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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION** | |
| **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 Partnerships (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.  **LEP Area Background**  Providing better paid employment opportunities for residents is a stated aim within the vision for Coventry and Warwickshire. It is recognised that while creating employment opportunities is fundamental there is also a need to ensure that the right people with the right skills meet future employer demands. Skills shortage vacancies now account for more than one in five of all vacancies. Coventry and Warwickshire data highlights educational attainment is below the national average across levels 2-4.  There are persistent pockets of unemployment in Nuneaton, Bedworth and North Warwickshire.  Rates are most pronounced amongst young people: 5.1% of 16-19 year olds were not in education, employment or training/15 in 2014 compared 5.5% in 2013/14. Such trends are restricting the LEPs overall economic performance and the contribution those young people can make.  The Services being procured will address the above by supporting the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP area’s disengaged young people back into training, education and employment to reduce youth unemployment and the strain to the public purse, as well as supporting the workforce needs of the future for our growth sectors.  The ESIF programme in the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP area has been prepared in collaboration with all key partners and is based on a real and detailed understanding of local challenges and opportunities.  This approach has included a desk based review of economic conditions; one to one consultations with stakeholders representing a wide range of local interests; a major stakeholder event to launch the initial thinking on the strategy, followed by a later strategy development workshop to provide partners with the opportunity to contribute to the final sign off document  The demand for the interventions as described in the ESIF Strategy has been thoroughly tested both against data and intelligence and softer partner views and feedback.  ***This specification is for Warwickshire provision only***. | |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** | |
| **At risk of becoming NEET:** Support for at risk young people aged 15 - 24 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 (LA), 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 programme  Candidates 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 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 geographic coverage.  **LEP Specific**  The aim of the Services is to support disengaged young people (NEETs) to enter and progress in the labour market and to reduce the number of young people aged 15-24 years who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The Services will improve their education, employability and personal skills which will enable them to progress successfully into work or further learning and improve their chances of gaining employment/ starting an Apprenticeship.  The Services should achieve the following for young people;   * A bridge to positive outcomes such as further learning or employment; * Emotional readiness to apply their learning, skills and behaviours to further learning or work; * Higher self-esteem and being more optimistic about their future and opportunities; * Self-motivation to remove barriers to success.   The Services will align to the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP’S Strategic Economic Plan and will support progression into all sectors, to address long term youth employment, and where possible entry/ progression into the following LEP priority sectors.  IT Services/Digital and Creative Industries  Logistics  Culture and Tourism  Healthcare and Assistive Technology  Professional Services  Construction  Education  The Services must include activities to reduce youth unemployment, by developing the employability and skills of NEET and individuals who are at risk of becoming NEET.  Candidates must be able to deliver interventions to support all target groups and their related needs across the Warwickshire area.  **The detailed service requirements are as follows.**  There must be a referral mechanism that will successfully engage with the target group and roll on roll off flexibility of recruitment.  The Services must provide an innovative induction programme to gain early engagement with young people. In particular the Services must engage 15-16 year olds at risk of becoming NEET and should be aimed at strengthening the transition into post-16 learning for young people who find this particularly difficult.  There must be an initial assessment and needs analysis for all individuals undertaking learning programmes, which results in 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) through the involvement of young people in both the design and delivery of the programmes, including training to provide peer support taking into account local conditions and requirements.  The Services should provide tailored information advice and guidance (IAG) for each young person, with intensive personal guidance and help to develop their understanding of the post 16 opportunities available to them. The Services must help young people gain a greater understanding of their own abilities, learning needs and the range of opportunities available, supported by the effective use of intensive enhanced and impartial high quality IAG at all stages of the learner journey.  The Services must provide individual and continuous mentor or key worker support. The Services should provide a combination of personal planning, mentoring, coaching, counselling, and ongoing one-to-one sessions and support. This will encourage young people to return to existing learning opportunities, participate in Traineeships or Apprenticeships; or enter into jobs, as appropriate for each young person. Where the young person is aged 18 or over and is claiming benefit, the Candidate will engage with the relevant organisation, or with the relevant Jobcentre Plus (JCP) adviser if it is Jobseekers’ Allowance (JSA).  The Services should provide stimulating and motivating activities that raise awareness of the world of work, build confidence and include summer activities to maintain interest and engagement, such as community volunteering.  