



Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities

## **Pre-Tender Market Engagement**

**CPD4124282**

### **English for Speakers of Other Languages and Employment Support**

**Department:** Department for Levelling up Communities and Housing  
(DLUHC) (“the Department”).

**Date Response required:** 5pm (GMT) 04 April 2023

## **1 PURPOSE**

1.1 In an extension of the government’s support for Ukrainians fleeing the war who have arrived in the UK under the Ukraine Visa Schemes, the government is providing £11.5 million to offer intensive English language courses and employment support to up to 10,000 individuals. This new funding is expected to boost the number of Ukrainians entering the labour market for the first time, as well as helping those already employed into higher-skilled roles. This Pre-Tender Market Engagement (PTME) seeks information in preparation for the potential procurement of a Provider (from herein referred to as a “Potential Provider”) to increase access to suitable English language training and employment support to support Ukrainians in entering employment, as well as helping those already in low paid employment, into higher skilled jobs. The Department is seeking a single Potential Provider to deliver this contract. Further details, including additional groups who may be eligible for this support and whether this programme will be UK-wide, will be published in due course.

1.2 The purpose of this PTME is to:

- help define the requirement;
- help provide a better understanding of the feasibility of the requirement;
- understand the best approach;
- understand the capacity of the market to deliver and possible risks involved; and

- provide the market with an opportunity to ask questions and raise queries and any issues to be addressed at an early stage.

The Department shall maintain commercial confidentiality of information received during the PTME.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Since Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, **over [165,000<sup>1</sup>] Ukrainians have been welcomed to the UK through the three Ukraine visa schemes:**

- The Ukraine Family Scheme – for Ukrainians who have family who are settled in the UK;
- The Homes for Ukraine scheme, launched by the government on 14 March 2022, which allows people living in the UK to sponsor a named Ukrainian national or family to come to live in the UK with them, providing they have suitable accommodation to offer; and
- The Ukraine Extension Scheme:
  - for those Ukrainians who held permission to be in the UK on or between 18 March 2022 and 16 May 2023; and
  - Ukrainians who held permission to be in the UK and that permission expired on or after 1 January 2022.

2.2 While many adults who have arrived through these three schemes are now employed in the UK, 56% of arrivals recently surveyed<sup>2</sup>, who have faced difficulty in finding work, reported limited English language skills as an ongoing barrier to taking up work or moving into roles more suited to their skills and qualifications. Boosting these Ukrainians' English language skills is also vital to support their integration into society across the UK, and the Department is already providing a £1 million fund to the Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMPs) to improve the provision and capacity

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-family-scheme-application-data/ukraine-family-scheme-and-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme-homes-for-ukraine-visa-data--2>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/visaholdersenteringtheukundertheukrainehumanitarianschemes/17octoberto7november2022>

of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services for Ukrainian guests on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

2.3 The Department is now seeking to enhance English Learning provision and employment support by awarding a Contract that will increase access to suitable English language training and provide an employment support service to support Ukrainians in entering employment in the UK for the first time as well as helping those already in employment into higher skilled jobs. The Department is seeking a single Potential Provider to deliver this contract. This follows the announcement made in the Spring Budget on 15 March 2023 of an £11.5 million employment support programme to provide intensive English language and employment support to up to 10,000 Ukrainians. Eligibility may potentially be expanded to include other groups in similar circumstances and for it to be potentially across the UK.

2.4 English language training and support into employment will allow Ukrainians to become independent and support themselves and their families during their time here in the UK. The Department's aim in establishing this programme is to increase the number of Ukrainians who are in work and particularly into higher skilled jobs, improving the likelihood of self-sufficiency within a one-year timeframe

2.5 The award of the contract will focus on the Potential Provider delivering targeted and intensive ESOL courses and high-quality, individualised employability support for up to 10,000 eligible unemployed (and under-employed) Ukrainians.

