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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29918**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 26-005**

**ESF funded activity to support individuals who are NEET in NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LEP area**

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION – FINAL TEMPLATE**  **Northamptonshire Local Enterprise Partnership – Northamptonshire NEET Support.**  **ITT\_29918-26-005** | |
| 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 Northamptonshire area set out below.  **Northamptonshire Local Enterprise Partnership**  The overarching vision for the ESIF and Strategic Economic Plan  (SEP) is to Increase the prosperity of Northamptonshire’s people and businesses by creating high skilled employment opportunities, within the most connected, safe and vibrant place to live, work and do business.  The Northamptonshire ESIF is about delivering the key priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy, namely:   * **Smart growth**: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation * **Sustainable growth**: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy * **Inclusive growth**: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion   This particular activity aligns the Creating a Responsive and Adaptable Workforce Priority 4 of the draft ESIF strategy, which will concentrate on improving the skills of potential and current workers to improve individual progression and business competitiveness and attracting more people into employment.  This Priority aims to support more people into employment, especially disadvantaged groups and the economically inactive as well as improving the skills of potential and current workers to improve individual progression and business competiveness.  The ESIF strategy prioritises support for young people aged 15-19 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and those at risk of becoming so. As part of building the evidence base for both the ESIF and SEP strategies, Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) commissioned a Local Economic Assessment, and Skills Strategy which provided the strategic context and rationale for all interventions including this tender to reduce the numbers of NEET individuals.  In terms of NEET levels in Northamptonshire, the current overall level is 6% with Urban areas having higher NEET concentration. Northampton experiences the highest rates, (of the largest population) with Wellingborough/East Northants/Kettering and Corby making up the middle band (the exact ranking fluctuates) and Daventry/South Northants having the lowest levels of NEET.  The costs to the individual and the economy of worklessness are well recognised and increasing the employability of those distant from the labour market will result in significant benefits to the economy.  There is also a need to support young people to make informed decisions in terms of training and employment opportunities and to intervene with those at risk of becoming NEET. | |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** | |
| **At risk of becoming NEET:** Support for at risk young people aged 15 to prevent them becoming NEET.  **Candidate:** means an organisation who has been invited to take part in this restricted procurement procedure.  **Disability**: A person has a disability if they disclose a disability that limits their ability to work.  **Eligibility:** Other than 15 year olds at risk of being NEET, only people who are eligible to work in UK are eligible for this programme. Asylum seekers are not generally supported by ESF.  **Employed**: People are employed if they perform work for pay, profit or family gain. People are self-employed if they work in his/her own business for the purpose of earning a profit, even if they are not making a profit or are just setting up.  **Job Seeking:** Where applicable, persons engaged in job seeking is understood to be persons usually without work and actively seeking work.  **Qualifications:** Qualification means a formal outcome assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards. Regulated qualifications/aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being regulated. Non-regulated aims are those listed in the Learning Aims Reference Service as being non-regulated.  Regulated and non-regulated aims must be planned to be delivered within budget.  Qualification rates are based on the published LARS rates at the start of the contract.  **Services:** The provision of education, training or support delivered to individuals.  **Start Date:** Employment status and age are determined on the date of starting on the Provision.  **Survey**: Where applicable, long term sustained outcomes over 6 months will be monitored separately. Some ESF indicators will be collected by survey by the ESF Managing Authority directly from the participants.  **Unemployed:** Unemployed are persons usually without work, available for work and actively seeking work. Persons considered registered unemployed would be included. Full time students are considered as inactive as they are not available for work. Long term unemployment is greater than 6 months for under 25 years old and greater than 12 months for 25 years old or more. | |
| **SERVICE REQUIREMENTS** | |
| **General**  All activities must complement and avoid duplication with other provision, thereby adding value to Department for Work and Pensions/Big Lottery, Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency, local authority, National Careers Service and the new Careers Enterprise Company funded provision. Successful candidates will be required to ensure that ESF provision will clearly add value and not duplicate any provision that can be arranged locally through existing mainstream institutions.  ***Capacity and readiness to deliver***  Candidates must have:   * The resources to offer very local and flexible delivery in the areas where levels of NEET are highest. * The capacity to deliver provision immediately upon commencement of the contract and that delivery should not be delayed in any way by any recruitment processes or other processes or relationships that need to be established.   ***Track record***  The ability to deliver the required activity, based on a track record in the successful delivery and management of this type of 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 Local Authority (LA) in the LEP area and will be expected to identify internal LA links across different departments. The Service must be able to respond to changing local needs and opportunities, as well as policy changes.  Candidates will be required to establish linkages with and have an understanding of local stakeholder needs and develop strong links with the key stakeholders.  ***Market intelligence and local knowledge***  The delivery of the Services must take into account the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence and in particular the specific factors affecting the area in which the Service is being delivered. A comprehensive understanding of the current employment market and the current and future social and economic indicators including labour market intelligence.  ***Management information and reporting***  Candidates will develop management information systems to enable it to submit data to the Skills Funding Agency via the Individual Learner Record (ILR) and put in place robust arrangements for ensuring that the evidence required to support payments is collected and retained.  Candidates will be required to share with LAs, LEPs and the Skills Funding Agency ongoing performance management data as well as additional intelligence to improve the effectiveness of all NEET reduction and prevention activities including details of each young person supported and update them of the young person’s progress.  Candidates will be required to share delivery/outcomes to ensure full coverage.  **LEP Specific**  The aim of the Services is to reduce the number of young people aged 15-18 (or up to 24 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD)) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the Northamptonshire area. The Services must improve the education, employability and personal skills of young people to enable them to progress successfully into work or further learning leading to employment 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:   * 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 * Contribute to the reduction of the numbers and percentage of NEETs in Northamptonshire at the end of the contract stage * Contribute to the reduction of the numbers of NEET in areas with a higher than the county average   The Services must provide a range of support to complement existing provision for supporting NEET individuals including provision through the Connexions/Horizon contract.  