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**SPECIFICATION & QUESTIONNAIRE**

**INVITATION TO TENDER –itt\_30114**

**NEET / IAG**

**Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership**

**DATE: 24 June 2016**

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| **ESF: Access to Employment**  **The Black Country LEP – NEET IAG itt\_30114** |
| 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) is for Priority Axis 1 and its Investment Priorities (IP), where the need has been identified both in the LEP area and European Structural and Investment Fund Strategies.  The Priority Axis 1 supports activity to increase participation in the labour market and thereby improve social inclusion and mobility. The objectives of Priority Axis 1 covered in this specification are:   * To improve the employability of long-term unemployed people, so that they can compete effectively in the labour market. * To provide individuals from groups which face particular labour market disadvantage with additional support so that they can compete effectively in the labour market. * To encourage inactive people to participate in the labour market and to improve their employability. * To address the basic skills needs of unemployed and inactive people so that they can compete effectively in the labour market. * To provide support for women at a disadvantage in the labour market, and particularly those who are currently inactive, to contribute to our efforts to reduce the gender employment gap. * To support people with multiple and complex barriers to participation to address these underlying issues and to move closer to or into the labour market. * To engage marginalised individuals and support them to re-engage with education, training, or in employment. * To engage marginalised 16-24 year olds and support them to re-engage with education or training. * To support young lone parents to overcome the barriers they face in participating in the labour market (including childcare). * To support the rise in the participation age by providing apprenticeship opportunities.   The strands in Priority Axis 1 in this specification are:   * **Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people** (IP1.1) - to help those who are disadvantaged but still relatively close to the labour market to tackle their barriers to work, and enter and sustain employment.   **Access to Employment for Jobseekers and Inactive People**  The Government is promoting employment for all by providing support mechanisms and benefits that incentivise work and reduce worklessness, to ensure that individuals can fulfil their potential within the labour market. National policies to help people move from welfare to employment are designed to ensure that jobseekers get the support they need to find a job and, in return, jobseekers are expected to do all they can to find work.  As the recovery strengthens, it is likely that those closest to the labour market will find it easier to find work, but there is a risk that the most disadvantaged will be left behind and find it increasingly difficult to compete effectively for work. ESF will therefore be used to ensure that these disadvantaged groups are provided with the right level of support, tailored to the needs of individuals and businesses in local labour markets. This will be the primary added value for ESF. Activities include help to identify the barriers individuals face in moving into work (for example: confidence, lack of recent work experience, basic skills, job-related skills, job seeking skills, or other material barriers like debt and working with them to tackle these barriers.  The SFA is looking to procure an organisation to deliver education and training that best support the needs of local employers and employees in the LEP area set out below.  **The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Background**  The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) produced a detailed European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Strategy detailing how ESF supports the sub-regions employment, skills and growth ambitions (<http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/Upload/01/Black%20Country%20EUSIF%20Strategy%20-%20Final%20Submission%20LEP%20Board%20rev.pdf>).  Amongst the many achievements of the sub-region the Black Country ESIF Strategy, drafted concurrently with the Strategic Economic Plan ( <http://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/about-us/plans-for-growth/strategic-economic-plan> ) outlines a number of key challenges and constraints to growth including high levels of unemployment, job losses, low skill levels and a substantial skills mismatch between the labour market and the needs of businesses in key sectors.  The Black Country has an underperforming labour market compared to many other parts of the country. Since 2002 there has been a loss of 16,000 jobs in the Black Country (BCC, State of the Sub Region Report). Unemployment is high, with the employment rate at just 66% in 2012, significantly below the national average of 71%*.* The area was affected harder than most by recession (linked to weaker economic resilience). Unemployment in 2011 was worse in the Black Country than in any other LEP area.  The rates of youth unemployment in the Black Country, measured by those between the ages of 16-24 years claiming JSA is high (11.4%) compared to the national average of 6.2%. 12% of this cohort have no formal qualifications, again higher than the national average of 9.6%. (Black Country Evidence Paper: 2013). The Black Country remains behind the national average in English and Maths at Key Stage 2. There is a lack of young people within the Black Country who are qualified in STEM subjects coming through the system to replace the ageing workforce.  The number of NEETs across the sub-region varies across the local authorities. Walsall and Wolverhampton has the highest number of NEETs (7%), whereas Dudley has been consistently below national average over the last year (5.1%). Although the proportion of Black Country NEETs (6.3%) is now above the national average (5.9%) this is the result of improvements in the rest of the country as opposed to locally.  In relation to apprenticeships, data from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills shows that 9,240 people across the Black Country were undertaking an apprenticeship compared to 44,230 across the West Midlands.  In contrast research undertaken by the Black Country LEP highlights that 80% of high value manufacturing sector firms anticipate difficulty in local recruitment over the next five years. Black Country businesses frequently report a lack of candidates with the right skills, training, qualification or experience required for the job. The Black Country Business Survey (2013) identified that almost one half of businesses (45%) undertook recruitment in the last 12 months. 31% indicate the process went smoothly while 14% experienced problems; most commonly, it is a lack of candidates with the relevant knowledge, qualifications and skills for the job. The Black Country has a higher proportion of companies (41%) that don’t train staff at all compared to elsewhere (34%) nationally.  Following a robust process of economic analysis and stakeholder consultation the BCLEP designed a comprehensive skills programme to realise the ambitions for transformational growth in the Black Country. This call is looking for projects(s) to enhance the current National Careers Service provision by providing detailed information, advice and guidance to young people aged 16-24 years in relation to career opportunities in the Black Country’s transformational and growth sectors. These sectors will generate the greatest levels of new employment creation and include: Transport Technologies including aerospace and automotive, Building Technologies/Construction, Advanced Manufacturing including Advanced Engineering, Environmental Technologies and Business Services.  The successful Candidate must be able to work with Black Country businesses, schools, parents and young people to promote a realistic and achievable vision and pathway into new and existing job opportunities within our growing sectors and especially the apprenticeship and vocational career pathways.  The Skills for Growth Programme has been developed from an excellent understanding of local need, analysis of the barriers to growth and lessons learnt from the 2007-13 Black Country ESF programme. The programme forms part of a portfolio of employment and skills delivery that responds to identified and evidenced need established through the SEP and ESIF Strategies. Strategic leadership from key stakeholders, including the Black Country LEP Employment and Skills Board, will support the local delivery of a mixed programme of interventions. |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** |
