



INVITATION TO TENDER

Independent evaluation of the BRIDGES project

Date: 01/09/2020

Version 1.0

Organisation	Steps to Work (STW)
Title of Procurement	BRIDGES
Brief description of supply	Evaluation Service
Estimated value of tender	£20,000 - £25,000 maximum to include all costs
Estimated duration	January 2021 - July 2022
Name of STW contact	Stephanie Hammond Head of Operations BRIDGES Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk
Timetable	<p>Response deadline 10am 30th September 2020</p> <p>Questions deadline 10 am 23rd September 2020</p> <p>Shortlisted supplier's presentations W/C 19th October 2020</p> <p>Notification of award 2nd November 2020</p> <p>Completion of evaluation July 2022</p>

Background

Building Better Opportunities

Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is a programme aimed at tackling poverty and social inclusion, by assisting the most disadvantaged people throughout England, and is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) acting as the Managing Authority.

The funding was distributed in line with thirty-nine Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas, each with its own priorities and strategies as to how the funding should be spent, however all of the projects have the same five key principles

1. Help the most disadvantaged

It is acknowledged that some individuals are more disadvantaged than others. The European Commission cites the following disadvantaged groups of people as a priority:

- People with parental or carers responsibilities
- Women
- People with health issues and disabilities
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME)
- Refugees and recent migrants
- People over 50 with few or no qualifications and not in employment
- Low income, single earner households with children where one partner is not working
- Disabled people
- Those out of contact with the labour market
- Ex – offenders and offenders
- Homeless people
- People with low or no skills

2. Tackle Social Inclusion

As social inclusion can severely affect a person's wellbeing and, in turn, have a substantial impact upon their confidence and motivation to seek support and opportunities, this programme seeks to target these issues by addressing individual's barriers to seeking employment.

3. Be focused on the capabilities of each individual

A 'one size fits all' approach to the most disadvantaged is not sufficient to address individual's barriers and issues. This programme will seek to offer truly individually tailored and holistic support packages to help those engaged overcome the challenges they face.

4. Lead to better coordinated services

For a number of years many organisations have worked in silo which did not always benefit individuals with complex needs and barriers. This programme activity encourages organisational partnerships to enable coordination, and a joining up, of services available to individuals.

5. Create new opportunities for work

If individuals are to be assisted to become more work ready it is essential that there are opportunities available for them to enter employment. Therefore, employer engagement will form part of this programme to ensure that individuals can progress into employment or self-employment.

Funding was available, via a two-stage application process, to a lead organisation that would be legally responsible and financially accountable for any funding awarded. The lead was also to take responsibility for the distribution of funds to delivery partners, throughout the delivery lifetime of the programme, which is presently until June 2022

BRIDGES

Steps to Work (STW) were successful in gaining a contract from the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) to deliver, within the Black Country, for their Employment Support Over 24's with multiple needs and complex barriers, with a grant value of £17,054,790.09 and the STW project Building Reachable Individual Dreams Gaining Employment & Skills (BRIDGES) became operational in July 2016

BRIDGES is a multi-faceted programme aimed at reaching the most disadvantaged participants who may have previously fallen through the cracks of services and society. By working with a diverse range of partners the programme is able to offer participants a seamless and supported journey from initial engagement to exiting the programme. This is accomplished by ensuring that each participant has access to fully supported routes to increase social inclusion and develop both personal and employability skills. People engaged upon the programme are able to access innovative and creative activities, both in groups and on a one to one basis, and specialist interventions to make the journey towards employment enjoyable and relevant and where all successes, large or small, are celebrated. The programme ensures that all of the activities are appropriate to the individuals engaged and are delivered by experienced and knowledgeable staff whilst ensuring that the programme enhances, and adds value, to existing, and sometimes mandatory, work related provision.

The partnership presently comprises of fifteen delivery organisations which enables the BRIDGES programme to offer a truly diverse range of services to participants

BRIDGES Current Delivery Partners

Access 2 Business	Accord previously Age UK Walsall	Beacon
CAB Wolverhampton	Black Country Healthcare Fountain Trust previously Dudley & Walsall Mental Health	Gloucester Street Community Centre
Ideal for All	Just Straight Talk	Manor Farm Community Centre
Refugee & Migrant Centre	Sandwell Consortium	Steps to Work
Walsall College previously Walsall Adult Community College	Walsall Council Sports & Leisure Services previously Walsall Council Public Health	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council

BRIDGES participants

The delivery of the BRIDGES programme takes place across the Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, which together form the Black Country. Although the majority of participants live within these Boroughs the programme support is available to people who live outside of the area providing that they access all of the programme's services within the Black Country.