The Services must be linked to mainstream skills development and employment activity and that it supports a good understanding of the main skills and apprenticeship priorities for the Northamptonshire area.  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 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 Northamptonshire 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 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 Service 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. * 15-16 year olds at risk of being NEET have improved attendance, behaviour or attendance (confirmed by school). * 16-18 year olds who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET progress into Traineeships, apprenticeships, other local provision, Progressions into Raising Participation Age (RPA) approved pathways.   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](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/349300/Participation_of_Young_People_Statutory_Guidance.pdf) and implement robust and transparent performance measures, linked to clear progression routes for learners. These should be linked to 16-19 Study Programmes, RPA guidance and Department for Education (DfE) principles of effective re-engagement.  Local authorities must be consulted on the delivery of the Services 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 local authorities and by providing a combination of delivery styles and content.  In delivering the Services, linkages must be established with local stakeholders, which as a minimum will include schools, FE colleges, independent private and Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) providers, and the providers of other ESIF projects and the voluntary and community sector.  Specialist providers should be involved in the delivery of the Services where appropriate.  **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 a robust initial assessment and needs analysis for all young people, which will result in a robust individual learning plan with progress reviews and an exit interview. Additional support needs will be identified and provided, particularly to support progression and to include literacy and numeracy skills development where required.  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 include the effective use of enhanced and impartial, intensive and high quality IAG at all stages of a young person’s learning programme. This is designed to help young people gain a greater understanding of their own abilities, learning needs and the range of opportunities available supported by intensive IAG.  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; offer continuing support to maximise retention when they have progressed into learning; and engage specialist providers where necessary.  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, including training to provide peer support. This ensures each young person is given the most appropriate level of support in line with his or her 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 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. Opportunities should be offered in areas that young people respond to, such as sport, music, dance and outdoor activities.  The Services must be delivered in a range of settings, avoiding excessive levels of classroom-based activity. A range of opportunities that raise awareness of the world of work such as work tasters and enterprise should be made available. Activities should be aimed at confidence building, be motivational and should include summer activities to maintain interest and engagement. These can include community volunteering and innovative activities to address barriers to learning and work, and effective use of incentives.  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 should provide tailored support 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 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 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (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. This will be done 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 include the provision of employability skills including job preparation, interviews and understanding employer requirements. There should be opportunities for employer-based vocational training and tasters, employment trials, work placements or internships, work pairing and volunteering.  The Services must provide individualised wrap-around programmes of support focusing on English and Maths and including skills that may not be funded through mainstream. This programme 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.  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 must engage local stakeholders and have ongoing governance arrangements implemented for the Services, these must involve local authorities in steering the Services delivered and ensuring that the delivery of the Services continues to be relevant within the local context.  The successful Candidate must:   * 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. * 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 15 up to the age of 24 years, if they have a Learning Difficulty Assessment.  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.  Target Groups  The focus is primarily on delivering opportunities for 15, 16, 17 and 18 year olds who are currently NEET, with a key focus on the following priority groups:  Participants with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked after children, young offenders, pregnant girls, teenage parents, 16-18 year olds who are NEET and require additional employability skills and 16-18 year olds who are NEET and are from workless families.  At least 60 % of the learners should reside within a deprived area of the county.  Individuals must be aged 15-18 years at the start of their activity. (Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 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 regular timetabled learning *and* are at risk of not participating post-16. The Services 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. | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Northamptonshire Local Enterprise Partnership area.  The coverage for this activity is the whole of the LEP area which is the administrative boundary of Northamptonshire, but with specific focus in those areas of the county that have a higher rate of NEETs.  Urban areas within the county tend to have higher NEET concentration. Northampton experiences the highest rates, (of the largest population) with Wellingborough/East Northants/Kettering and Corby making up the middle band (the exact ranking fluctuates) and Daventry/South Northants having the lowest levels of NEET. | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £299,650 will be available for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available.  176 young people aged 15-24 years who are not in education, training or full time employment or at risk of becoming NEET receive training development and support.  All activity needs to be achieved within the lifetime of the contract.  The table below shows the initial planned outcomes, but performance management may change the volumes and mix during the life of the contract.  From the funding available on the regulated and non-regulated lines, the provider must plan to deliver the appropriate education & training for each participant to enable them to progress.  The minimum service deliverables, values and volumes for which evidence must be provided are:   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 176 | £50 | £8,800 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £112,800 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £63,450 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 20 | £800 | £16,000 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 10 | £400 | £4,000 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 41 | £400 | £16,400 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 60 | £800 | £48,000 | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 10 | £400 | £4,000 | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 20 | £100 | £2,000 | | SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | 10 | £100 | £1,000 | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 41 | £100 | £4,100 | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 60 | £100 | £6,000 | | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 10 | £100 | £1,000 | | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | 20 | £100 | £2,000 | | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | 41 | £100 | £4,100 | | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | 60 | £100 | £6,000 | | |