



CALL FOR PROPOSALS – Local London Flexi-Learn VLE Platform and Development

Newham College of Further Education seeks to contract a technical partner to develop curriculum content focusing on the health and social care sector accessible via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) designed for non-traditional learners and to support both blended and distance learning.

The technical partner will work with the Local London Flexi-learn project which is funded by the Department for Education.

We are seeking to procure a system which achieves the core objectives of:

- Building on existing offers rather than replicating them
- Ease of use
- Accessibility
- Interactivity of content

The chosen technical partner will be expected to demonstrate their knowledge of existing provision, and how they will use it as a springboard for Flexi-Learn.

The VLE platform and content needs to be flexible and easy to access for adults who are in work, or returning to work, with either low or intermediate level skills.

The new VLE, with bespoke content backed by tutor support designed for non-traditional learners, is part of a three-pronged approach which also includes the development of curriculum content contextualised to working in health and social care, and delivery in venues best suited to learners.

The maximum contract value is up to £150,000 inclusive of VAT, and tenders must be from suitably qualified and experienced organisations to deliver the requested specification.

1. Newham College of Further Education

Newham College is a large general further education college which operates within the East London Borough of Newham from two main campuses, located at East Ham and Stratford. In addition, it has a network of local learning centres and learning partnerships.

The College's strategic priority is to provide relevant skills and training for local people to ensure their full participation in the employment and educational opportunities that are developing in Newham, East London and London as a whole. The College caters for students of all ages from 14 years of age and offers courses from entry through to degree level programmes. A range of social indices confirm that many of the borough's residents are faced with a number of extreme socio-economic challenges.

The London Borough of Newham's projected population for mid-year 2017 is 342,900; by 2030 the population is projected to be 398,500 and by 2040 the population of Newham is projected to be 429,600, an increase of 86,700 people. This is a projected increase of 25% from 2017 to 2040, compared to 16% in London overall; based on this figure Newham has the third fastest population growth in London.

Newham has a high population turnover of around 19%. It is estimated that 66,077 people, 19% of the population, either left or arrived into the borough during 2016 (this does not include births and deaths).

Newham has the highest proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents in London, making up 74% of the population based on projected mid-2017 figures. Based on the same projection Indian is the largest group with a 15% share, followed by Bangladeshi (13%), Black African (11%) and Pakistani (11%). 2011 UK Census data showed there was huge diversity in Newham's population, for example 11.4% of Newham's population defined themselves as white other (not British, Irish or Gypsy/ Irish Traveller). Nino data contained in the Greater London Authority's borough showed that the largest migrant population arriving in Newham for 2015/16 was Romanian, followed by Indian and then Bulgarian. This provides an insight into the diversity of Newham residents and the changing nature of the population.

2. Newham College of Further Education – Centre for Innovation and Partnerships (CIPs)

The Centre for Innovation and Partnership (CIPs) was established by Newham College of Further Education in 1997 to lead on activities to support the local and regional regeneration agenda, and to open up new ways of training and supporting individuals and businesses. Central to all of this is CIPs ability to establish strong partnerships and secure external funding. In the current year, CIPs has successfully secured over £5m of external funding which has created a major capacity for partnerships, collaboration, development, and innovation projects.

The College supports businesses across a wide range of sectors, and specialises in support to business start-ups, creative businesses, and businesses owned by women and people from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic communities.

3. Local London Flexi-Learn

Local London Flexi-Learn is a partnership of Local London FE Colleges, The Prince's Trust and UCL's Institute of Education led by Newham College. It is the largest single collaboration of FE colleges in response to the area-based reviews of 2016/17 and strongly supported by Local London. The colleges support around 70,000 learners each year, and work with between 2,000 and 3,000 employers in any given year of which around 1,000 are health and social care SMEs and NHS Trusts across the Local London area.

Flexi-Learn has the support of the majority of NHS trusts, Local London, representing all boroughs in the east/south-east London area and other employers in health and care services across the 8 Local London boroughs

Local London Flexi-Learn (Flexi-Learn) seeks to develop and test a scalable, replicable model for improving the job prospects and outcomes for low-paid or unemployed adults. The project will focus initially on the health and social care sector. Local Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) demonstrates significant challenges around skills gaps and in-work poverty issues in this sector. The project is supported by the Local London, our sub-regional LEP, and by 20 local employers, including major NHS Trusts operating in the Local London sub-region.

The project will:

- Develop curriculum content to support low paid adults and adults not yet in employment or training - focusing on the health and social care sector, but with consideration to how the model can be rolled out to other sectors.
- Build content into a new virtual learning environment (VLE) designed for non-traditional learners: this will be slicker and more accessible than traditional college VLEs, and will support both blended and distance learning.

- Make available on-line learning modules that make-up a whole qualification within existing qualification frameworks. This will enable learners to develop both portable skills and qualification credits at a pace that fits with their family / employment commitments.
- Use part of the funding to develop non-traditional settings, including employer premises (e.g. NHS) and community outlets.
- Pilot the new delivery modules and models to 1,000 programme participants, to create the evidence base for evaluating the impact of the funding.
- Critically appraise in real time the project approach and outcomes through the UCL Institute of Education utilising the partnership developed through the ELVET programme funded by JP Morgan and currently evaluated by SKOPE, the University of Oxford.

