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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29955**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 21-004**

**ESF funded activity to support individuals who are NEET & Ex OFFENDERS in LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE LEP area**

**LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION – LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP - Support for ex-offenders back into employment (<25)****ITT\_29955-21-004** |
| BACKGROUND |
| **General**The contracting authority is the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills acting through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), an executive agency of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills exercising functions to fund adult education and skills.The SFA, acting as an Opt-In Organisation for the European Social Fund (ESF), is procuring education and training services to meet priorities identified by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area European Structural and Investment Funds Sub–Committees. As an Opt-In Organisation the SFA provides match funding at Priority Axis level utilising sources of public funding as match for ESF funded activity.This Invitation to Tender (ITT) supports ESF Investment Priority 1.2 where the need has been identified both in the LEP area and European Structural and Investment Fund Strategies. The SFA is looking to procure an organisation to deliver education and training services to support young people who are 15-24 who are not in education employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET in the LEP area set out below. **Leicester & Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)**This activity fully aligns with the LLEP’s ESIF strategy and with the City Deal (signed March 2014). The City Deal highlighted the importance of meeting the needs of the ex-offender target group and this target group is clearly identified in our ESIF strategy.In particular, the high level objectives in our ESIF strategy that are relevant to this procurement include:* Reduce youth unemployment by 50% by 2018
* Reduce unemployment by 50% by 2018
* Improve employability skills amongst those seeking to enter the labour market
* Reduce the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications
* Improve the match between the aspirations of young people and the opportunities in the labour market.

Under Thematic Objective 8 in LLEP ESIF strategy the LEP have identified indicative activities for those aged under 25 to support entry into employment which include:* Structured programmes to help young people become job ready. This will include careers advice and guidance, preparation activities, confidence building, development of employability skills and interventions aimed at improving job readiness (e.g. work placements)
* Structured programmes and activities to support NEET and young unemployed people to acquire relevant skills including basic maths and English language skills to help labour market entry
* Transition support for young people in the transition from education to work including work experience and work placements.

This procurement aims to deliver these indicative activities for the ex-offender cohort of young people.Local partners have been running a successful support programme for offenders (REACH) in Leicester and Leicestershire. Based on the success of this programme, we would like to commission a similar programme across the entire LLEP area targeted at ex-offenders serving community sentences that are currently unemployed and aged between 15 and 24. This activity builds on evidence of what has worked locally through the REACH programme. LLEP have engaged in widespread consultation with partners, which has confirmed a significant need for the interventions in this procurement. The activity is primarily to support young people into employment but also training/learning which will ultimately lead to employment. It is aimed at ex-offenders who face complex needs and barriers who have not benefitted sufficiently from mainstream interventions to date. A 2005 Home Office report claimed that 65% of offenders serving a custodial sentence and 53% serving a community sentence had a problem with education, training and employment, which was related to their offence. No other factor was so closely related to offending.Our research shows that 80% of the ex-offender target group have writing skills that are at or below the level of an 11 year old child. The equivalent figure for numeracy skills is 65% and for reading skills 50%. This demonstrates a significant need for support with English and maths amongst this target group. The activity seeks to address this amongst other barriers and this should significantly improve the opportunities for this target group to secure sustainable employment.Interventions to support ex-offenders are expensive, intensive and require specialist knowledge and experience. The interventions needed do not readily match private sector business models around making profits and/or growing the market. The objective is to reduce the market by solving entrenched and complex problems rather than generating more demand. |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** |
| **At risk of becoming NEET:** Support for at risk young people aged 15 to prevent them becoming NEET.**Candidate:** means an organisation who has been invited to take part in this restricted procurement procedure**Disability**: A person has a disability if they disclose a disability that limits their ability to work.**Eligibility:** Other than 15 year olds at risk of being NEET, only people who are eligible to work in UK are eligible for this programme. Asylum seekers are not generally supported by ESF.**Employed**: People are employed if they perform work for pay, profit or family gain. People are self-employed if they work in his/her own business for the purpose of earning a profit, even if they are not making a profit or are just setting up.**Job Seeking:** Where applicable, persons engaged in job seeking is understood to be persons usually without work and actively seeking work.**Qualifications:** Qualification means a formal outcome assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Regulated qualifications/aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being regulated. Non-regulated aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being non-regulated.  Regulated and non-regulated aims must be planned to be delivered within budget. Qualification rates are based on the published LARS rates at the start of the contract.**Services:** The provision of education, training or support delivered to individuals.**Start Date:** Employment status and age are determined on the date of starting on the Provision.**Survey**: Where applicable, long term sustained outcomes over 6 months will be monitored separately. Some ESF indicators will be collected by survey by the ESF Managing Authority directly from the participants.**Unemployed:** Unemployed are persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered registered unemployed would be included. Full time students are considered as inactive as they are not available for work. Long term unemployment is greater than 6 months for under 25 years old and greater than 12 months for 25 years old or more. |
| **SERVICE REQUIREMENTS** |
| **General** All activities must complement and avoid duplication with other provision, thereby adding value to Department for Work and Pensions/Big Lottery, Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency, local authority, National Careers Service and the new Careers Enterprise Company funded provision. Successful Candidates will be required to ensure that ESF provision will clearly add value and not duplicate any provision that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions.***Capacity and readiness to deliver***Candidates must have:* The resources to offer very local and flexible delivery in the areas where levels of NEET are highest.
* The capacity to deliver provision immediately upon commencement of the contract and that delivery should not be delayed in any way by any recruitment processes or other processes or relationships that need to be established.

