Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Attachment 3 - Statement of Requirements

MHCLG ref: CPD/004/119/192

1 Introduction

1.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is seeking bids from suppliers, preferably with existing expertise of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) pedagogy, to establish two strands of complementary products that focus on the utilisation of volunteers to support language learning.

1.2 The first strand will prototype, test and produce a best-practice model and supporting guide for how to set-up and run "conversation clubs".

1.3 The second strand will create a range of products that provide advice for individuals and organisations on appropriate roles for volunteers in English language learning as well as support materials for volunteers.

1.4 MHCLG is looking to appoint a single supplier to deliver both strands of the work detailed within this specification. The expected duration of the proposed contract is circa 5 months. The deadline for the delivery and acceptance of all outputs is the end of the financial year i.e. end of March 2020.

2 Background

2.1 The 2017 Conservative Manifesto committed to bringing forward 'a new integration strategy, which will seek to help people in more isolated communities to engage with the wider world, help women in particular into the workplace, and teach more people to speak English'.

2.2 Using volunteers is an important part of Government's approach to English language learning to support social integration as it brings volunteers and learners together to share a mutually rewarding experience and provides additional opportunities for learners to practise their English.

2.3 Stakeholder engagement during the development of the National English Language Strategy and responses to the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper suggested that there was a gap in the market for (i) advice on how volunteers should be involved in English language learning and (ii) that volunteers require appropriate training and support to be effective in their role.

STRAND 1: Conversation clubs:

2.4 The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper (March 2018) consulted on the proposal to increase support for volunteers to participate in setting up and running new conversation clubs. Consultation responses showed support for the proposal to develop new resources to support volunteers.

2.5 Conversation clubs are informal sessions, they are a space for participants to practise their English language speaking skills in a friendly, supportive and informal environment. Volunteering and participating in informal language learning is an opportunity for social mixing.

2.6 Currently the picture of conversation clubs is inconsistent and of varying quality. Informal volunteer-led provision takes a number of forms and there is no standard approach or model of training, resources or materials to which volunteers adhere.

STRAND 2: Role of volunteers:

2.7 Responses to the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper emphasised the value of volunteer-led supporting learning, but made it clear that informal volunteer opportunities should not replace formal language learning delivered by a professional.

2.8 Stakeholder engagement of the English Language Strategy concluded that volunteers are a valuable element within the overall landscape of local language learning provision – e.g. in reaching and engaging potential learners (as community learning champions) and in providing support with language practice and developing wider cultural understanding. The stakeholder engagement exercises concluded that ESOL volunteers require appropriate training and support to be effective in their role.

2.9 The second strand will create a range of products that provide advice for individuals and organisations on appropriate roles for volunteers in English language learning and support materials for volunteers.

3 Objectives

Strand 1: Conversation clubs resource pack (2 products)

Approach:

3.1 Establish a model for successful conversation clubs to showcase best practice and provide a basis from which conversation clubs can develop.

3.2 Develop a resource pack for volunteers currently running or setting up a conversation club. The pack will include activities and resources for integration-themed content for sessions, as well as practical advice on how to go about setting up and maintaining a conversation club.

3.3 Refine and iterate the resource pack through user testing in several different settings, in order to help add to the evidence base of what works in terms of English language and integration, whether resources need to be tailored to certain contexts or target groups.

Strand 1 key outcomes:

3.4 Will include: the establishment of a successful model for running a conversation club; volunteers having access to useful and accurate information on how to set up and run a conversation club; improved quality of provision for conversation clubs and evidence of better English language proficiency outcomes as a result; and improved integration outcomes for conversation club participants.

Strand 2: A range of products (four) outlining the role of volunteers in English language learning and the support they need to be able to volunteer most effectively:

Approach:

3.5 In addition to desk-based research, the contractor will conduct interviews and focus groups to gather user opinion and evidence to inform and shape development products to ensure they meet user need and incorporate a wide range of stakeholder input.

Strand 2 key outcomes:

3.6 A clear understanding of the breadth and scale of different roles which are occupied by volunteers in ESOL (not currently known) and an assessment of which roles are most suitable for volunteers. In addition, a set of supporting resources to facilitate a more standardised, high-quality approach to how volunteers are involved and inducted.

4   Scope

Project delivery method:

4.1 <u>Conversation clubs:</u> The contractor will deliver an initial scoping exercise establishing the enablers, barriers and models to creating a successful conversation club. This scoping will develop a conversation club model and a prototype resource pack. The contractor will test the prototype model and pack in a number of different settings, and with different users before a final model and resource pack is produced.

4.2 <u>Role of volunteers:</u> The contractor will conduct desk based research, user interviews, user testing, and focus groups to map the role of volunteers, using a proportionate methodology to produce sufficient insight to inform the development of the products. The contractor will use the research to produce the four products for this strand (as listed earlier in this document). The contractor will user test the products before a final set of products are produced.

Note:

4.3 We are expecting the contractor to project manage both strands and all products from inception to completion, including user testing and stakeholder engagement.

