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**SPECIFICATION**

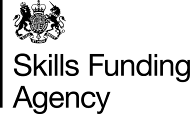
**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29914**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 19-001**

**ESF funded activity to support individuals who are NEET in**

**Lancashire**

**DATE: January 2016**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION**  **Lancashire Enterprise Partnership – Provision for NEET Individuals**  **ITT\_29914-19-001** | |
| 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 (ESIF).  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.  **Lancashire Enterprise Partnership**  Lancashire Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plan sets out their growth ambitions for the next 10 years providing a clear focus on realising the potential of the whole of Lancashire, setting out the framework for their Growth Deal with Government and directs the resources within our agreed ESIF strategy.  Lancashire Enterprise Partnership’s focus is to foster the right conditions for growth: to invest in **innovation**, **skills**, **enterprise** and **infrastructure** to accelerate the achievement of its full economic potential. As the fourth largest economy in the north of England, Lancashire offers, through its ESIF Strategy, a mechanism to use ESI Funds to invest in opportunities that will have a national impact; doing so in a way that means it can also tackle its challenges.  Lancashire has a number of groups whose low or lack of qualifications will prevent them from accessing the benefits of growth. This affects a number of groups but in particular young people not in employment, education and training (NEETs). There are an estimated 3,200 NEET young people in Lancashire, 6% of 16 to 18 year olds in the area. By age group, nearly 600 are 16 years old, over 1,000 aged 17 and 1,600 are 18 years old. Overall Lancashire has a higher than average number of NEETS , with 15% of 16-24 year olds young people only qualified to NVQ Level 1 and 9% with no qualifications. However, over 28% of 16-24 year olds are qualified to NVQ Level 2 compared to the 17% of the total working age population with NVQ2 as their highest level of qualification. | |
| **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, National Citizenship Service and the new Careers Enterprise Company funded provision.  ***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 Services need 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 geographic coverage.  **LEP Specific**  The aim of the Services is to reduce the number of young people aged 15-18 (or up to 24 for learners with learning difficulty or disability (LLDD)) who are NEET or are at risk of becoming NEET. The Services procured will improve their education, employability and personal skills which will enable them to progress successfully into work or further learning leading and improve their chances of gaining employment/ starting an apprenticeship.  The Services should engage with the hardest to reach NEET and in particular contact and re-engage young people aged 15-18 and improve their attendance, attainment, performance and behaviour to enable them to access suitable learning and/or employment.  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 are more optimistic about their future and opportunities; * Self-motivation to remove barriers to success.   The Services must be linked to mainstream skills development and employment activity; it must also ensure that it supports and integrates with the emerging Lancashire Skills Hub and it must be based on a good understanding of the main skills and Apprenticeship priorities for the Lancashire area.  The Services should be directed at two distinct groups:   * 15-16 year olds at risk of becoming NEET and * 16-18 year olds who at NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.   The Services must engage of 15-16 year olds at risk of becoming NEET and be aimed at strengthening the transition into post-16 learning for young people who find this particularly difficult.  The Services must ensure that young people progress into sustainable outcomes by developing progression routes which fit with the needs of young people and it is expected that the Services will deliver the following results:   * 90% of those who start on the programme (both age groups) who are at risk of NEET being retained in education or employment six months after engagement * 70% of participants completing an individualised learning programme incorporating accredited training and basic skills * 70% of those who are NEET progress into Traineeships, Apprenticeship, other local provision or a job with accredited or non-accredited training.   The Services must fully adhere to the principles of re-engagement provision as set out in Annex 3 of the Statutory Guidance for Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) and implement robust and transparent performance measures. These should be linked to clear progression routes for learners should be in place linked to 16-19 Study Programmes, RPA guidance and Department for Education (DfE) Principles of effective re engagement.  30% of the Services should be delivered to 15-16 year olds at risk of becoming NEET and 70% to 16-18 year old NEETS and at risk of becoming NEET.  The Services should be focussed on:   * Re-engagement of 15-16 year olds at risk of becoming NEET * Developing employability skills (15-18) * Engagement of hardest to reach NEET/Personal and Social Development and Mentoring (15-18) * LLDD/Vulnerable Groups (15-18).   