Local London



Collaboration and the sharing and implementation of best practice will be the key to creating a high quality, very accessible shared resource for learners. Flexi-Learn will offer maths, English, digital and technical skills delivered through a blended learning approach at employers' premises, in community venues and 'on the go' using mobile devices. The initiative will represent a step change in the offer of accessible learning across Local London through developing a shared, very accessible, supported VLE designed (in the first instance) specifically for learners working in or seeking to work in the health and social care sector.

Local London is the ideal test bed for Flexi-Learn and the Local London health and social care sector is well placed to benefit from the initiative. Despite London's general affluence and the growing prosperity of Local London, evidence shows that low skills persist to prevent in-work progression and trap people in low paid roles or unemployment. Unemployment in east London has risen by 2.9% in the last year, even though the data proves that there are unfilled vacancies and opportunities for progressions in the health and social care sector. More than 15% of vacancies advertised in the UK were in the health and social care sector (January 2017). Through its collaborative approach, Flexi-Learn will reach out to engage learners in all Local London boroughs on their terms. Flexi-Learn will test approaches to equip them with the catalytic maths, English, digital and vocation skills to unlock their potential to gain employment and/or progress within health and social care.

4. Requirements for the Technical Partner

The successful bidder will be required to develop a Flexi-Learn VLE system which is cross college, user-friendly, contemporary and comprehensive, to achieve the core objectives of: building on existing offers rather than replicating them; ease of use; accessibility and interactivity of content.

The successful partner will demonstrate their knowledge of existing provision and how they will use it as a springboard for Flexi-Learn. The developer will be expected to provide a detailed scoping document which will detail existing provision and how the VLE will be developed to incorporate this existing provision and aid access to it for Flexi-Learn participants.

This creation of a common platform will be more easily accessible outside college than exists in any single provider. The successful developer will work closely with Flexi-Learn partners to develop the optimal VLE for Flexi-Learners.

The VLE will be developed between July 2018 and December 2018 and will be comprehensively tested with learners and delivery staff as the process evolves. Feedback from learners and delivery

staff will be continuously fed into the development process to enable it to shape the VLE. Progress will be reported to the Steering Group at monthly meetings and will be closely scrutinised through Newham College's thorough monitoring regime so that the VLE is ready for implementation and project delivery beginning in January 2019.

Running alongside, and working closely with the development of the VLE, will be the four workstreams to create contextualised curriculum content to develop learners' skills in:

- Maths
- English
- digital Skills
- Vocational Skills (health and social care sector).

Working groups of experts from partners will take forward each workstream, working with the technical partner to design new content which will serve three purposes;

- to attract and engage non-traditional learners
- to set learning in the context of learners' roles or potential roles in Health and Social Care, and
- to be ideal for blended and distance learning through the VLE in all venues and on all devices.

Throughout the development process, content will be tested and modified in response to learner feedback. Each work stream will liaise with the others to cross-reference, eradicate wasted duplication and ensure compatibility. Course content will be developed between July 2018 and October 2018 so that it can be agreed by the steering group ready for Flexi-Learn delivery in January. The four content work groups will liaise closely with the VLE developer throughout the development phase to ensure that their work merges together smoothly.

5. Specification of requirements

Bidders will be required to submit detailed proposals demonstrating:

- Understanding of the brief and its context;
- Proposed research and scoping methodology;
- Detailed work plan;
- Evidence of previous relevant VLE development experience;
- Experience of developing interactive content with proven accessibility and ease of use
- Experience of working with FE partners and designing sector specific vocational content
- Evidence of individual team members' qualifications, skills and experience; individual roles and responsibilities within the team and their input at each stage of the work;
- Comprehensive risk assessment – the successful partner will have taken all reasonable measures to mitigate any potential risk to the delivery of the required specification. Therefore, the bidder should submit a comprehensive risk assessment covering:
 - the key assumptions underlying the proposals and the anticipated challenges that might be faced;
 - the estimated level of risk involving these assumptions/challenges;
 - and proposed contingency plans that the bidder would put in place to mitigate any occurrence of each of the identified risks, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that the VLE development is completed in a timely and credible way;
- Price (refer to Pricing Schedule)
 - Detailed cost breakdown relating to delivery of the required services
- Evidence of financial capacity to deliver the services over the duration of the term

Bidders should take into consideration current and post project needs:

1. Compatible with accessibility (disabilities and less competent learners)
2. Platform should be able to host in house SCORM content

3. Created content is customisable
4. Content should automatically update to take into consideration legislative and technological changes e.g. Computer updates so that the content does not stop working/ playing

Consideration should be given to the following:

Communication:

- Online discussion tools
 - Online debates
 - Communication available on a one-one level
 - Email system within the VLE
- Can be linked to online quizzes and self-test
- Assessment reminders
- Learner can provide feedback after each module or activity completed

Collaboration:

- Allow teachers to share resources with and across student groups' i.e. file upload (share articles, notes, PPT files, narrated PPT slides
- Share and embed video clips e.g. you-tube etc.

