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**SPECIFICATION**

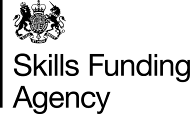
**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29917**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 29-002**

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

**SOLENT**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION – FINAL TEMPLATE**  **SOLENT LEP - ENHANCED TRAINEESHIPS**  **ITT\_29917-29-002** | |
| 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 Solent LEP area set out below.  **Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (Solent LEP)**  The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership’s Strategic Economic Plan (*Transforming Solent*) and the ESIF Strategy set out a vision to create an environment that will generate employment and private sector investment in the Solent, building on the considerable strengths of the area. In the period to 2020 the Solent LEP will create an additional 15,500 new jobs in the Solent area and achieve GVA growth of 3%. In addition to current forecasts the Solent LEP also aims to increase GVA per capita by £3,000 per head; to increase employment rates to 80% from the current 78%; and to improve economic activity rates from 80% to 81%.  Within the broader vision the Solent LEP has clear objectives to:   * **Maximise the economic impact** of marine and maritime assets in the area and sectors with the potential for growth. Promoting the area as the UK’s leading growth hub for advanced manufacturing, marine and aerospace both at home and in the global marketplace; * **Unlock critical employment sites** to enable the Solent businesses, particularly the marine, maritime and advanced manufacturing sectors of the economy to expand; * **Provide new housing** to support a growing workforce; * **Ensure people have the right skills** to access employment and support growing sectors; * **Provide effective support to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)** to enable them to grow and * **Unlock innovation-led growth** to engage more businesses in knowledge transfer and innovation.   The design of the Solent LEP ESIF programme supports the wider objectives of *Transforming Solent*. This Service builds on the existing pre-apprenticeship programme on the Isle of Wight, recently extended across the Solent, in which 16 and 17 year olds were paid the minimum apprenticeship wage while on a work experience placement lasting up to 26 weeks. Between November 2011 and June 2013, it supported 170 placements and is an important factor in maintaining low levels of youth unemployment on the Island. In 2012, just 4.7% of 16 to 18 year olds, or 220 individuals, on the Isle of Wight were NEET. This is much lower than the rate found in Portsmouth (7.8%) and Southampton (6.3%). It is even lower than the rate found in the prosperous county of Hampshire (4.8%), which has a much lower incidence of overall unemployment. 84.5% of the young people completing the programme progressed to a full apprenticeship, employment or further education and training. 43.6% progressed onto apprenticeships.  Youth unemployment remains a serious problem and is “hardening”. In May 2013, 2,365 people aged 18-24 in the Solent had been unemployed for longer than six months compared to 670 in May 2008. It is essential that young people are supported in making an effective transition into the labour market and, where this transition does not occur smoothly, that intervention measures are in place to prevent young people becoming permanently detached from work. There is also a need to address employers’ concerns about young people lacking the right skills and attitudes for work or an apprenticeship. Too many have little or no experience of seeking, or being in work. At a time when they are competing for jobs against adults with more skills and experience, young people are too often passed over. Traineeships and apprenticeships are invaluable in helping young people make this transition, addressing simultaneously both youth unemployment and employers’ skills needs.  It is intended that the delivery of this Service will provide intensive support for those who would not be able to manage a traineeship or apprenticeship, tackling youth unemployment in the area, particularly focused but not exclusively, on areas of deprivation. It is additional to the support currently available through mainstream programmes and will support those currently furthest from the labour market.  ***Links to Solent LEP strategies and plans***  A link to the Solent LEP website <http://solentlep.org.uk/>  <http://solentlep.org.uk/uploads/documents/Solent_EU_SIF_Strategy_-_19.05_.2014_.pdf>  <http://solentlep.org.uk/uploads/documents/Solent_Skills_Plan_2014.pdf>  <http://solentlep.org.uk/uploads/documents/Solent_Strategic_Economic_Plan.pdf>  <http://solentlep.org.uk/uploads/documents/LR_Solent_LEP_Brochure_Final.pdf>  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/city-deal-southampton-and-portsmouth> | |
| **DEFINITION OF TERMS** | |
| **At risk of becoming NEET:** Support for at risk young people aged 15-24 to prevent them becoming NEET.  **Candidate:** means an organisation who has been invited to take part in this restricted procurement procedure  **Disability**: A person has a disability if they disclose a disability that limits their ability to work.  **Eligibility:** Other than 15-24 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 15-24 (including those learners with learning difficulty or disability (LLDD)) who are NEET or are at risk of becoming NEET.  The delivery of the Services should reflect the needs of Solent, its communities, businesses and economy. They should complement and not duplicate existing local provision in particular the City Deal youth employment programme.  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 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 of the Solent geographical area.  The Service will support individuals to progress into apprenticeships, further learning or work, including voluntary work.  