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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29912**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 33-005**

**ESF FUNDED ACTIVITY TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE NEET IN SWINDON & WILTSHIRE LEP AREA**

**SWINDON & WILTSHIRE**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION –**  **Swindon and Wiltshire LEP (SWLEP): Skills Coaching - *progressing into work younger people (not in work or at risk of becoming workless) aged 16-24 years.***  **ITT\_29912-33-005** |
| 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.  The SFA is looking to procure an organisation to deliver education and training services to support young people who are 16-24 who are not in education employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET in the LEP area set out below.  **Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SWLEP)**  The Services being procured are ESIF activity intervention under the Skills for Inclusion Thematic Grouping and documented in the SWLEP ESIF Strategy  The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) outlines the vision for 2026, where ‘we have a skilled and competitive workforce, meeting the needs of employers and driving business development and growth. Our economy offers jobs and opportunities for everyone, with different skills and Qualification, and regardless of age or personal circumstances.  The Vision is that more of our young people will gain good Qualifications between ages 16 and 19, particularly in the core skills of English and Maths and more progress into Apprenticeships, Employment and Higher Education. Young people are optimistic about their future and demonstrate this by staying in the area to make their livelihood here. They have a positive attitude to work and the underpinning knowledge and skills required. They aspire to work in the many high-tech firms in the area.  The Strategic aims and objectives for the Services are to :   * meet the skills needs of priority sectors as identified by SWLEP throughout the contract period * meet the needs of young people 16-24 so that they can progress into education, employment and training * improve attainment by 19 and skill levels of all young people, providing a pipeline of residents for City Deal at level 4+ * develop a flexible model of vocation training which provides pathways to employment. * engage workforce in lifelong learning and developing a culture of learning * address barriers to entering employment and meet the needs of young people who are vulnerable   This specification has been developed with input of current providers for NEET and Unemployed young people with a good understanding of what is currently working well and gaps to achieve the desired outcomes.  The Services will build on previous ESF projects and pilot programmes delivered in the area to ensure the interventions support young people into sustained employment. Employers are clearly stating that there are skills gaps in their workforce and that young people need to be better prepared for employment in order to compete.  NEET and unemployment has significantly reduced across the area but there are high numbers of 18 year olds who are NEET and these are not always reflected in the data re those claiming benefits, as many are not claiming.  NEET/Unemployed young people are overrepresented by certain groups including those with special educational needs, teenage parents, young offenders, young people with mental ill health, young people with low level Qualifications and young people who did not attend a main stream school.  Activity to support young people into work will include employers in the design and delivery of the Services so that young people are then successful in competing for work.  The will ensure some work is carried out with employers to ensure opportunities are sustained and on-going training and development needs are met.  There are currently no specific programmes and pathways which have the mechanisms to provide the intensive and extended support to the employers and the young people to ensure that vulnerable young people can overcome barriers to enter sustained work with training. |
| **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 increase the number of young people progressing from education into sustainable employment with training and able to access apprenticeship or traineeship positions.  It will reduce the number of 16-24 year old who are NEET/ workless or at risk of becoming NEET/ workless, including those young people who initially enter work but cannot sustain employment.  The Services must be delivered to support all target groups and their related needs across the whole of the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership area.  The Services relate to SWLEP ESIF Skills for Inclusion Activity 4.3. Approaches to supporting younger workless people (or those at risk of worklessness aged 16-24).  The Services will achieve the following for the priority groups:   * More employers offering and involved with the development of work experience, traineeships, supported internships and apprenticeships to the priority groups * More young people into sustainable work with training * Increase the number able to benefit from, and sustain a traineeship and achieve L2 in English and maths * Increase the numbers able to access and sustain apprenticeships * Increase the numbers accessing and sustaining apprenticeships at L3 and above * Young people able to access to a Skills Coach providing 1-2-1, small group bespoke support to achieve IT, English and maths in the workplace and / or community   **The detailed Services requirements are as follows:**  A referral mechanism that will successfully engage with the target group and roll on roll off flexibility of recruitment working with other training and DWP providers (16-24 years) to secure referral routes into the Services.  An innovative induction programme to gain early sustained engagement with young people.  