To be eligible to access support from the programme an individual must be;

- Aged 25 years and over
- Unemployed (cannot be in part time work or on a zero hour contract)
- Economically Inactive (including those not working who are claiming benefits other than JSA)
- Legally resident in the UK and able to take paid employment in European Union member states
- Have complex needs/multiple barriers which are impacting on being able to enter paid employment
- Require support to fully and independently engage in existing services

BRIDGES Objectives

Engagement upon the project	Profiles for the lifetime of the project
Total number of participants	4592
Number of men	2296
Number of women	2296
Number who are unemployed including long term unemployed	2296
Number who are Economically Inactive including not in education and training	2296
Number who are aged 50 or over	739
Numbers with disabilities	976
Number from ethnic minorities	1395

Results	Profiles for the lifetime of the project
Number who move into education or training on leaving	657
Number who move into employment, including self -employment on leaving	657
Of these the number who were unemployed when joining the project	354
Of these the number who were economically inactive when joining the project	354
Number that were economically inactive move into job searching on leaving	665

Outcome 1

Indicators	Profiles for the lifetime of the project
Participants will report that as a result of accessing the project they feel more aware of the support available to them	3314
Participants will feel more confident to access other services provided by mainstream providers	3314
The number of people demonstrating that they feel more motivated to search for and apply for jobs, to enquire about training courses and/or volunteering opportunities	3314

Outcome 2

Indicators	Profiles for the lifetime of the project
The number of people with multiple barriers reporting increased confidence and self esteem as a result of accessing the support provided by the project	3306
Unemployed or economically inactive people, who access the project, will report having improved well being as a result of the projects interventions	3214
All engaged participants co-designing personal action plans	4592
Increased number of people will report they feel more optimistic about their future	3306
Increased number of people will report they feel more confident in presenting skills to employers	2526

Outcome 3

Indicators	Profiles for the lifetime of the project
Employers perceptions of unemployed or economically inactive people will have changed	230
The number of employers who recruit local people into their job vacancies (Not restricted to BRIDGES participants)	240
The number of employers who would consider offering employment to people who have limited or no work experience	230

Outcome 4

Indicators	Profiles for the lifetime of the project
Participants have a better understanding of how their benefits will be affected if they start work	2526
Participants feel more confident in making the transition from benefits to paid employment	2296

The number of participants who sustain their employment for more than 4 weeks.	380
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Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation will be used to assess the progress and impact in meeting the projects objectives alongside measuring the overall effectiveness of both the project and the partnership with close attention given to highlighting the changes, if any, made to its participants.

The evaluation will need to report upon

- The extent to which the project has achieved its objectives
- The impact upon the participants accessing the support of the project
- Whether the project has had a differential impact upon specific groups of participants (women/BAME/over 50 etc)
- Determine if the project demonstrates equal opportunity access
- Strengths and weakness of the approach taken by this project
- The extent, and how, the project has built successful partnerships
- The most, and, least effective elements of the project
- The challenges faced by the project and the partnerships
- What could have been done differently
- Any unintended benefits of the project to both participants and partners
- Lessons learnt and good practice
- Assessing the potential for replication of the project's approach in other areas.
- The impact of Covid 19 upon the project
- Social Return on Investment

This list may not be exhaustive

Research methodology

Potential suppliers should specify the techniques they intend to supply however as a minimum we would anticipate that it will include the following

- Analysis of the projects management information system
- Tracking participants to establish the impact of the project
- One to one interviews
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Incorporate appropriate information from additional reports and publications
- Demographic research to establish baselines and impact in the wider context

Publicity and dissemination

The BRIDGES project is bound by the governing rules of the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund. Ownership of the data and reports related to the project will reside with Steps to Work and finding shall not be released to the press, or distributed in any way or at any time, prior to publication without the express approval of Steps to Work.

Any breach of the European Social Fund regulations and/or terms and conditions could result in clawback of funds. Should any such breach be as a result of the supplier then the supplier's payment may be affected

Should the supplier, after completion of the evaluation, wish to present findings that are in the public domain the supplier shall notify Steps to Work before any agreement is made with any external organisation to allow Steps to Work to consider the request.