### 3 HIGH LEVEL OUTLINE PROJECT OUTCOMES REQUIRED

3.1 This programme is a priority for the Department. Through a procurement competition, we are seeking to select a recognised Provider (or leader of a consortium who would enter into a service level agreement). The Potential Provider (or leader of a consortium) will need to deliver at pace the following four objectives:

**Objective 1:** To assess learners' initial English Language skills and identify barriers to entering the employment market, or into higher skilled roles and develop tailored support plan.

**Objective 2:** To provide tailored English Language tuition (with an increase in English standards of the cohort by 1-2 levels out of 3CEFRqualification levels) to 10,000 Ukrainians

**Objective 3:** To provide high-quality, individualised employability support to 10,000 Ukrainians in parallel to providing English Language classes.

**Objective 4:** At least 40% of students to be in employment/better employment within 12 months of beginning their training.

3.2 We require the Potential Provider to deliver an online ESOL programme at flexible times of day to suit this cohort's needs. This programme should be as intensive as possible with an expectation of up to 20 hours ESOL classes a week after an initial 1–2-hour assessment; alongside which, high-quality, individualised employability support of up to 12 hours over the programme should be provided on an individual basis. This should include an initial assessment of, on average, 1 to 2 hours before the end of week 1; 1-2 hours on average to develop an employment plan upon week 3; and then 1 to 2 hours a week from week 7 to support in accessing employment opportunities. This service can be provided virtually.

The Potential Provider should recognise there may be other barriers to employment, such as childcare issues and wellbeing of the student who has fled a war. As such the Potential Provider should seek engagement with those issues and refer student on to local services. We would expect individuals to complete the course within 10 weeks. The Potential Provider will supply a certificate of completion of the course along with a summary of the course content covered in it.

## **Social Value**

3.3 The Provider should recognise there may be other barriers to employment, such as childcare issues and the wellbeing of the student who has fled a war. As part of the social value element of this contract we shall be asking providers how they can support students in these situations, and where appropriate their referral mechanism

to local services<sup>3</sup>. The Department aims to secure and maximise additional tangible social value benefits in accordance with [The Social Value Model](#) through explicit delivery of this specific contract. We are considering the following criteria:

- Theme 5: Wellbeing
  - Policy Outcome: Improve Community Integration
    - MAC 8.1: Demonstrate collaboration with users and communities in the co-design and delivery of the contract to support strong integrated communities.
    - MAC 8.2: Influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to support strong, integrated communities.
- The Provider will be asked to commit and report as part of the Key Performance Indicators on the following:
  - Proposal and agreement of appropriate approach and methodology
  - Completion of milestones to agreed timeframe
  - Completion of course to satisfactory standard, including completeness of information and readability of reports.
  - Learners in employment within 12 months of starting the course following initial implementation.

## 4 OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

4.1 Whilst potential students are referred by their council/SMP/Job centre/other education provider and/or self-referred. The Provider will be expected to refer the students that do not fit with the eligibility criteria to alternative provisions (such as the Adult Education Budget offer delivered through Colleges and local authorities). The Provider will be required to assess the eligibility of candidates for this programme.

---

<sup>3</sup> If in any doubt please refer to:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/940828/Social-Value-Model-Quick-Reference-Table-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940828/Social-Value-Model-Quick-Reference-Table-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf)

4.2 The Provider is expected to produce an individualised support plan for each learner, identifying how they will improve their English skills and overcome barriers to employment through employability support.

**For English language provision:**

4.3 Provide intensive online English language lessons of up to 20 hours a week as a minimum, delivered flexibly to suit the cohort's needs.

**This will include (but is not limited to):**

- Assessing students English learning needs.
- Helping students improve reading, writing, speaking and listening in English aimed to enable them to access the employment market.
- Providing specific language skills for those seeking employment in specific professional employment e.g., nursing.
- One to one support including regular check-ins to motivate and monitor progress.
- Daily check on attendance and learning at the ESOL course for the initial few weeks and then weekly checks for the remaining weeks.
- End of course assessment leading to an English certificate indicating the level of achievement.