The Services must provide innovative elements to learning programmes, which give young people experience of success in learning and increase commitment and motivation to achieve.  The Services must deliver interventions to support all target groups and their related needs across the whole of Lancashire Enterprise Partnership area. The Services must offer very local and flexible delivery in the areas where levels of NEET are highest including the location of a physical base within the area.  The Services must be delivered from an established local presence and tailored so that it is effective at district/ward level. The Services must be delivered to the same standards across the whole geographical area.  **The detailed Services requirements are as follows**  There must be an innovative induction programme to gain early engagement of those at risk of being NEET and "not-known" individuals.    There must be robust initial assessment and needs analysis for all young people which will result in a robust individual learning plan with an expectation of progress reviews every 4 weeks as a minimum (with activity in-between) and an exit interview. The Services must identify and provide additional support needs, particularly to support progression, including literacy and numeracy skills development where required.  The delivery of the Services must address aspects of the young person’s journey including: engagement, assessment, delivery, retention, progression, tracking and post-progression support and must be flexible so that young people can start and progress at the most appropriate times to them.  The Services must include the effective use of enhanced and impartial, intensive and high quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) at all stages of a young person’s learning programme and be designed to help young people gain a greater understanding of their own abilities and learning needs.  The Services must include the development and delivery of personalised provision, which is flexible (in terms of content, times and location) and involves young people in both the design and delivery of the programmes. This should include training to provide peer support and ensure that young people are given the most appropriate level of support in line with their assessed needs. This must include a personalised transition or ‘moving on’ plan for every learner that will include a portfolio of activities and achievements whilst on the programme and aspirations for their own future.  The Services should provide tailored support for each 15-16 year old at risk of becoming NEET, with intensive personal guidance and help to develop their understanding of the post 16 opportunities available to them.  The Services include extra support to the study programmes for 16-18 year olds at risk of becoming NEET, focusing on the target groups that will need more support.  The Services provided for LLDD and other vulnerable groups must address participation, retention, achievement and the progression of young people with certain disadvantages. The Services will support the sustained engagement, transition and progression through creation of individual support packages, appropriate to the particular needs of the vulnerable young person through joint working across services and support agencies, including third sector organisations, in order to pool key information and create an appropriate support package.  The Services must provide individual and continuous mentor/key worker support for each young person. The Services should include activities such as mentoring, counselling, motivation and team building.  The Services should be delivered using a “whole family” approach, linking with other agencies working closely with young people from known workless families within the community. It should offer continuing support to maximise retention when they have progressed into learning and engage specialist providers where necessary.  The Services must meet the needs of young people in both rural and urban locations providing innovative ways to address mobility barriers to engagement especially in rural areas. For example, difficulties with accessibility/transport and the requirement for provision for small groups in some areas.  The Services must be delivered in a range of settings, avoiding excessive levels of classroom-based activity.  The Services must deliver activities aimed at confidence building, be motivational and should include summer activities to maintain interest and engagement, such as community volunteering and innovative activities to address barriers to learning and work effective use of incentives.  The Services should be offer opportunities in areas which young people respond to such as sport, music and dance and outdoor activities.  The Services must provide individualised wrap-around programmes of support focusing on English and maths and include skills that may not be funded through mainstream. This should, for example, include specialised provision for young/teenage parents. English and maths/ESOL courses should also be provided for young people who are already NEET, do not have Level 2 English and/or maths and where it is a barrier to them progressing into learning or work. This should not duplicate what is available through mainstream funding.  The Services must make a range of opportunities available which raise awareness of the world of work such as work tasters, work experience and enterprise.  