Assessment:

- Formative and summative assessment
- Quizzes and test
- A system which allows the teach to provide in-depth feedback and not just indicate whether the learner is right or wrong
- Modular content
- Be able to weight assessment grades by contribution (presence, interaction, transaction transformation)
- Be able to weight assessment grade by percentage

Accessibility:

- Navigation language - Translating abilities
- Transcribe audio/ video content
- Simplified language that is clear (entry level – level 1 / 2 learners)
- Screen magnifier (visually impaired)
- Adaptable colour of VLE content (learning difficulties)

Other facilities:

- Student tracking
 - When a student accesses a course, how long for, how frequently accessed
 - Identify which areas they have accessed e.g. maths, English, digital or HSC
 - Link to institution's library, learning centre or online resources (students can spend less time looking for resources and so more time available to work through activities) (A digital repository is required)
 - Ability to support practitioners to update resources or learning material
 - Ability to generate a certificate upon completion – unregulated qualifications?
 - Can support live video lectures?
 - Visible LO
 - Support the capture of ILR DATA
- Use and Maintenance of the platform throughout the project and thereafter

Legal issues

- Software rules in place to support
 - Safeguarding and PREVENT (e.g. can screen for abuse or terrorist language)
 - GDPR
 - ITC e.g. safe use
 - Plagiarism (scanning software e.g. Turnitin to support QA)
 - Assessment, Teaching and Learning policy
 - Copyright and intellectual property

Please also attach the following:

- Names, job titles and brief biographies / relevant experience of proposed team members including any relevant education or professional qualifications;
- Named contact person with overall responsibility for the achievement of this contract
- A confirmation that no conflicts of interest would arise in managing this brief within your organisation;
- 2 references.

6. Contract Value

The contract value is up to £150,000 including VAT.

Please note – VAT. If you cannot recover VAT for the project you should include VAT within your project costs. If you are able to recover VAT it should be excluded. In the event of your bid being accepted you will not be able to charge VAT on top of project costs. You are responsible for determining your own VAT recovery position and should submit cost proposals accordingly.

7. Timescale for the VLE Development

The key milestones below provide a framework that the successful partner will be expected to follow to develop the Flexi-Learn VLE. Bidders should also complete the pricing schedule.

Key project milestones	Anticipated Date
Call for proposal published	20 th July 2018
Deadline for receipt of tenders	6 th August 12pm
Decision on successful bidder	13 th August 2018
Contract award	28 th August 2018*
Contract formalities completed	w/c 3 rd September 2018
Inception Meeting	6 th September 2018
Progress Meeting / Steering Group Meeting / Working Group	TBC
Progress Meeting / Steering Group Meeting / Working Group	TBC
Progress Meeting / Steering Group Meeting / Working Group	TBC
VLE Development completed	December 2018
Operational VLE in place	January 2019

*Allowing 10 days

Proposal submission

Proposals should be no longer than 10 sides of A4 (excluding CVs or biographies) and should be submitted by email to the Flexi-Learn Project Director: **Julia Bollam** julia.bollam@newham.ac.uk

Proposals must be received by **Monday 6th August 2018, 12.00pm**. Any received after this time and date will not be considered.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Contract will be awarded based on:

- Professional Capacity, expertise, capability (75%)
- Price: Value for money and value added (25%)

The successful applicant will be expected to submit all invoices no later than 1st March 2019, in order to ensure that all invoices are paid within the lifetime of the project. No invoices submitted after this date will be paid.

Newham College is not bound to accept the lowest priced Quotation or indeed any Quotation. Newham College also reserves the right to accept all or any part of a Quotation. A final decision on the award of contracts will be subject to the satisfactory outcome of any negotiations, or any outstanding issues being resolved. Documentation received in response to this invitation to tender shall be treated as private and confidential except where the disclosure is required by law.

The successful applicant will be offered a contract with Newham College based on the tender submitted and will be expected to deliver the activities specified. All expenditure and activity must be completed by the date stated in the tender specification.

9. Intellectual Property

Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project, and the successful Technical Partner agree that all rights, title and interest in or to any information, data, reports, documents, procedures, forecasts, technology, know-how and any other Intellectual Property Rights whatsoever owned by either Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project, or the Technical Partner before the date of Contract award shall remain the property of that party.

Where Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project, permits the Technical Partner to use any of its Intellectual Property Rights in connection with the Project (including without limitation its name and logo), the Technical Partner shall, on termination of any Agreement, cease to use such Intellectual Property Rights immediately and shall either return or destroy such Intellectual Property Rights as requested by Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project.

The Technical Partner hereby assigns to Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project, with full title guarantee, all Intellectual Property Rights created or arising from the Project for the full duration of such rights, wherever in the world enforceable. The Technical Partner agrees to execute (or procure that any other party it shall engage in the Project will execute) all documents and assignments and do all such things as may be necessary to perfect Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project, title to the Intellectual Property Rights or to register Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project as owner of the Intellectual Property Rights. The obligations shall remain in force following termination of any Agreement for any reason whatsoever.