**For employability support**

4.4 Employment support should be delivered 1-2 hours per week after week three, increasing in intensity from week seven. Depending on individual's needs these sessions may be one-to-one support or provided in group settings.

**This will include (but is not limited to):**

- Support with seeking recognition of existing professional qualifications where the qualification is relevant to the employment sought;
- Signposting to job boards and/or job opportunities.
- Support with CV writing and job applications.
- Undertaking interview practice including providing actionable feedback and role-playing cultural norms around interviewing as needed; and

- Support in preparing for self-employment, including but not limited to, signposting to local entrepreneurship services, and training to understand business, the UK tax system and how to access financial support and start-up capital.
- The Provider shall ensure that paid-for vocational and/or technical training is provided to a recognised standard (for example, in-line with qualification levels in England What qualification levels mean: England, Wales and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)))

The Potential Provider should also provide qualitative evidence such as case studies of individuals

### **For mobilising and managing the service:**

4.5 The Department will support the Potential Provider to deliver the work to the required standard. This support will include:

- Provide the Potential Provider's contact details to lead contacts within councils and SMPs where required
- Being responsive to requests for engagement from the Potential Provider
- Providing copies of relevant information held relating to the English levels and employment support of the cohort. (This information should be extracted from anonymised user surveys)
- Informing SMPs and councils about the work ahead of time and encouraging them to signpost this work to potential students.

4.6 The Potential Provider will work with the contract manager in the Department to deliver project objectives, update meetings, and reports as required. At a minimum these will include:

- An initial meeting to introduce team members and agree an approach to engagement going forwards,
- A meeting to discuss emerging issues at an agreed stage during the review process,
- A meeting with the Department and the councils and SMPs to present the programme and findings.
- A monthly progress meeting to assess performance against contract deliverables

4.7 Contact between the Department and the Potential Provider is not limited to the above should further contact be necessary.

4.8 The Potential Provider is also expected to work collaboratively with relevant industry bodies, government bodies and interest groups to collect and research knowledge related to the programme where necessary.

4.9 Councils and SMPs could help the Potential Provider by:

- Referring potential students to the training programme.
- Offering AEB-funded English classes and alternative English learning classes if fitting.
- Providing computer access in public libraries to complete the training course.

4.10 Referrals to the provision may come from councils, SMPs, DWP, JCP, Voluntary sector bodies, education providers and individuals. The Potential Provider will then:

- Conduct a triage process to ensure that referrals are suitable, considering availability, IT literacy, whether the student can make the time commitment, and current English language standards.
- Referrals should then be placed into course groups by ability and by availability to attend – with an expectation that courses are run at differing times according to demand. Our aim is for at least 35-40% learners to complete the ESOL part of the programme by month six of the contract.

4.11 Each objective of the programme, as laid out in the 'Objectives' section is mandatory. Performance measures include (but are not limited to):

- Assessment of the extent to which the Potential Provider has fulfilled their bid
- Draft report provided to agreed timeframe
- Final report provided to agreed timeframe
- Satisfactory output that reflects what the Potential Provider has proposed in their bid.

## **5 KEY DATES & TENDERING PROCESS**



5.1 We expect the successful provider to deliver this contract at pace. Key dates for delivery are set out below.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deliverable Description</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
1	Commencement start date	Within 1 week of contract award
2	Output: Start of training course of first set of learners	Within 4 weeks of contract award
3	Output: 40% of learners in employment/better employment	Within 12 months of learner starting course
4	Evaluation report	Within 2 weeks after initial course end date

5.2 If it is decided this service is required, it is anticipated that a procurement may start mid-April 2023 with the contract to commence June 2023. These indicative rates are for information purposes only. The Department reserves the right to amend these dates at any time, and Potential Provider rely on them entirely at their own risk.

5.3 The contract is expected to be for a period of up to 12 months.

## **6 RESPONSE**

6.1 Please respond by email to [commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk) with the following by 5pm (GMT) 04 April (the “Response Deadline”) using the same subject text and reference numbers in your response.