There must be successful delivery of job opportunities and training outcomes for the target groups delivered in a range of settings, avoiding excessive levels of classroom-based activity.  Innovative elements should be built into learning programmes, to give young people experience of success in learning, and increase commitment and motivation to achieve. There should be innovative activities to address barriers to learning and work including the effective use of incentives.  Learning programmes for 15-24 year olds at risk of becoming NEET should include additional/extra support.  There must be an emphasis on building independent learning skills, employability skills and potential, and resilience.  Individual programmes should develop and demonstrate young people’s employability skills through a range of opportunities such as enterprise, employer-based vocational training and tasters, employment trials, work pairing, work experience, internships and voluntary work in both Public and Private Sectors or in the Third Sector. Employability skills including job preparation, interviews, understanding employer requirements.    Individualised wrap-around programmes of support, focusing on English and Maths and including skills that may not be funded through mainstream, should be built to meet assessed need. This programme could, for example, include specialised provision for teenage parents. Literacy and numeracy skills development must be provided where required, including personal tuition that supports mainstream delivery. English and Maths/ESOL courses should be provided for young people who are already NEET.  Learning programmes should provide for longer-term support both pre- and post-progression where necessary. There should be a ‘structured ending’ where support is gradually tapered off. Young people must be supported to re-engage in training, employment and self-employment, including meaningful and quality work experience, placements, volunteering, traineeships and Apprenticeships.  The Services delivered should lead to:   * Progression into education, training and/or employment. * Progression into employment in the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP’s priority sectors. * Progression into Apprenticeships * Entering a traineeship   The Services should be delivered so as to meet the principles of re-engagement provision as set out in Annex 3 of the Statutory Guidance for Raising of the Participation Age:  <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/349300/Participation_of_Young_People_Statutory_Guidance.pdf> Robust and transparent performance measures, linked to clear progression routes for learners will need to be implemented.  The delivery of the Services will need to address any issues with regard to rurality, difficulties with accessibility/transport and the requirement for provision for small groups in some areas. The Services must be delivered so as to ensure that access to provision and the variety of activities available meet the same standards across the geographical area.  Successful Candidates will be required to:   * Share sub-contractor performance data with the LEP. * Share information on engagement with LEP priority sectors. * Complete a full Evaluation report. | |
| **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.  **LEP Specific**  Target Groups:  The Services will support young people who are 15-24 years, NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. Individuals supported must be aged 15-24 years at the start date of the activity.  These vulnerable young people will likely be those who face multiple barriers to their participation and need a different type of provision to engage them in learning and keep them engaged. Such groups include: young carers; looked after young people; care leavers; young people with mental health difficulties; young offenders; teenage parents; young people from black and minority ethnic groups; refugees or asylum seekers; homeless people; people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; young people with poor literacy/ numeracy and/or few qualifications; out of work graduates.  For 15-16 year olds either on or off school roll, the use of ESF funds is restricted to:   * those young people who are disengaged from regularly timetabled learning and are at risk of not participating post-16; * or who are on the LA’s Risk of NEET Indicator list.   Pre-16 provision will support underachieving pupils in schools/academies and ensure statutory provision for those off-school-roll. It is critical to work with LAs prior to engage with this particular target group. | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within Warwickshire.  This specification is for delivery in Warwickshire only and priority wards are:  Bar Pool, Camp Hill, Kingswood, Abbey Wembrook, Newbold and Brownsover, Bede, Crown, Atherstone Central, Poplar, Atherstone South and Mancetter, Rokesby and Overslade, Warwick West, Brunswick, Attleborough, Exhall, New Bilton, Eastlans/Benn, Arley and Whitacre Heath, Stratford Avenue and Newtown, Arbury, Hartshill, Alcester, Slough, Bilton, Admirals and Cawston, Stratford Mount Pleasant, Atherstone North. | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £1,211,950 will be available for the period from June 2016 to 31 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 as follows:   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Deliverable** | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 764 | £50 | £38,200 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £493,350 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £227,700 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 168 | £500 | £84,000 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 62 | £500 | £31,000 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 198 | £500 | £99,000 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 167 | £500 | £83,500 | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 62 | £500 | £31,000 | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 161 | £200 | £32,200 | | SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | 55 | £200 | £11,000 | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 190 | £200 | £38,000 | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 160 | £200 | £32,000 | | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 55 | £200 | £11,000 | |  | Total |  |  | £1,211,950 | | |