feel she is not a good mother if she doesn't give them a cooked breakfast, and may give the answer which she feels makes her appear to be a better mother.

Another form of question is the **open question**. In this case no answers are provided and the respondent answer in his own words

eg. Why did you go abroad for your holiday? _____

This type of question is easy to ask, difficult to answer and the answers are often very difficult to analyse. However they can provide useful additional information which is you would not get from a closed question.

You may decide to use a control question to check the validity of the answers you are getting. A control question approaches the same subject as a standard question but from a different point of view.

You may also use a filler question which only applies to some respondents eg. smokers in a group. You should tell excluded groups to move on to the next question.

Format

1. Introduction

You need to decide how to introduce the questionnaire. The majority of people will want to know something about the survey before they agree to answer the questions. Introductions should be polite and general.

When sending out a postal questionnaire a good introduction can increase response rates.

2. Instructions

You need to give instructions so the questionnaire is filled in properly. The person who is asking the questions may need to be given instructions or the person who is answering them.

eg Section 3 - Tick one box per question

You must also decide on the order in which to ask the questions.

3. Opening Questions

These should be easy to answer, factual, usually closed questions so that the respondent can relax.

4. Later Questions

These can be more difficult questions, which may require some thought, and more time to answer. They should still be written simply, avoiding long or unusual words, technical terms, or complicated concepts. You may want to include an open question at this stage, to obtain extra information.

5. Personal Questions

You will want some information about the person being interviewed to help you with your classification and analysis and to enable you to make comparisons between different groups. You may require information on age, sex, marital status, occupation, occupation of the principle wage earner, type of house, ownership of home, number of children etc. In business markets it is often helpful to know the respondent's job title.

If you are asking questions with ranges in them, make sure they don't overlap. eg. 20-34, 35-49, 50-65.

Normally you do not ask for a respondent's name or address. It is believed that anonymity allows respondents to relax and give more truthful replies. However some people offer an incentive in return for providing this information.

eg. If you would like further information about the project, please provide your name and address below.

Finally - don't forget to thank the respondent for his time and effort in completing the questionnaire!

Sample Questionnaire

This is just to give you some ideas about the type of question you might ask. You will need to adapt it to provide the information you need and to suit your target client groups and local circumstances.

XXX is seeking funding to develop an Information and Communication Technology Centre (ICT) at xxxxx. To do this we need to identify in detail the types of training, facilities and support required by the local

Please take a few minutes to help, by filling in this questionnaire. It has been designed as part of the research needed to raise the necessary funds. Your answers will help us to plan different uses and services. You do not need to give your name, and your answers are confidential. We will use them only to plan likely services and income for the project.

Children and Young People

Please answer this section only if you have school age children at home

- *Would you pay for an after school homework/computing club? (eg 4- 6pm)*
YES NO

- *Would you prefer the service to run:*
Every day Once or twice a week Holidays only

- *Would you pay for your children/teenagers to attend an evening Computer club or Internet workshop (games and tuition)?*
YES NO

- *How much would you expect to pay per child per day for either of these types of service?*

- *At the charge you have indicated, how many places would you buy a week (days multiplied by children):*
Afterschool/homework club:
Evening Computer/Internet club:

- *Comments on this section:*
- *If NO, do you feel you will use one in the future*
 YES NO

Computers and Information Technology At Home

- *Does your household have a home computer*
 YES NO
- *If NO, does your household have other access to a computer for leisure or non-commercial use?*
Through friends or colleagues? *Elsewhere (if so where?)* _____
- *If YES what does your household use a computer for at present (please tick all that apply)*
 - Games and leisure* *Children use it*
 - Finding out information (eg Internet)* *Household management*
 - Communication (eg electronic mail)* *Voluntary work (eg for clubs)*

Computers and Information Technology in Your Business

- *Does your business use a computer?* YES NO
- *If NO: Do you plan to buy one in the near future?*
 YES NO MAYBE
- *IF NO or MAYBE why is this? (tick all that apply):*
 - Don't know how to use one* *Too expensive.*
 - Lack of support/knowledge* *Don't need one*

About You

- *Are you:* *Employed* *Self-employed*
Retired *Unwaged*
Registered Unemployed
- *Please indicate your age range:*
Under 20 *21 to 39* *40 to 59*
Over 60
- *How far do you live from xxxxxx*
- *Do you have any special needs?*
 - English is not your first language*
 - Trouble with reading or writing*
 - Poor eyesight*
 - Poor hearing*

Registered disabled
Care responsibilities
Lone parent
Other

- If you would like to give us your contact details (name, address, phone) so that we can let you know about how the project is developing, please note them in this box:

Processing and Analysing Data

Once all your questionnaires have been completed, you must process and analyse the information you have obtained. You need to check all the questionnaires to ensure they have been filled in correctly. Once you have ensured that the information is satisfactory you can count responses, and draw up tables and charts to analyse the information you have gathered. The answers to open questions often need studying separately to obtain all the diverse information they may have elicited.

Once you have carried out your research you should be aware of the needs of your target client groups and be in a position to define exactly what you are offering in terms of products and services, how you will price them, where they will be offered (place) and how you will promote them. This is known as the **Marketing Mix or 4 Ps.**

Product or Service

You will need to give details of the product or service or your proposed programme. This should be quite detailed and comprehensive and for DfEE and NOF funding it should include dates, times, location and numbers of sessions and uses, and information about all proposed activities. You should think about the scope of the project, the activities you will offer, as well as when and how often. You will need to think about how you will measure your success.

Consider the technology you will need and how you will offer support to learners and provide a high quality level of support. Section 2 of the application guide raises a number of issues to consider. You must make sure that you are able to meet the needs of people with special needs.