The Technical Partner confirms that all rights of development, promotion, marketing, manufacture, distribution, exploitation and dealing in relation to the Project and all Intellectual Property Rights arising from, the Project, shall be vested in Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project and shall be assigned to Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project in accordance with the above.

The Technical Partner agrees that the assignment of Intellectual Property Rights under the above shall in no way impose on Newham College of Further Education, on behalf of the Local London Flexi-Learn project, an obligation to protect, enforce, exploit or make use of any such Intellectual Property Rights.

Subject to the above the Technical Partner shall have the right, during the Project Period, to use the Intellectual Property Rights created or arising for the delivery of the Project.

Annexe 1 – PRICING SCHEDULE

Tender for	Local London Flexi-Learn VLE Development
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Name of Contractor	
Address	
Post Code	
Telephone	

Note to bidders: please treat the generic template below as a set of minimum requirements and tailor it to produce detailed costings of your work plan.

Work plan timeframe	Work plan stages /tasks	Development team time input – no. of days broken down by each individual team member against each task					Totals
Key dates & timescales	1. Individual work plan stages with a break down of individual activities /tasks (preferably in chronological order) 2. Identify delivery of key outputs /deliverables						Time sub-totals per stage /task
Total of days per team member							Total days for team
Corresponding day rates per team member							
Total fees per team member							Total fees
Total expenses							
Total fees & expenses excluding VAT							
VAT							
Total cost (fees & expenses including VAT)							

Signed on behalf of the Contractor _____

NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

DATED _____

Authorisation
SIGNED BY _____

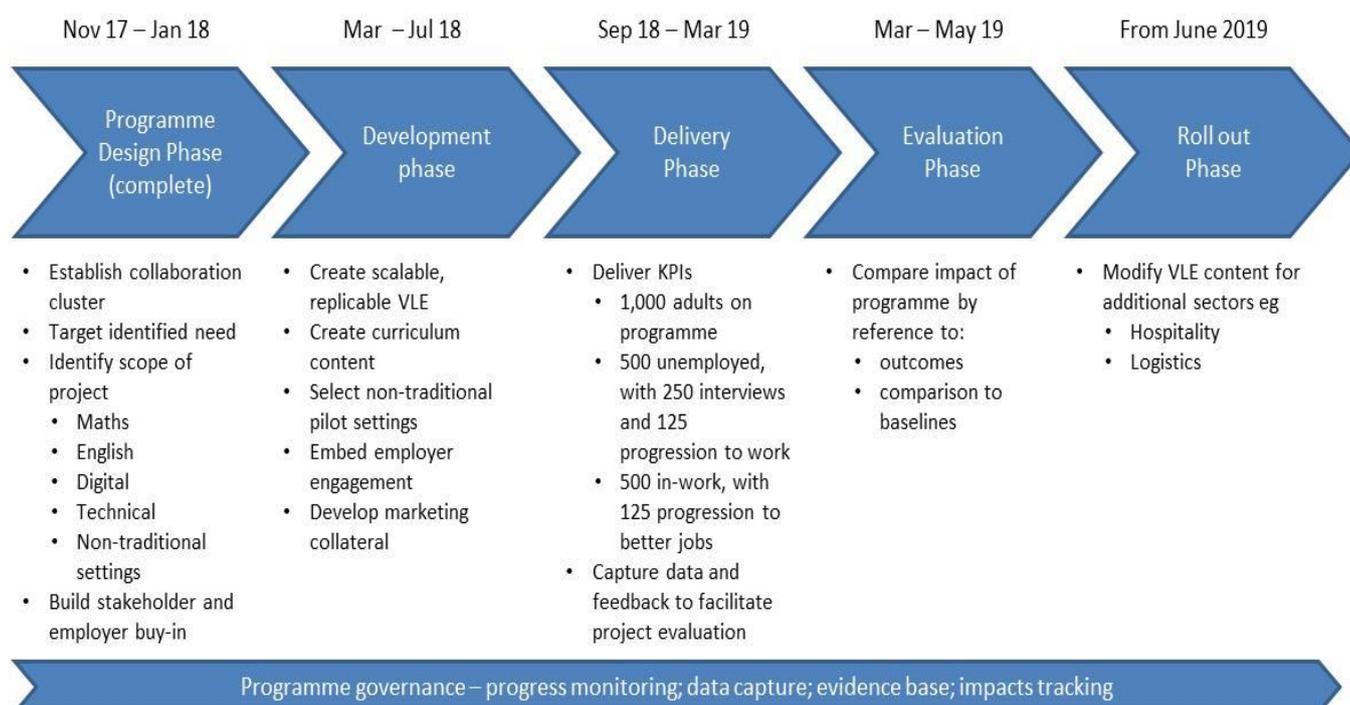
NAME (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Annex 2 – Executive Summary

Local London Flexi-Learn (Flexi-Learn) seeks a grant of £1m to develop and test a scalable, replicable model for improving the job prospects and outcomes for low-paid or unemployed adults. The funding will focus initially on the **health and social care sector**. Local Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) demonstrates significant challenges around skills gaps and in-work poverty issues in this sector. Our bid is supported by the Local London, our sub-regional LEP, and by 20 local employers, including major NHS Trusts operating in the Local London sub-region.