Effective relationships with Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) providers; Local Authorities; FE providers and other possible referral agencies must be established as part of the delivery of the Services:   * Focus on areas of deprivation across the Solent as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation * No restrictions in terms of prior qualifications   Services must be delivered to young people referred from agencies dealing with care leavers, ex-offenders, young people with disabilities, those affected by drug misuse and those who come from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Young people in equalities groups prioritised in the cross-cutting themes, will make up a significant proportion of the participant cohort.  **The detailed services requirements are as follows:**  The Services must provide innovative marketing, outreach, engagement and re-engagement activities to overcome barriers to participation for those young people who are NEET and those that are identified as being at risk of becoming NEET.  There must be an innovative induction programme to gain early engagement of those at risk of being NEET and "not-known" individuals.  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, 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.  There must be robust initial assessment and needs analysis for all young people, which will result in a robust individual learning plan with regular progress reviews and an exit interview.  The Services must provide individual and continuous mentor support to encourage continued engagement with the Services.  The Services should provide a combination of personal planning, mentoring, and coaching, counselling and on-going one to ones, and include personal and social development support including if appropriate support to access other services such as housing or health care. The Services should include activities aimed at developing confidence and life skills training including support with managing money.  The Services should include innovative delivery methods which should include outreach or residential opportunities if appropriate to meet a young person’s assessed needs.  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 be made available.  The Services must provide enhanced traineeships for young people who need support outside of that which is provided by the national Traineeship programme which offer added components such as work tasters, short periods of skills training, retention support, and encouragement/help with continuous job search while in work experience placements. Enhanced traineeships must be delivered in conjunction with providers with Traineeship funding to ensure that young people will be both be able to gain the support they need - through this provision but also the mainstream offer.  The Services should develop and demonstrate young people’s employability skills through a range of structured opportunities such as enterprise, employer-based vocational training and tasters, employment trials, work pairing, work experience, internships and voluntary work in both public and private sectors or in the third sector and/or part-time, evening or weekend work.  The Services must deliver vocational training and qualifications linked to key employment sectors, agreed with the LEP and provide local opportunities in particular through apprenticeships or Traineeships.  The Services must include individualised programmes of support for functional skills including English and maths, and including skills that may not be funded through mainstream provision to meet assessed need.  The Services must include differentiated delivery for different groups of young people, demonstrating an in-depth understanding of their varied and complex needs.  This must include the provision of personalised and flexible programmes which take account of the different aspirations and needs of different groups including (but not exclusively):   * those in care and care leavers * Individuals identified by the troubled families programme * young carers and teenage parents * those with mental health difficulties including behavioural and social difficulties * those from BME communities including travellers * those who have been home educated * those who are homeless * ex-offenders, offenders and those at risk of offending * those with disabilities including those with mild to moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities.   The Services should include any provision to support young people aged 16 and 17 to overcome the barriers that would otherwise stop them from participating in the Services, for example travel, childcare and equipment (this cost is included within the unit costs provided).  The successful Candidates will be required to:   * share performance data with the LEP * share delivery/outcomes split across all LA geographies to ensure full coverage of the Solent LEP area * set up a steering group for the programme, which the LEP reserves the right to have a place at * undertake a quarterly (minimum) joint meeting with the SFA, LEP or their nominated representative. * complete a full evaluation report including summary evaluation to include what worked well; constraints to delivery success and improvements for the future | |
| **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 be open to :   * All young persons who are NEET, at risk of NEET, or unemployed in the Solent LEP area who are aged 15-24 at the start date of the activity * Young people aged 16-24 through the City Deal programme | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership area with an emphasis on those areas experiencing high levels of deprivation as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £693,000 will be available for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31March 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:  525 young people aged 15-24 years to receive Enhanced Traineeships of which:   * 399 to be unemployed participants (76%) * 126 to be inactive participants (24%)   All activity is to be achieved within the project lifetime.   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 525 | £70 | £36,750 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £200,000 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £236,250 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 140 | £600 | £84,000 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 30 | £400 | £12,000 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 85 | £400 | £34,000 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 150 | £600 | £90,000 | | |