An initial assessment and needs analysis for all individuals undertaking learning programmes which results in a robust individualised learning and transition plans where young people are planning to leave school or college with 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 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.  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 and be offered as a follow on Service once a learner has completed their programme.  The Services must provide individual and continuous mentor/key worker support. Case management should be continued as the young person engages in core funded skills programmes to ensure that their participation is sustained, that the young person continues to affirm / review their plan and that the transition between core funded programmes and employment is seamless and supported. The Services should provide motivational programmes to build confidence teamwork and resilience.  The Services should provide stimulating and motivating activities which raise awareness of the world of work, build confidence building and include summer activities to maintain interest and engagement, such as community volunteering.  The Services should include pre-employment training to enable young people to understand employer’s requirements such as attendance, attitude, motivation, language and behaviour management and skills such as interview preparation. Advice on and support on self-employment and business creation should also be made available.  As the young person moves into core funded provision the Services should include individualised support as required by the young person to achieve their core funded English and maths, job searching, interview practice or other that could be a barrier to progression, either ‘in programme’ or ‘between programmes’ and ultimately into an apprenticeship role, if not addressed.  Support should be provided 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 on-going mentoring. The Services should also support employers to develop progression pathways to advanced and higher level apprenticeships  The Services should ensure that use is made of incentives such as AGE where applicable and available.  In delivering of the Services engage specialist providers should be engaged where necessary.  The Services must draw on examples of innovative practice linking schools, colleges, voluntary sector, Job Centres, health professionals and Welfare to Work providers. It will encourage access to work / work experience at the earliest opportunity using an IPS approach. IPS is an evidenced based approach and stands for Individual Placement and Support. IPS supports people with mental health and those who are furthest from the job market in their efforts to achieve steady employment in mainstream competitive jobs, either part-time or full-time. |
| **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**  Must be 16-24 NEET or at risk of being NEET.  The primary target is 16-24 year old NEET / unemployed or at risk of being NEET / unemployed (at the start of their participation) including those young people who are in learning and seeking work and those who can’t sustain employment and enter and re-enter states of NEET/ unemployment on a cyclical basis, but they must be NEET on the day they start this programme.  This will include university/college leavers and the hidden workless who are not claiming benefits and are often challenging to identify and therefore engage with.  The programme will grow the number of employers providing work with training opportunities to young people 16-24 and work with employers who already employ young people 16-24 but where there are retention and progression issues.  The activity will provide specific provision and pathways for vulnerable young people to ensure they are able to enter and sustain employment:   * Young people with a learning difficulty or disability * Young offenders either serving or recently released from a custodial sentence, and ex-offenders * Children in care/care leavers * Young parents * Drug and alcohol misuse * Young people with mental ill health.   The project will find and engage young people as well as developing robust referral routes with health professionals, schools, colleges, Welfare to Work providers, Local Authority Youth Employment Workers, Adult Services and the voluntary sector. |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP area only.  The Services must be delivered from venues located within the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP area, with priority given to young people who are resident in, or on the school roll within, that area.  Learning and/or employment placements can be outside this boundary.  The Candidate will focus on geographic areas where young people are over- represented in the NEET / Unemployed cohort. |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £899,450 will be available for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available.  All activity must 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:   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Deliverable** | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 500 | £50 | £25,000 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £287,200 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £213,750 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 124 | £800 | £99,200 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 50 | £400 | £20,000 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 200 | £800 | £160,000 | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 49 | £400 | £19,600 | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 118 | £100 | £11,800 | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 47 | £100 | £4,700 | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 190 | £100 | £19,000 | | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 47 | £100 | £4,700 | | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | 94 | £100 | £9,400 | | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | 44 | £100 | £4,400 | | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | 170 | £100 | £17,000 | | SU15 Sustained Traineeship 6 Months | SU15 Sustained Traineeship 6 Months | 37 | £100 | £3,700 | |