Through the grant funding, we will:

- Develop curriculum content to support low paid adults and adults not yet in employment or training - focusing on the health and social care sector, but with consideration to how the model can be rolled out to other sectors.
- Build content into a new virtual learning environment (VLE) designed for non-traditional learners: this will be slicker and more accessible than traditional college VLEs, and will support both blended and distance learning.
- Make available on-line learning modules that make-up a whole qualification within existing qualification frameworks. This will enable learners to develop both portable skills and qualification credits at a pace that fits with their family / employment commitments.
- Use part of the funding to develop non-traditional settings, including employer premises (e.g. NHS) and community outlets.
- Pilot the new delivery modules and models to 1,000 programme participants, to create the evidence base for evaluating the impact of the funding.
- Critically appraise in real time the project approach and outcomes through the UCL Institute of Education utilising the partnership developed through the ELVET programme funded by JP Morgan and currently evaluated by SKOPE, the University of Oxford.



We will target the following KPIs by the end of the programme:

- Recruit at least 1,000 programme participants who are not currently enrolled at any of the partners
 - 500 unemployed adults seeking work in the health and social care sector
 - 250 (50%) interviews secured and
 - 125 (25%) progression into employment.
 - 500 low-paid workers in the health and social care sector
 - 125 (12.5%) to progress in-work.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Flexi-Learn is a partnership of Local London FE Colleges, The Prince's Trust and UCL's Institute of Education led by Newham College. It is the largest single collaboration of FE colleges in response to the area-based reviews of 2016/17 and strongly supported by Local London. The colleges support around 70,000 learners each year, and work with between 2,000 and 3,000 employers in any given year of which around 1,000 are health and social care SMEs and NHS Trusts across the Local London area. The Colleges have a successful history of collaborating to deliver projects to up-skill both unemployed and employed people, most notably through London-wide ESF projects including Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) led by Newham College. As part of SSW, we also had a Local Response Fund. This gave the partnership the opportunity to develop provision to respond to ongoing and emerging skills issues identified by LEPs.

Health & social care emerged from SSW as a priority sector and funding was allocated to respond to the emerging skills issues, particularly in helping employers and employees to prepare for reforms under the Care Act. This flexible fund allowed us to work with circa 80 employers, up-skilling more than 500 employees, and to develop new qualifications and delivery methods. We have continued to build on these good employer/provider relationships identifying skills gaps and in developing this Flexible Learning Fund proposal.

Flexi-Learn will build on expertise and networks from SSW to focus on Local London's health and social care sector. The proposal has the support of the majority of NHS trusts, Local London, representing all boroughs in the east/south-east London area and other employers in health and care services across the 8 Local London boroughs (see map below).

Local London



Collaboration and the sharing and implementation of best practice will be the key to creating a high quality, very accessible shared resource for learners. Flexi-Learn will offer maths, English, digital and technical skills delivered through a blended learning approach at employers' premises, in community venues and 'on the go' using mobile devices. The initiative will represent a step change in the offer of accessible learning across Local London through developing a shared, very accessible, supported VLE designed (in the first instance) specifically for learners working in or seeking to work in the health and social care sector.

6.2.1 Geography and Sector

Local London is the ideal test bed for Flexi-Learn and the Local London health and social care sector is well placed to benefit from the initiative. Despite London’s general affluence and the growing prosperity of Local London, evidence shows that low skills persist to prevent in-work progression and trap people in low paid roles or unemployment. Unemployment in east London has risen by 2.9% in the last year¹, even though the data proves that there are unfilled vacancies and opportunities for progressions in the health and social care sector. More than 15% of vacancies advertised in the UK were in the health and social care sector (January 2017)². Through its collaborative approach, Flexi-Learn will reach out to engage learners in all Local London boroughs on their terms. Flexi-Learn will test approaches to equip them with the catalytic maths, English, digital and vocation skills to unlock their potential to gain employment and/or progress within health and social care.

6.2.2 The Concept to Develop and Test

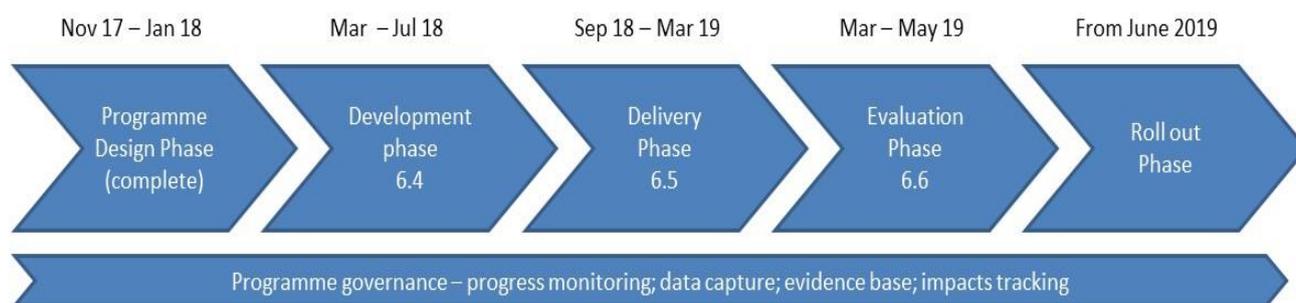
Flexi-Learn’s three-pronged approach will combine:

- a new VLE with bespoke content backed by tutor support designed for non-traditional learners;
- curriculum content contextualised to working in health and social care; and
- delivery in venues best suited to learners .