4.4 There is potential for products outlined in this specification to be slightly adapted/change following user engagement in order to best meet user needs.

Approach to user testing and stakeholder engagement:

4.1 Clubs take place outside of normal working hours as participants often have other commitments such as work or childcare.

4.2 User testing will need to be conducted in a number of different settings and geographic locations. These will be in England in places where there is a demand for English language support. We anticipate user testing will include at least one of the Integration Areas (these are Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest).

4.3 MHCLG will look to broker relationships with existing providers and organisations in order to facilitate opportunities for stakeholder engagement and user test product development. We would however like the contractor to do some scoping work to ensure a broad range of users and stakeholders are engaged in product development.

4.4 There will be some communication with existing conversation clubs to help establish the model of best practice. There will also be some user testing of the resource pack and model. MHCLG officials will assist in establishing links with conversation clubs to allow communication and user testing. The user testing will take place in a variety of contexts in places where there is a demand for English language support, including some in at least one of the Integration Areas (these are Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest).

5 Deliverables/Outputs and Performance Measures

5.1 We are expecting the contractor to project manage both strands and all products from inception to completion, including user testing and stakeholder engagement.

5.2 All items should be branded in the same style to show the synergy between the products.

5.3 Products need to be able to be uploaded onto a website – however we would like to see some measure of interactivity to show best-practice e.g. Youtube clips, etc.

Strand 1 output:

1. A quality, comprehensive resource pack for setting up and running a conversation club, based on the production of a simple set of evidence-based good practice principles and a design of a model for running a conversation club.
2. A substantial set of supporting session plans, activities and resources for volunteers to draw on to facilitate conversation club sessions to reduce the burden on volunteers to plan and produce materials. These should take due regard for facilitating sessions for learners of English who are at a variety of different levels of proficiency, confidence levels, backgrounds etc. Whilst not limited to social integration themes, these should be a strong focus. These resources should be easily adaptable so that volunteers can adjust them so that maintain their relevance and can be re-used.

Strand 2 output:

1. A universal induction pack for all volunteers involved in ESOL. This is a basics guide to volunteering with information about what to expect and how to work with learners from migrant and refugee backgrounds. This learning would be available online. We would like this pack to be able to demonstrate 'what good looks like' interactively - e.g. through curated Youtube videos produced for the pack.

2. A guide for organisations on how to use volunteers appropriately in ESOL. This guide will contain details on (and is not limited to, following user research):
   o Different roles volunteers can play (such as language coaches & language buddies).
   o Creating a volunteer strategy.
   o Insurance and volunteers.
   o How to recruit and retain volunteers and how to match them with the right roles.

- o How to invest in CPD for volunteers (e.g. basic training to advanced accreditation)
- o How to support volunteers including their health, wellbeing and resilience.
- o Avoiding job substitution – keeping the distinction between volunteers and employees clear.
- o Legal responsibilities towards volunteers (e.g. HR and employment law, safeguarding etc).

3. A report assessing the different roles volunteers currently occupy in ESOL, including case studies, some analysis of the scale of volunteers involved in language learning currently, and identification of best practice models. This report will show what works and draw conclusions on what are the best roles for volunteers including recommendations.

4. A substantial set of supporting activities and resources to draw on to facilitate sessions in informal spaces. These should take due regard for facilitating sessions for learners of English who are at a variety of different levels of proficiency, confidence levels, backgrounds etc. We would like this to complement the Education and Training Foundation's Pre-entry teaching resources available on the Excellence Gateway. Whilst not limited to social integration themes, these should be a strong focus.

Performance measures:

- We will require the contractor to provide short written weekly updates on the progression of the project monitored against deliverables / outputs as set out above, as well as attend monthly meetings with MHCLG officials.

6 Key Dates

Action	Timescale
Start of contractor's desk research - scoping out and snowballing users and stakeholders to interview and take part in user groups. Set-in place agreements to user-test the product.	Beginning of November 2019
Delivery of first initial resource pack & user testing completed	End of January 2020
Delivery of second draft resource pack	Mid of March 2020
Final product	Completed by end of March 2020

STRAND 2: Role of Volunteers timescale

Action	Timescale

Start of contractor's desk research - scoping out and snowballing users and stakeholders to interview and take part in user groups. Literature review to consider existing research on this topic.	Beginning of November 2019
Delivery of four draft products to MHCLG	Mid February 2020
Delivery of second initial iteration of four products to MHCLG	Mid March 2020
Final product	Completed by end of March 2020

7   Contract Management Arrangements / Payment

a.   The contract manager for the project will be a Policy Advisor within the Integration and Communities team.

b.   **Meetings** between the Contractor and MHCLG officials will occur on a monthly basis. Progress reports should be written on a weekly basis, including details of expenditure to date, and progress charted against milestones to be agreed at the start of the project.

c.   **Payment** will be based on deliverables / milestones. Milestone payments will be agreed between MHCLG and the appointed contractor during the contract inception phase.