Key Deliverables

An evaluation plan with specific deliverables and timeframes will be agreed with the successful supplier however Steps to Work would expect the following as a minimum

Deliverable	Due date or frequency
Inception meeting to agree evaluation framework including reporting structures, events and a communication and dissemination strategy	Within one month of contract start date
Develop and pilot evaluation tools	March 2021
Regular progress updates and in person meetings	Monthly/quarterly
An interim report to include an update of the evaluation process.	October 2021
Final report	July 2022
Presentation of evaluation findings to stakeholders	July 2022

Timeframe and budget

The evaluation will take place between January 2021 and July 2022 and will include a full evaluation of the project which commenced in July 2016

The budget is a maximum of £20,000 to £25,000 inclusive of any VAT or expenses. This includes the costs of all research, interviews, focus groups (including travel and expenses), analysis, report writing and meetings with the project team and Steps to Work

Selection criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the tenders

Criterion	Weighting
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1. Demonstrates a clear understanding of the aims, objectives and concerns of the evaluation	12.5%
2. Demonstrates knowledge, experience and capacity of evaluating projects within the BRIDGES area of work	12.5%
3. Demonstrates the capacity and resources to carry out the evaluation within the given timeframes	12.5%
4. Demonstrates a clear and realistic plan detailing all stages of the evaluation and the roles and responsibilities of each staff member involved	12.5%
5. Demonstrates detailed plans for dissemination of the evaluation findings	12.5%
6. Demonstrates the suitability of the proposed methodology	12.5%
7. Demonstrates value for money	25%

Scoring methodology

Score	Descriptor	Description
0	Poor	No or partial response and poor evidence provided. Supplier does not instil confidence in their ability to deliver the contracted evaluation
1	Weak	Weak standard of evidence, in several areas, to support response giving concern in the supplier's ability to deliver the contracted evaluation
2	Satisfactory	Satisfactory standard of evidence, in most areas, to support response but some areas lacking detail or evidence giving some concern in the supplier's ability to deliver the contracted evaluation.
3	Good	Good standard of evidence to support comprehensive response which gives confidence in the supplier's ability to deliver the contracted evaluation. Meets the requirements of Steps to Work
4	Very good	High standard of evidence to support comprehensive response which gives a high level of confidence in the supplier's ability to deliver the contracted evaluation, may exceed some of the requirements of Steps to Work
5	Excellent	Very high standard of evidence to support a very comprehensive response which gives a very high level of confidence in the supplier's ability to deliver the contracted evaluation, may exceed most of the requirements of Steps to Work

Tender process

Any queries or questions regarding this tender should be directed to Stephanie Hammond at Stephanie.hammond@stepstowork.co.uk & simon.carter@stepstowork.co.uk stating BRIDGES Evaluation Tender Query in the subject line, by no later than 10am 23rd September 2020.

All queries, questions and responses will be available on the frequently asked questions page to be found on Steps to Work website and Contract Finder. Due to procurement guidelines Steps to Work are unable to respond to questions directly, all responses will be available via the frequently asked questions page.

Steps to Work reserves the right to carry out clarifications if necessary which may be carried out via email or clarification meeting. We will only invite up to four potential suppliers to attend a clarification meeting, dependent upon the closeness of the scoring. Scores may be moderated based upon clarifications provided. Any potential supplier invited to attend a clarification meeting will be responsible for all of their expenses for attending said meeting.

Closing date for tenders 10am 30th September 2020

Please ensure you include

- Details of your organisation including contact details
- Name and contact details of the lead evaluator
- A summary of your proposal, team, method and how you meet the tender requirements
- Knowledge and understanding of our sector and area of work
- Your track record in evaluating similar projects and/or research in this field
- Your proposed methodology
- Plans for reporting and dissemination
- A detailed timetable for carrying out the work, highlighting key milestones, deadlines, suggested meetings and progress reports
- Details of the evaluation team and their role within the evaluation. CV's /biographies should be included as an annex together with details of their current DBS status.
- Quality assurance and approach to risk management
- A detailed budget including a clear structure of charges broken down by days, member of staff and activity.
- Contact details for two referees for whom you have completed similar work
- Evidence of professional indemnity and public liability insurance