The process will be iterative using a critical and evaluative approach supported by University College London (UCL) Institute of Education.

6.3 OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

The exhibit below, extracted from the executive summary in 6.1 above, summarises the key phase of the project. A more detailed project plan is set on pages 7 and 8 shows the timing and major tasks that will be fulfilled for each phase.

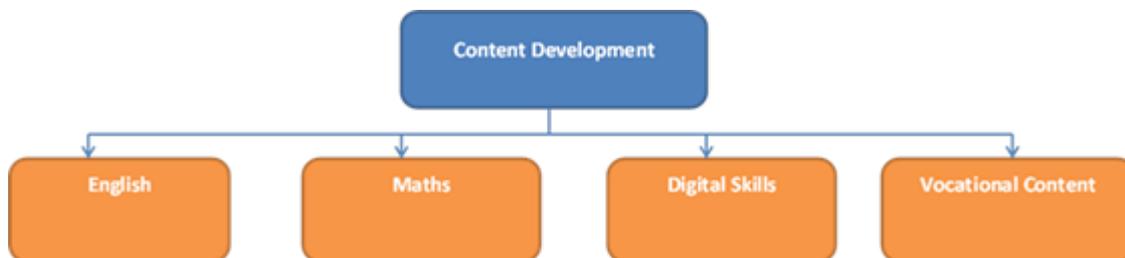


Newham College is the lead partner for Flexi-Learn, but the project will be run collaboratively through a representative steering group to oversee and approve project delivery and expenditure to develop the shared resource. As the lead partner, Newham College will manage Flexi-Learn budgets; report and evidence claims to DfE; monitor delivery, payments to partners; chair the steering group; and lead on marketing and quality assurance. A dedicated, full-time, experienced project manager will be appointed by the College to manage Flexi-Learn reporting to monthly steering group meetings. Our partnership is ready to “hit the ground running” with a bank of project managers available who are experienced in working in FE.

¹ Labour Market Update (December 2017) LB Newham Corporate Performance Team.

² Office for National Statistics Jan 2017 The Guardian website accessed 27/01/17

The collaborative development and implementation of Flexi-Learn will be achieved through 5 work streams each of which will have a budget allocation and be co-led by partners to get and share best practice and which will draw together relevant curriculum experts from each organisation to complete the work. Accordingly, there will be four work streams for the development of curriculum content for maths, English, digital and technical skills development. A fifth work stream will focus on developing delivery in non-traditional settings including pop up delivery.



Work to develop Flexi-Learn VLE will be undertaken by a specialist partner to be commissioned at the outset of the project. Costings are based on quotes already received and will be further tested to assure value for money. The commissioning of the technology platform can start on the award of the FLF grant to ensure there is no delay to the development of the VLE. All partners will work with the developer and oversee progress which will be closely monitored through the Steering Group.

Newham College will develop bespoke marketing collateral to attract learners and engage additional employers. The marketing plan will combine cutting edge techniques with in-depth understanding of learner target groups and sector knowledge. Materials will be appropriate to learners' likely circumstances to attract them to Flexi-Learn, to encourage them to fully exploit the programme's resources and to signpost them to other resources and agencies to support their progression. The College will use techniques which have proven effective through ESF/ERDF programmes to reach non-traditional learners and to engage employers.

6.4 DEVELOPMENT PHASE

In preparing for the launch of Flexi-Learn in September 2018, partners will carry out research with and about prospective learners. Working with employers we will better understand how we might best overcome their employees' barriers to learning in respect of timing, location, content and method of learning. We will work with stakeholders such as Jobcentre Plus, Adult Community Learning providers and local third sector organisations to identify unemployed adults willing to engage with the programme and establish the best strategies to upskill them to provide their bridge to employment in health and social care. Our partner, The Prince's Trust has experience of working with young adults to facilitate them securing employment in the health and social care sector and has well-established links into NHS trusts in developing appropriate learning materials to support this process. Their experience in developing an on-line platform will be invaluable in sharing best practice. We will also continue to consult employers to determine how Flexi-Learn can best meet their needs and unlock their employees' potential to progress in their health and social care roles, leading to more responsibility, promotion or higher pay including permanent contracts and fewer zero-hour contracts. Similarly, we will plan with employers how we can help fill their vacancies by upskilling unemployed people to support them into those roles.

The development phase of the project will comprise three main elements:

- creation of a streamlined VLE for non-traditional learners;
- design of contextualised, very accessible curriculum content; and
- planning of non-traditional and pop-up venues.