The detailed information you provide may be in the form of a table (Section 7.5 of application form) and must tie in with your cashflow forecasts and with your human resources section.

"The project will offer training courses in ICT, run by trainers who are patient with beginners and able to explain ICT in clear terms. The 12 week courses will be run 3 times per year with trainees attending 2x 3hr sessions per week. The courses will be held at and will be able to train a maximum of 10 trainees at a time."

Pricing Policy

You must explain how you have decided on your pricing policy, this may include looking at what funding is available, what others are charging, what the needs of your client group are. You may ask questions about what people would be prepared to pay in your questionnaire or research. You will need to talk about using and promoting Individual Learning Accounts (Section 7.11b). You may also need to consider the long term sustainability of the project or business which may require the generation of a profit. You will also need to have looked at the costs involved in operating the project.

"The pricing policy has been chosen to ensure long-term sustainability of the initiative, to meet the priorities decided by the community in offering affordable (possibly not-for profit) services to local people (probably members)."

You will then need to provide details of your charges for specific products or services.

Place

You will need to describe where the products or services are going to be provided. You might need to go into detail about the equipment available as well as the building and the environment. (For NOF funding you will need to ensure that your equipment meets the minimum technical standards and compatibility required under the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) see equipment above).

You should discuss accessibility, especially bearing in mind the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, you will also need to talk about public transport, parking and opening hours.

Promotion

You will need to talk about how you will promote your project or business. You will need to consider all the options, find out the costs and then look at the benefit of using each type of promotion. There are many to choose from.

You will need to think about the image you want to get across, if you want to attract local people who have few skills, make sure that the information is easy to read and doesn't use language that will put people off.

"The project will be promoted by using leaflets which can be produced on the computers at the centre very cheaply. These will provide basic information about the courses and have an application form on the back. They will be distributed to local groups and placed in the local library and job centre and will be available to people making telephone enquiries or dropping in to the centre."

You may be able to get coverage from the local press, using press releases, or hold open days for people who are interested in what you are offering, don't forget about word of mouth and personal recommendation. You need to calculate what

your marketing will cost and these figures should be shown on your cashflow forecast.

Marketing Goals

You will need to decide on your marketing goals and these should again be SMART (see objectives above). You will need to include key dates and milestones, state who will carry out your marketing activities and discuss how you will continue to attract new users for the life of the project (Section 7.10).

"Design logo/ within 6 weeks

Define a house style by month x

Run a local launch event (press, VIP and local people present) in month x

Distribute 500 leaflets to libraries and local organisations in months 3 - 4

Get 50 enquiries for training in the first six months"

Consider how you will evaluate the effectiveness of your marketing activities. Will you have an enquiry form which asks where the customer found out about what you are offering? Think about monitoring and reviewing your marketing on a regular basis.

Human Resources

You need to explain the staffing structure of your organisation, as it is now if you are an existing business and how it will be in the future. You will need to think about Project management and co-ordination, (Section 7.7) particularly if you are working with partner organisations.

You may like to define the skills needed to deliver the service and then consider whether the best way to meet those requirements is through full time or part time staff, or by using trainees or volunteers. You will need to consider what you will pay employees, what the costs are to the business or organisation in terms of employers contributions. You will need to draw up job descriptions and discuss how you will recruit suitable staff. Page 21 of the application guide covers some areas that you should address, from base level support, mentoring and facilitation, to administration and management of the project.

Once you have staff you will need to monitor their performance and make sure that they have the appropriate skills. Consider how you will meet their training needs, can you train them in house or do they need to attend external courses?

If you are using volunteers you will need to outline their roles and how many volunteers will be involved (Section 7.8)

Project management, monitoring

You will need to have clear procedures for monitoring progress and whether or not you are meeting your targets. What information systems can you use? How will you keep records of who has visited the centre, attended courses? Can you use

questionnaires to evaluate how satisfied clients are with the services you are providing?

You will need to state who will be responsible for the monitoring and how you will use that information to develop your project (Section 7.13) The application guide also states that there is a comprehensive evaluation strategy and that centres will be expected to collect common data. There will also be an on-line monitoring system.

Funding applications

Capital costs - CMF Funding

For large projects, (over £0.5 million) there must be considerable private sector involvement. This can take the form of sponsorship, sharing premises, contributions in kind. This is also desirable for smaller projects.

You need to decide whether you need funding for capital costs (cost of designing and building a centre or refurbishing a centre, purchasing PCs and other equipment, software packages and licences). For further information see page 26 of the application guide. If you are just applying for capital costs you will be expected to show that you have other funding or income to cover the operating expenses.

Revenue Costs - NOF Funding

NOF funding will cover the cost of staff to support learners through running workshops, demonstrations or taster sessions. It will cover monitoring, mentors and people undertaking outreach work as well as expenses for volunteers. Learning materials, administration, maintenance of ICT equipment, marketing and promotion and training. Further details are available on pages 38 - 40 of the application form (guidance notes for NOF funding).

If you are applying for more than £50,000 of revenue funding you must include a cashflow forecast showing quarterly income and expenditure for the project. You will need to break down the costs in detail to demonstrate that the figures are realistic.

It is possible to apply for both Capital and Revenue Funding by completing all relevant sections of the application form.

Preparing a cashflow forecast

The DfEE is providing worked financial models which will be available on the website www.dfes.gov.uk/ict-learning-centres from the end of February 2000.

Section 8 of the application form shows some headings that you might need to include. Ideally a detailed cashflow forecast should be produced to generate the

figures to be inserted in section 8.1 In section 8.2 you will be required to show any other income for the project and the value of any contributions in kind.