The Services must include the provision of employability skills including job preparation, interviews, understanding employer requirements. There must be opportunities for employer-based vocational training and tasters, employment trials, work placements or internships, work pairing and volunteering.  The Services must provide support to small and medium sized enterprises to build their capacity to take on young people from the NEET group and sustain their employment, including enhanced induction and ongoing mentoring.  The successful Candidate will also provide staffing resource and other practical tools to better co-ordinate NEET and other aligned activity across the LEP area.  The successful Candidate will provide a NEET co-ordinator post seconded to Lancashire’s Skills Hub to co-ordinate delivery across all Opt-Ins and individual projects. We expect that the NEET Co-ordinator will operate at a senior level and will be appointed in partnership with the Skills and Employment Board. It is expected that a minimum of £100,000 is spent on the NEET Co-ordinator post over the lifetime of the project.  The NEET co-ordinator will also ensure that NEET activity complements other initiatives that come online, continue to add value to Government funded programmes, and will be responsible for liaising with partner organisations and other ESIF projects around referral processes and progression opportunities. The NEET co-ordinator will also work with provision commissioned via the Big Lottery Opt-In given that this will target support on clients from a similar age group and facing similar barriers to educational and economic engagement.  The successful Candidate will provide a capacity building resource that may be used to undertake non-learning/capacity building activity which supports the objectives of the Service and which improves the service offer for participants. Examples of the activities that might be delivered are: purchase of IAG software licenses for participating organisations and partners; as well as other non-learning/capacity building resources such as developing opportunities for work placements, engaging businesses with schools and colleges and work to complement the National Careers Service inspiration agenda. It is expected that a minimum of £50,000 is spent on these types of activity over the lifetime of the project.  The successful Candidate will develop a capacity building plan to the Skills Board every 12 months which will be monitored by the Skills Board and SFA. The £150,000 for the NEET co-ordinator and the capacity building resource is embedded into the unit costs of the provision delivered and should be accounted for in project budgets.  Local stakeholders must be engaged with and ongoing governance arrangements implemented for the Services which actively engages LAs in steering the activities delivered and ensuring that the delivery of the Services continues to be relevant within the local context. There must be work with LAs to establish what is needed on the ground (mentoring, tuition support, 1:1 support, personal and social development to address for example, confidence issues etc.) and to identify which young people would benefit most from ESF provision. The needs of young people will vary and will need to be met by working closely with LAs and by providing a combination of delivery styles and content.  Linkages must be established with local stakeholders, which as a minimum will include schools, FE colleges, independent private and IAG providers, and the providers of other ESIF projects (specifically Lancashire Skills Support Plus), the voluntary and community sector and the National Citizen Service. This will involve (as appropriate) the engagement of specialist providers.  There will be a requirement to:   * Create a steering group with relevant local stakeholders, chaired by the NEET Co-ordinator, which reports into the LEP via the Skills and Employment Board. * Progress against the delivery of the capacity building plan will be reported by the steering group to the Skills and Employment Board and the SFA quarterly. * Provide the LEP with regular performance reports which detail actual and profile performance of the overall contract and individual sub-contractors and performance by target geographical areas in the context of the overall Agency contract including the provision of pipeline information. * Engage with LEP / ESIF oversight and scrutiny activity to support the LEP's Skills and Employment Board's insight and scrutiny of this area of work. * Undertake a quarterly (minimum) joint meeting with the SFA, LEP or their nominated representative. * Undertake an on-going review to ensure the regional/sub-regional/LA requirements are being met. | |
| **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 National Eligibility Rules.  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 Services will support young people who are 15-18, NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. Young people, who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, can be aged up to 24 years if they have an EHC Education Health Careplan. These young people will likely be those who face multiple barriers to their participation and need a different type of offer of provision to engage them in learning/skills development 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 and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; etc.  Individuals must be aged 15-18 years at the start of their activity. (Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be 15 - 24 years at the start of their activity).  