| **At risk of Redundancy:** means Employees identified by the employer as at risk or redundancy and/or commenced formal consultation with staff representatives on the need to make redundancies  **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:** Only people who are eligible to work in UK are eligible for this EU programme.  **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.  **IAG:** Information, advice and guidance service offered to participants.  **Inactive:** Inactive are persons currently not part of the labour force (in the sense that they are not employed or unemployed according to the definitions provided).  **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 or when the qualification starts if this later.  **Services:** The provision of education, training or support delivered to individuals.  **Status:** Employment status and age are determined on the date of starting on the Services.  **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 but not eligible for this provision 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 Service Requirements**  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 locally tailored solutions and flexible delivery to meet the skills and Apprenticeship priorities of employers and employees in the defined geographical area of delivery. If the LEP area also has a ‘transitional’ area defined in addition to the ‘more developed’ area, delivery locations will have to be available *in each locality* * 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. * Candidates must be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake robust initial assessment of eligible individuals. Vocational training delivered must be regulated units and qualifications on the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework and be able to support individuals into higher levels of training and workplace progression   ***Track record***  The ability to deliver the required activity, based on a track record in the successful delivery and management of this type and size of programme  ***Information, Advice and Guidance***  Where the activity requires effective Information, Advice and Guidance successful  applicants and/or subcontractors delivering this element will either hold or be  working towards the Matrix standard.  ***Management and quality assurance***  Candidates will need to have effective management arrangements in place to ensure all of the requirements of this specification 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.  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.  Where the Service works with Jobcentre Plus clients the Candidates will be required to co-operate effectively with Jobcentre Plus making them aware of candidates who fail to attend training and notifying them of any instances where individuals leave training due to starting work. Candidates will be required to establish links with Jobcentre Plus and visits to public or private sector employers should be made in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus and National Careers Service wherever possible to ensure a smooth, efficient, and joined up approach to arranging benefit claims, offering new employment opportunities and training for all eligible individuals.  ***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. Candidates must be able to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the current employment market and the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence for the geographical area being supported. Candidates must also have an understanding of local skills shortages and gaps and any existing skills support structures within the LEP area.  ***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 LEPs and the Skills Funding Agency ongoing performance management data as well as additional intelligence to improve the effectiveness of projects in the LEP area in the future  **Specific Service Requirements**    **IAG FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (1.1)**  The Services must provide a focused careers guidance service to young people in the LEP area to enable them to identify opportunities to move into employment, training or education.  This must include:   * providing the cohort with generic information, advice and guidance focused on their needs within the LEP area * focused pre-employment activity for specific groups who may need more support to take advantage of opportunities work and education opportunities * signposting young people to the NEET provision in the area for specific skills training * working with schools, colleges and employers to develop work experience opportunities   The Services must add value to the existing National Careers Service provision and activity already taking place in schools which is delivered either in-house or via third party organisations.  Appropriately qualified practitioners must deliver the Services to ensure the standard of the Services are comparable to the services provided by the National Careers Service.  The Services must deliver a range of practical and business focussed activities targeted at young people (aged 16-24 years) and teachers/schools with the aim to inform and advise them of the various career opportunities within local businesses especially (but not restricted too) the BCLEP’s identified key sectors as follows:  Black Country transformational growth sectors:     * Advanced Manufacturing, including Engineering, Logistics and Food and Drink * Building Technologies/Construction * Transport technologies, including aerospace and automotive * Business Services * Environmental technologies, as a cross cutting theme across the above sectors.   Black Country local growth clusters:   * Dudley- Visitor Economy * Sandwell- Food and food technology * Walsall- Health and Social Care * Wolverhampton- Creative and cultural industries   The Services must involve local businesses as part of the delivery. The Services must work with delivery organisations to maximise the benefits of existing provision and to avoid duplication of activities, including the Black Country Youth Employment Initiative.  The Services must be available across the Black Country. There must be local employer engagement, and the successful Candidate must have an established presence in the local area and demonstrate an understanding of the current employment and skills needs of the Black Country business base. Evidence of previous successful delivery of similar skills interventions should be provided. |
| 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.  **IP1.1 Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people**   * 16 to 24 years old * In education and inactive * Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)   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.  **IP1.1 Access to employment for jobseekers and inactive people**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | **More Developed** | | | Total participants who are unemployed (including long term unemployed) | 70% | | Total participants who are inactive | 25% | | Participants from ethnic minorities | 22% | | Female participants | 45% | | Participants without basic skills | 21% | | Participants with a disability or health problems | 25% | | Participants who are lone parents | 13% | |  |  | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership area. |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £449,900 will be available for the period from August 2016 to March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available.  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:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 350 | £350 | £122,500 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 64 | £950 | £60,800 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 59 | £950 | £56,050 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 65 | £950 | £61,750 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 64 | £950 | £60,800 | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 56 | £500 | £28,000 | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 60 | £500 | £30,000 | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 60 | £500 | £30,000 | | Total |  |  | £449,900 | |