

# Expression of interest

# Title: Evaluation of wave 1 Career Learning Pilots

**Project reference: EOR/SBU/2017/080**

**Deadline for expressions of interest: 5pm Monday 12th February 2018**

## Summary

Expressions of interest are sought for an evaluation partner to develop and conduct the evaluation for two sets of pilots. This is the first wave of pilots that aims to boost Career Learning among working adults and those seeking to return to work. We expect the evaluation will involve mixed modes, incorporating case studies, surveys, and analysis of administrative and monitoring data.

## Background

DfE has launched a series of pilots to better understand how to boost economically valuable learning among working adults and those looking to return to work. The findings from these pilots will inform the development of a National Retraining Scheme as outlined in the recent [Industrial Strategy White Paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664572/industrial-strategy-white-paper-print-ready-version.pdf).

This evaluation relates to two sets of pilots:

**1.)** The [**Flexible Learning Fund**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-flexible-learning-fund) invites organisations to apply for funding to adapt existing educational provision making it flexible and accessible for adults. The evaluation will be finalised once successful projects have been selected in April 2018.

**2.)** Another pilot will test the role of **outreach** and the **cost** of coursesin five local areas. This will involve targeted outreach to boost demand for upskilling and retraining, careers information, advice and guidance, and steps to improve the affordability of certain courses where they have particular value to the local economy. To meet local needs, we expect aspects of this pilot to vary between the five areas. Again, the exact specification of this pilot will be finalised in March.

We would like to have a research organisation contracted in the early stages of the pilot. This means, however, that we will not have finalised the *exact* evaluation methods and scale by the time we invite bidders to tender. We will therefore set out a range of options to be costed and will assess the bids based on these options. The evaluation design will be finalised in April 2018.

## Evaluation aims

The aims of the evaluation are to: assess the effectiveness of the pilots in boosting economically valuable learning; evaluate how the pilots were implemented and identify any aspects that could be improved; and assess the scalability of these interventions and the feasibility of a full roll-out. In more detail:

**Flexible learning fund**

* How do providers make the courses more flexible?
* How much resource does it require to translate classroom-based courses to flexible courses? Is this feasible for a national policy?
* Which type of flexible learning appears to be most successful at engaging in-work adult learners?
* What do learners think of the flexible learning? What were their experiences of the courses? Does it make it easier for them to learn? (Compared to those on standard delivery courses.)
* Do flexible courses have higher achievement rates than standard delivery courses?

**Outreach and cost pilot**

* How do areas reach out to adults to engage them in learning? What is their outreach provision, what methods/messages do they use?
* How many people were contacted through the outreach, and how many accessed the face-to face guidance? What are their profiles?
* Do the outreach elements ‘land’ as intended?
* What did adults do following their contact with the outreach and/or face-to-face guidance?
* How do local areas select their ‘most valuable’ courses?
* How are the courses advertised? How do the outreach and guidance link with this?
* How has improved affordability influenced adults’ decisions to learn? Without this improvement, do they think they would have enrolled or done a different course?
* Are there other remaining affordability issues?
* Does learner take-up increase in pilot areas relative to non-pilot areas? What are the demographic characteristics of these learners?

## Methodology

#### Flexible learning fund

The contractor will work to monitor and evaluate the implementation of flexible learning methods. We expect the contractor:

* to analyse monitoring data on the outreach and guidance activity
* to analyse administrative data on the numbers and profile of learners
* to provide a case study for each flexible learning grant awarded, and combine this with primary research with learners and providers

#### Outreach and cost

The Learning and Work Institute are closely involved with the design and implementation of this pilot, and they will collect some monitoring information. The contractor will be responsible for synthesising this evidence, and for conducting the remaining primary research to understand how adults interact with the outreach and how improvements in affordability affect decision making. Again, we expect this will be complemented by primary research, and to combine this with an analysis of learner numbers using administrative data.

#### Reporting

The contractor will draft emerging findings documents, a final report, technical report, plus any necessary data tables and underlying datasets. We expect emerging findings at a few points during the project.

## Timing

**Procurement**

* Deadline for EOIs to be sent to DfE – 5pm Monday 12th February 218
* DfE issues ITT – Friday 2nd March 2018
* Deadline for proposals – Friday 30th March 2018
* Proposals of successful bidder finalised to reflect final pilot details – April 2018
* Contract awarded – April 2018

**Pilots**

* Outreach and Cost plans finalised - March 2018
* Flexible Learning Fund grants awarded – April 2018
* Flexible learning development – April to Summer 2018
* Local outreach activities and face to face advice – March 2018 to March 2019
* Flexible learning courses underway – summer 2018 until summer 2019
* Subsidised courses underway – summer 2018 until summer 2019
* Potential follow-up research – early 2020

## Assessment criteria

* Expertise in design of pilot evaluation, both impact and process evaluation
* Expertise in conducting quantitative research
* Expertise in conducting qualitative research and case studies
* Expertise in analysis and reporting for a range of audiences
* Understanding the policy environment

| **Closing date for EOIs: 5pm Monday 12th February 2018****Send your EOI form to: oliver2.shaw@education.gov.uk** |
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## How to submit an expressions of interest

You must submit an expression of interest (EOI) in order to be considered to be invited to tender. To do so, please complete the NEW EOI Form which can be found under attachments. A submission of an EOI does not guarantee an invitation to tender and the Department does not routinely advise organisations that they have not been successful in being invited to tender. Feedback is however available on request.

All contracts are let on the basis of the [Department’s Terms and Conditions](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eoi-guide). You are encouraged to check these before submitting your expression of interest, as these form part of your contractual obligations.

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