***Track record***The ability to deliver the required activity, based on a track record in the successful delivery and management of this type of programmeCandidates will need to have an understanding of the varied needs of young people and an ability to engage and work with young people, especially those who are disengaged and vulnerable and have particular learning needs or barriers to learning. Candidates will need to have experience of creating employment opportunities.And in designing and delivering high quality provision for young people including those who are NEET/at risk of becoming NEET.***Management and quality assurance***Candidates will need to have effective management arrangements in place to ensure all of the requirements of this specification particularly in regard to meeting the identified needs of identified young people are fulfilled. The Services must be delivered to a high quality and successful tenderers will need to have in place quality assurance and improvement processes.The Service needs to be flexible and responsive to the changing economic and political landscape and take into consideration that the approach and associated processes may change during the life of this contract. Therefore Candidates will be expected to be able to change the delivery of the Services accordingly. ***Partnership working***Candidates will be required to work in partnership with other organisations delivering education and training in the area to ensure the Service is complementary to and not in competition with other funded provision.Candidates will engage with every Local Authority (LA) in the LEP area and will be expected to identify internal LA links across different departments. The Service must be able to respond to changing local needs and opportunities, as well as policy changes. Candidates will be required to establish linkages with and have an understanding of, local stakeholder needs and develop strong links with the key stakeholders. ***Market intelligence and local knowledge***The delivery of the Services must take into account the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence and in particular the specific factors affecting the area in which the Service is being delivered. A comprehensive understanding of the current employment market and the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence.***Management information and reporting***Candidates will develop management information systems to enable it to submit data to the Skills Funding Agency via the Individual Learner Record (ILR) and put in place robust arrangements for ensuring that the evidence required to support payments is collected and retained. Candidates will be required to share with LAs, LEPs and the Skills Funding Agency ongoing performance management data as well as additional intelligence to improve the effectiveness of all NEET reduction and prevention activities including details of each young person supported and update them of the young person’s progress. Candidates will be required to share delivery/outcomes to ensure full coverage.**LEP Specific** The aim of the Services is to support young ex-offenders serving community sentences back into employment through local and targeted programmes of engagement, confidence building, high quality Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), skills development and work experience. The Services must recognise the additional complex barriers faced by young ex-offenders and support them back into employment. The Services must be centred on the needs of the individual and take a holistic approach to address the complex problems or barriers that ex-offenders face. The Services must increase commitment and motivation to achieve.The Services must lead to a reduction in unemployment amongst young ex-offenders and to address issues of ‘recycling’ - where young ex-offenders are dropping out of current support programmes and/or failing to find sustainable employment. The objectives of the Services are: * To provide intensive support to 535 young ex-offenders and for at least 3 months to secure sustainable employment at the end of the activity
* To engage 535 ex-offenders in training and learning activities tailored to their needs which will improve literacy, numeracy and employability skills
* To reduce re-offending rates amongst the 535 ex-offenders through a positive engagement programme.