6.4.1 The VLE

We have tested the outline specification for the VLE with two technology partners forming the basis of our costed proposal. On contract award, we will procure the VLE system to achieve the following core objectives: build on existing offers rather than replicating them; ease of use; accessibility and interactivity of content. The successful provider will demonstrate their knowledge of existing provision and how they will use it as a springboard for Flexi-Learn. Following the formal commissioning for the development of the VLE, the developer will provide a detailed scoping document which will also detail existing provision and how the VLE will be developed to incorporate this existing provision and aid access to it for Flexi-Learn participants.

Flexi Learn will enable effective and efficient collaboration to inform the creation of a cross-college, user-friendly, contemporary, comprehensive VLE. This creation of a common platform will be more easily accessible outside college than exists in any single provider. Through engaging an objective external partner to develop the VLE, Flexi-Learn will learn from the best of The Prince's Trust, the Colleges and private sector resources to offer the optimal VLE for Flexi-Learners. The VLE will be developed during May, June and July and will be comprehensively tested with learners and delivery staff as the process evolves. Feedback from learners and delivery staff will be continuously fed into the development process to enable it to shape the VLE. Progress will be reported to the Steering Group at monthly meetings and will be closely scrutinised through Newham College's thorough monitoring regime so that the VLE is ready for implementation and project delivery beginning in September.

6.4.2 Development of Contextualised Curriculum Content

Running alongside, and working closely with the development of the VLE, will be the four workstreams to create contextualised curriculum content to develop learners' skills in maths, English, digital technology and health and social care technical skills. Working groups of experts from partners, playing to their strengths, will take forward each workstream. They will design new content which will serve three purposes; to attract and engage non-traditional learners, to set learning in the context of learners' roles or potential roles in Health and Social Care and to be ideal for blended and distance learning through the VLE in all venues and on all devices.

The Prince's Trust brings hands on expertise to the Flexi-Learn partnership from their 'Talent for Care' skills delivery project. 'Talent for Care' was based on using contextualised learning materials for young people aiming to gain employment in health and social care roles. Through the project, Princes Trust worked with over 2,000 young people over 6 years helping many, who have overcome difficult hurdles, into jobs in this sector. Flexi-Learn will translate the best strategies and techniques from the Princes Trust's work to its adult target group. Being mindful of the different demographic, Flexi-Learn will seek to replicate that which has proven most successful for Princes Trust and modify content which has not worked for learners.

Throughout the development process, content will be tested and modified in response to learner feedback. Each work stream will liaise with the others to cross-reference, eradicate wasted duplication and ensure compatibility. Course content will be developed between April and May so that it can be agreed by the steering group ready for Flexi-Learn delivery in September. The four content work groups will liaise closely with the VLE developer throughout the development phase to ensure that their work merges together smoothly.

6.4.3 Non-Traditional Venues

During Flexi-Learn's development, partners will research and develop a plan to pilot delivery at non-traditional venues including spaces in the workplace; based at and around nurseries; and in community and local venues. Feedback from prospective learner groups and those organisations working with them will be used to ascertain the most appropriate areas for the pilot study. During the 6 months' delivery, we will focus on benchmarking outcomes achieved in a few carefully chosen venues against the baseline of mainstream college delivery.

6.5 DELIVERY PHASE

6.5.1 Recruitment

During the delivery phase, preparation will have begun for delivery through the implementation of the marketing plan and the triggering of a recruitment plan to engage learners ready to start in September.

Once identified, learners will meet an adviser who will offer very accessible, Matrix accredited information advice and guidance to make them aware of their options and enrol them if appropriate. They will be assessed using either BESTest or BKSB depending on the needs of the learner (online if possible, but paper-based if necessary) to determine their basic skills and employability levels. From this the learner and adviser will develop a learning plan specifying goals and mapping learning through Flexi-Learn to achieve them. The plan will clarify how progress will be measured and the SMART targets to be met. Each learner will be starting from a different base and progress measurement will be commensurate with that and will include the use of RARPA. All participants will be offered the opportunity to achieve a whole qualification tailored to their needs.

Enrolment will be undertaken by each partner with activity captured in a common format to enable Newham College to report project outcomes consistently.

Delivery will through the three-pronged approach:

- a new VLE backed by tutor support designed for non-traditional learners;
- curriculum content contextualised to working in health and social care; and
- delivery in venues best suited to learners.

Depending on individual needs, learning plans will draw on the resources offered by Flexi-Learn, however, as the non-traditional venues being piloted are limited, other venues will be used for delivery, helping to highlight how necessary and effective it is to target non-traditional venues. We will explore options to utilise mobile/"pop-up" facilities which can be taken to the workplace and make use of webinars for those needing to access learning from their homes e.g. in the evening when caring responsibilities have been discharged.

6.5.2 Non-Traditional Venues

Flexi-Learn will pilot delivery based around the shared VLE, at non-traditional venues which are most likely to fit around learners' lives. For those who are in employment, Flexi-Learn will offer learning in the **workplace**, providing equipment and resources by agreement with the employer. Learners can access at a time that suits their working patterns; backed up by support either face-to-face, by telephone or skype etc., or on-line, including chat rooms and other supportive fora. For example, we may agree with a health trust to place a PC onsite for employees to access or to provide "pop-up" equipment and support on an ad-hoc basis as needed.