6.2

- Q1: Would you be interested in bidding for this project?
- Q2: Is what the Department asking for clear?
- Q3: What would the indicative cost breakdown be for this piece of work?

- Q4: In your view, is this project deliverable in the proposed timeframe?
- Q5: Has the Department missed or overlooked anything material in setting out their requirement? How could DLUHC enhance our initial information in this document to inform any potential future specification?
- Q6: Is the proposed study time realistic to move quickly between ESOL levels?
- Q7: How would you plan the course to ensure an even spread of training throughout the year and to ensure 10,000 students go through the programme.
- Q8: Are there any elements of wrap-around support that we have missed? If so, what would you recommended that DLUHC includes here?
- Q9: What depth of capacity (how many staff members/what qualification do staff have/resources), in your view, would a third-party provider need to successfully deliver this requirement?
- Q10: What additional information and/or data sets would you need to deliver a high-quality proposal to DLUHC?
- Q11: What do you perceive as the most important challenges in the potential delivery of this requirement? Please also outline the "Why?" and rationale of said perception. How might DLUHC and/or your organisation mitigate against said challenges and balance pace and individualised learner led journey?
- Q12: Do you feel comfortable working collaboratively with councils and SMPs (for example, to ensure there is a smooth referral process and, if necessary, to provide access to computers)?
- Q13: What should, could, or would "success" of this contract look like to your organisation? How would your organisation quantify this?
- Q14: How would the programme be tailored to Ukrainians here in the UK on the three visa schemes listed? How could you tailor it to other cohorts of refugees?
- Q15: Are the proposed Social Value Themes and Policy Outcomes appropriate for this requirement? Please elaborate on your reasons why and/or suggest alternatives from the model that could be applied and why these alternatives would be more relevant
- Q16: In your opinion, what is the level of risk of modern slavery in your supply chain? Can modern slavery risks be managed / mitigated within the service?

- Q17: What would your organisation suggest as a payment model that would achieve a high degree of delivery? Please also outline the logic and "Why?" of your suggest payment model."

## 7 QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- 7.1 The Department will hold an online meeting for interested providers setting out the requirements and allowing questions from providers at 11am to 12.30 pm on 29 March 2023. Please contact: [commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk) if you would like to participate. In addition, Potential Providers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this PTME document at any time prior to the Response Deadline. Questions must be submitted by email to [commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk) only.
- 7.2 To ensure that all Potential Providers have equal access to information regarding this PTME exercise, responses to questions raised by Potential Providers will be published in a "Questions and Answers" document on gov.uk.
- 7.3 Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
- 7.4 If a Potential Provider wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being revealed, then the Potential Provider must state this in their email and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If the Department does not consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the Potential Provider will be invited to decide whether:
- the question/clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
  - it wishes to withdraw the question/clarification.

## 8 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 8.1 This a draft specification. The specification that will go to procurement will be substantially different. The specification and tender launch are subject to full business case approval within the Department. This PTME will help the Department to refine the requirements and to understand the potential level of

interest in the delivering requirements. It will also aid Potential Providers' understanding of the requirements in advance of any formal competitive tender exercise.

- 8.2 The Department reserves the right to change any information contained within this PTME at any time, and Potential Providers rely upon it entirely at their own risk.
- 8.3 The Department reserves the right not to proceed with a competitive tender exercise after this PTME or to award any contract.
- 8.4 All costs associated with the production of such a response to this PTME must be borne by the Potential Providers.
- 8.5 Information contained within this document is confidential and must not be revealed to any third party without prior written consent from the Department.
- 8.6 No down-selection of Potential Providers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this PTME.
- 8.7 The Department expects that all responses to this PTME will be provided by Potential Providers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
- 8.8 No information provided by a Potential Provider in response to this PTME will be carried forward, used, or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the Potential Provider, in any subsequent formal procurement process.
- 8.9 PTME responses are not published in the public domain and any commercially sensitive information provided by the respondents would be exempt from Freedom of Information requests.