**Detailed Services requirements**The Services must include an initial diagnostic assessment and needs analysis for all young ex-offenders, which results in a robust individualised learning and transition plans with regular progress reviews and exit interviews. The delivery of personalised provision should be flexible (in terms of content, times and location). The Services should provide tailored IAG for each young ex-offender, with intensive personal guidance on training and career options, including advice on disclosure of offences and advice on housing and finance etc. The Services must provide a specialist 1-to-1 Caseworker to carry out a holistic assessment of needs and barriers to employment and develop a personalised action plan with realistic goals and aspirations individual and continuous support to encourage continued engagement with the Services. The Services must provide referral for specialist help e.g. with mental health, housing, drug and alcohol misuse and specialist targeted assistance for ex-armed forces personnel and for female sex workers. The Services should provide a combination of personal progression planning into employment or employment with training or learning, mentoring, coaching, counselling and on-going one to ones and include personal and social development support including post training and employment entry support. The Services should include activities aimed at developing confidence and GOALS, a widely recognised and successful motivational programme.The Services should provide tailored interventions and include innovative delivery methods, which should include outreach or residential opportunities if appropriate to meet a young person’s assessed needs. The Services should include pre-employment training to enable young ex-offenders to understand employer’s requirements such as attendance, attitude, motivation, language and behaviour management and skills. The Services must provide intense support for CV and interview preparation.The Services must support individuals to overcome personal difficulties, clarify ambitions and prepare convincing applications for available job opportunities. The Services should include intensive and comprehensive assessment, followed up by bespoke employment focused interventions. These can include enterprise, employer-based vocational training and tasters, employment trials, work pairing and work experience, especially in those sectors of the economy that are growing and have recruitment difficulties, for example construction, manufacturing, logistics, internships and voluntary work in both public and private sectors or in the third sector and/or part-time, evening or weekend work. The Services must provide access to weekly in-house job clubs, access to additional 1-to-1 support from volunteer mentors from local companies and access to peer mentors who can provide valuable support in that they have trodden the same path as the current participants and are able to provide advice and encouragement based on that experience. The Services must include specialist help and individualised support with English, maths, ICT and English for Speakers of Other Languages. The Services must include vocational training assessment, vocational training provided by specialists and community-based providers or signposting to relevant and appropriate existing provision.The Services must provide access to specific courses to meet the particular needs of women offenders.The Services should include elements of capacity building to identify employers that are willing to offer opportunities to and work with the ex-offender target group and to raise awareness of the significant benefits this can bring to individuals.The successful Candidate will need to work with employers to support young ex-offenders to enter into employment.The successful Candidate will need to provide to the LEP a breakdown of performance by gender and BME group and intelligence on what is working well and what could be changed to improve performance and outcomes for young people in each target group. |
| **Horizontal Principles** |
| The Services must support the cross cutting themes of the ESF Framework. These are set out below. Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development. The ESF programme maintains the dual approach to promoting gender equality and equality of opportunities by funding specific activities which target women and disadvantaged groups as well as integrating equal opportunities into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme as a whole. Action to promote equality and diversity is an integral part of the SFA business objectives. A world-class workforce can only be created if we remove barriers, eliminate discrimination, address disadvantage and raise the aspirations of both present and potential learners. Performance monitoring of the project will include a review of progress against the implementation/action plan on a quarterly basis included in this specification.Sustainable Development (SD) activity is a mandatory requirement of all projects funded through the ESF programme. Successful tenderers will be required to have in place an operational SD policy and implementation/action plan within two months of the project Start Date. Performance monitoring of the project will include a review of progress against the implementation/action plan on a quarterly basis included in this specification. Activity will need to promote and engage with priority individuals, such as those with protected characteristics. |
| ELIGIBILITY |
| **General**General eligibility requirements are set out in : the European Social Fund Programme for England 2014-2020 National Eligibility Rules which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-programme-guidance> Please note LEP specific requirements are subject to the National Eligibility Rules detailed above. In delivering the Services, the successful Candidate must take into account and support the targets for the following groups where this is consistent with the other Services requirements for addressing the needs of groups identified as priority and meeting the Services deliverables. Ethnic groups                          min 20%Female                                    min 45%Disability/health issues            min 10%Lone parents                           min 5%No basic skills                         min 18%**LEP Specific** The target group for this procurement is ex-offenders serving community sentences that are aged under 25 but over 15 years old. These individuals will be currently NEET/unemployed. There is no restriction on the length of time unemployed.There are no restrictions on size of business for employment entry. |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** |
| **LEP Specific**The Services will be delivered within the Leicester & Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership area.Delivered within the whole of LLEP area, with priority given to those with a home address within the LLEP area. |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** |
| **LEP Specific**Currently £908,800 will be available for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available.All activity must be achieved within the lifetime of the contract.The table below shows the initial planned outcomes, but performance management may change the volumes and mix during the life of the contract.  From the funding available on the regulated and non-regulated lines, the provider must plan to deliver the appropriate education & training for each participant to enable them to progress. The minimum service deliverables, values and volumes for which evidence must be provided are:

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| **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** |
| ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan  | 500 | £150 | £75,000 |
| RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £281,750 |
| NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £274,500 |
| PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 100 | £700 | £70,000 |
| PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 50 | £350 | £17,500 |
| PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 180 | £350 | £63,000 |
| PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 90 | £700 | £63,000 |
| PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 49 | £350 | £17,150 |
| SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 100 | £100 | £10,000 |
| SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | 50 | £100 | £5,000 |
| SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 180 | £100 | £18,000 |
| SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 90 | £100 | £9,000 |
| SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 49 | £100 | £4,900 |

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