Unemployed adults who need to upskill to secure a role in health and social care, can access Flexi-Learn in their neighbourhood or where their daily activities take place. For example, Flexi-Learn will be accessible at the **nursery** that parents' children attend or at a venue close by. In this way, parents will capitalise on the time that their children spend in nursery to upskill themselves. Nurseries will make parents aware of this opportunity with Flexi-Learn tutors available onsite or nearby. Following this initial contact, parents will access Flexi-Learn resources anywhere using their own devices to lead them to the skills and qualifications needed to work in health and social care. NEWTEC, part of the Newham College Group, is responsible for running 9 nurseries and is supportive of Flexi-Learn. Flexi-Learn will compare outputs in non-traditional settings with those gained from "standard" engagement on mainstream college courses.

The third non-traditional setting will be "around the corner" delivery in the community for adults wishing to return to work and those in work who wish to learn nearer to home e.g. **local community venues** run by 3rd Sector organisations, shopping centres and cafes - wherever Flexi-Learners feel at ease. The budget for non-traditional venues covers an allocation to supply meals within reasonable costs for a Supper Club or Breakfast Club to attract learners and relieve some possible time pressures. Delivery will be entirely flexible and in sync with the needs of learners; at set times, as ad-hoc "pop-up" sessions, through blended learning with 1-to-1 support or through group work.

6.6 EVALUATION

It is acknowledged that the DfE will do its own evaluation. The involvement of IoE ensures that data collected will create an evidence base supporting a rigorous evaluation process. Continuous improvement through constant, meaningful, objective evaluation runs through Flexi-Learn from the start, at development stage and through to when delivery has ended. The project has its own in-house partner; the UCL Institute of Education (IOE) as a 'critical friend', to evaluate and feedback with objectivity throughout. As well as undertaking ongoing evaluation, IOE will review the design of each element of Flexi-Learn to confirm that it will lend itself to being evaluated so that its approaches can be properly analysed and measured to assess their efficacy. Capturing learner, employer and stakeholder feedback is embedded into Flexi-Learn and will be carried out by IOE as an objective, honest broker. It is also the intention to consult the evaluator commissioned for the Flexible Learning Fund by DfE early in the design stage to confirm that Flexi-Learn is on track to be a good test bed, and to take DfE advice on how we might better prepare for the evaluation process.

As part of its critical friend/evaluative role UCL IOE may wish to contribute further added value by reflecting on and communicating some wider conceptual issues regarding the role of skills development and employment in the context of a rapidly changing London economy; social challenges and the political devolution and skills agenda of the Mayor.

Outline Project Plan

Milestones	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19
Project Strategy and Management																
Partner Service Level Agreements Sign Off																
Appointment of Project Manager																
Marketing Plan signed off																
Flexi-learn launch event																
Steering Group Meetings																
Reporting points																
Design																
Research with learners																
Research with employers																
Consultation with critical friend (IoE)																
Market testing for VLE technology partner																
Developer commissioned																
Scope for VLE signed off with developer																
VLE developed and tested																
VLE signed off for delivery																
Content developed maths, English, digital.tech																
Testing, feedback adjustment to content																
Steering Group agrees content for delivery																
Research with learners for venues																
Non-traditional venues planning																
Select non-traditional pilot settings																
Embed employer engagement																
Develop marketing collateral																
Delivery plan developed collaboratively																
Delivery																
Identification and training of delivery staff																
Recruitment campaign																
Delivery and testing of Flexi-learn to learners																
Capture data & feedback to facilitate evaluation																
Dissemination event																
Review impact of programme																
Modify content to roll out																

Partners

Local London Flexi-Learn has been approved by the Department for Education.

The Flexi-Learn project partners are :

Lead partner:

- Newham College of Further Education

Curriculum Content Design and Delivery Partners:

- Barking and Dagenham College
- Bromley College of FE (part of London South East Colleges Group - LSEC)
- CONEL (part of Capital City College Group)
- Havering College
- Newham College of Further Education
- Waltham Forest College
- The Prince's Trust

Critical friend/ Evaluation:

- University College London (Institute of Education)

Timescales

The project start date is June 2018 with an end date for delivery of 31st March 2019.

The piloting phase will take place from January 2019 until July 2019.

Annex 4 – Flexible Learning Fund Summary

At the Spring 2017 Budget, the Government committed to exploring ambitious new approaches to encouraging lifelong learning. £40million was allocated at the Spring 2017 Budget for pilots aimed at helping adults progress in employment or enter new occupations through re-skilling or up-skilling.

The pilots will provide important evidence about what works, and what does not, in engaging adults about the opportunities and benefits of learning.

The Flexible Learning Fund was launched as part of this pilot programme. The £10m Fund will provide grant support to projects that develop methods of delivering learning that are flexible and easy to access for adults who are in work, or returning to work, with either low or intermediate level skills.

Projects must include a period of design and development of the specific delivery method, followed by a delivery phase during which the method is tested with real learners. Projects must centre on the delivery of basic skills, or on intermediate or higher level technical learning.

Further information is available:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-flexible-learning-fund>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-fund-for-adult-learning-announced>