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. The Service for 15-16 year olds will support underachieving pupils in schools/academies and ensure statutory provision for those off-school-roll. It is critical to work with local authorities prior to engaging this particular target group.  The Services for LLDD and vulnerable groupswill address participation, retention, achievement and progression of young people with certain disadvantages, including those detailed below:   * Young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability * Young offenders either serving or recently released from a custodial sentence * Looked after children/care leavers * Teenage/young parents * Drug and alcohol misuse * Emotional/behavioural mental health, * Family issues, * Young people linked to Youth Offending Teams (YOT) * Free School meals pupils.   Whilst the Services are designed to support all young people who are 15-18 NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. There is a need to have a more targeted focus on the following groups and priorities:  **Blackburn with Darwen area** – 16-18 year olds who have one or more of the following characteristics:   * Young/teenage parents * Young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability * Young people with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. * Young people coming from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. * Young offenders * Looked after children/care leavers * Young carers.   The following activities have been identified as a priority for the above target groups:   * A focus on employability skill support for 17 and 18 year olds * Dedicated support and advocacy for young people at transition points.   **Blackpool area –** Young people who have one or more of the following characteristics:   * Young/teenage parents * Young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability with a statement of special needs/school action plus * Young offenders.   The following activities have been identified as a priority for the above target groups:   * Varied, flexible, individually tailored programmes, which are focussed on robust clear goals including a work experience offer that gives a taster of learning and work skills alongside a clear progression pathway into mainstream learning.   **Lancashire area –** Young people who have one or more of the following characteristics:   * 12 week plus NEETs * NEETs with no qualifications * 18 year olds – (greatest % - and specifically no qualifications) * Young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability * Young/teenage parents * Young offenders * Looked after children/care leavers.   The following activities have been identified as a priority for the above target groups:   * Genuine work experience linked to local skills/employer needs; * Delivery of English and maths to improve current standards; * Development activity that will ensure individuals are prepared for longer study periods. | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership area.  Priority will be given to young people resident or educated in Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Blackpool Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. Within these geographic areas, the Services should provide a specific focus on the following:   * **Blackburn with Darwen Unitary Authority Area –** Delivery should focus on all areas of the borough, with particular emphasis on the most deprived wards, such as Shadsworth with Whitebirk, Wensley Fold and Sudell. * **Blackpool Unitary Authority Area –** Delivery should focus on all areas of the borough, with particular emphasis on those wards with the highest proportion of the NEET group, such as Talbot, Claremont and Bloomfield. * **Lancashire County Council –** Delivery should focus on all twelve districts within the Lancashire County Council geography. Fylde and the Ribble Valley will be targeted but have not identified priority wards. In the other 10 districts particular emphasis should be given to the following wards: * **Burnley -** Bank Hall, Brunshaw, Daneshouse with Stoneyholme, Gawthorpe, Lanehead, Rosegrove with Lowerhouse and Trinity * **Chorley -** Chorley South-East and Chorley South-West * **Hyndburn -** Spring Hill, Central and Church * **Lancaster –** Harbour, Heysham North, Central and South, Poulton and Skerton * **Pendle -** Bradley, Southfield and Clover Hill * **Preston –** Brookfield, Deepdale, Fishwick, Ingol, Larches, Ribbleton, Riversway, St George's, St Matthew's and Town Centre * **Rossendale –** Greensclough, Hareholme and Irwell * **South Ribble -** Lowerhouse * **West Lancashire** – Moorside, Tanhouse and Skelmersdale South * **Wyre –** Pharos and Rossall. | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £4,000,000 will be available for the period from 20 May 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 below:  The delivery will be targeted to engage 2539 individuals.  All activity must be achieved within the lifetime of the contract.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 2539 | £145 | £368,155 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £1,277,775 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £1,091,770 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 152 | £800 | £121,600 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 51 | £400 | £20,400 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 1422 | £400 | £568,800 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 305 | £800 | £244,000 | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 102 | £400 | £40,800 | | SD01 Uplift for 16-18 year olds achieving English and Maths Qualifications | 889 | £300 | £266,700 | | |