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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29909**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 37-001**

**SUPPORT TO IMPROVE employability and employment for NEET and those at risk of NEET (15-24) IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) AREA**

**WEST OF ENGLAND**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION**  **West of England LEP: Support to improve employability and employment for NEET and those at risk of NEET (15-24).**  **ITT\_29909-37-001** | |
| 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 LEP area set out below.  **West of England Local Enterprise Partnership**  The proposed activity reflects directly the approach laid down by the West of England EUSIF Strategy  Those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) or at risk of being so, present a particular challenge. Businesses cannot afford to invest in basic literacy, numeracy, IT and life skills development. Companies continually report that the product of education and training falls short of their needs. Whilst the percentage of NEETs in the West of England is slightly lower than the national average, there remain 42,000 people looking for work. 18,100 unemployed people are aged 16-24. The societal implications of 16 -18 year old NEETs and those at risk of becoming NEETs are clear.  Employment rates in the West of England remain above the national average. However, these figures disguise very significant market failure in some areas, for example, youth employment, long-term unemployment and general employment levels in economically disadvantaged areas of the City region. Thus employment issues in specific areas and communities across the West of England remain and need to be addressed.  The West of England has a particular challenge with a rise in long term claimants amongst the 18-24 age population. There are disparities between the four local authority areas, and the problem is at its worst amongst young males in North Somerset. 16-18 year olds are well represented in the learning population, but numbers decline dramatically in those aged 18-24. The largest cohort of claimants comprises males aged 16-49, although the take-up of skills training provision is low amongst those aged 24 and above. The proportion of young people who are NEET rose in most parts of the West of England over the last year, while it fell in most other LEP areas and nationally. The problem is particularly acute in Bristol. Also notable is the progressive rise in the number of young people who are NEET from age 16 up to age 18. There are considerable opportunities to provide more skills training for people seeking to re-enter the jobs market.  **Particular objectives of this project:**  Objective 1:  Sustainably reduce the overall number of young people (aged 15-24) in the West of England who are classed as being either NEET or at risk of becoming N.E.E.T. over the contract lifetime.  Objective 2:  Improve employability of young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET in the West of England over the contract lifetime.  Objective 3:  Enable progression routes for young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET in the West of England and who have been challenging to engage with.  **Specific links which candidates should consider when applying to supply services for this project:**  WE LEP General: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk)  WE LEP Economic Intelligence: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/about-us/economic-intelligence](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/about-us/economic-intelligence)  WE LEP People and Skills: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/people-and-skills](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/people-and-skills)  Bristol Enterprise Zone: [www.bristoltemplequarter.com](http://www.bristoltemplequarter.com)  Avonmouth / Severnside Enterprise Area: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-avonmouth-severnside](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-avonmouth-severnside)  Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-bath](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-bath)  [www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/major-projects/bath-enterprise-area-city-ideas](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/major-projects/bath-enterprise-area-city-ideas)  Emersons Green Enterprise Area: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-emersonsgreen](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-emersonsgreen)  Filton Enterprise Area: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-filton](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/ea-filton)  Junction 21 Enterprise Area: [www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/junction-21-enterprise-area](http://www.westofenglandlep.co.uk/business/projects/junction-21-enterprise-area) | |
| **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 Services will provide support to improve the employability and employment of young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, to ensure they are sustainably engaged with education, employment and/or training.  The Services will provide a NEET engagement programme which targets young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, across the West of England.  The Services must focus on those NEET young people who are closest to a return to education, employment and/or training. This will require key linkages being made with NEET programmes concentrating on those NEET individuals who are harder to engage and work. This will ensure that there is a clear referral route into this ESF funded provision and that these young people have a clear progression route. The Services must identify and recruit eligible young people onto the programme with the geographical focus of recruitment reflecting known eligible cohorts in the four West of England Unitary Authorities.  The Services must address the barriers and needs that are preventing the participant from sustainably engaging with education, employment and/or training.  The Services will also receive referrals and act as a progression route from other NEET focused provision in the West of England, especially provision which is aimed at very hard to engage NEET (or at risk of NEET) young people.  The Services should focus on those who are closest to a sustainable re-engagement with education, employment and/or training. As such it will not displace or duplicate existing or planned activity and will add value to these services (e.g. the Big Lottery Fund NEET provision).  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 link to mainstream skills development and employment activity; so that it supports and integrates with the other relevant delivery mechanisms in the West of England area. It must be based on a good understanding of the main skills and apprenticeship priorities for the West of England area.  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 West of England Local 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 a 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 to be provided must include ’sustained progression’ in a range of outcomes (apprenticeships, education, etc.). All deliverables including ‘sustained progressions’ must be delivered during the term of the contract. This is to ensure that all agreed deliverables can be measured and funded.  **The detailed services requirements are as follows**  The Services must include an innovative induction programme, which is flexible enough 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 high quality individual learning plan with regular progress reviews and an exit interview. There must be arrangements to have additional support needs identified and provided, particularly to support progression and 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 address difficulties with accessibility/transport and the requirement for provision for small groups.  The Services must include the effective use of enhanced and impartial, intensive and high quality Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) at all stages of a young person’s learning programme. This should be 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 a one-to-one key worker as appropriate according to the initial assessment. A key focus should be placed on helping the participants to gain and then sustain that employment.  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 and ensures each young person is given the most appropriate level of support in line with their 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.  The Services provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable groupsmust address participation, retention, achievement and the progression of young people with certain disadvantages. The Service will support the sustained engagement, transition and progression through creation of individual support packages, appropriate to the particular needs of the vulnerable young person 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, 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 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. There should be clear progression routes for learners linked to 16-19 Study Programmes, Raising Participation Age guidance and Department for Education principles of effective re-engagement.  In delivering the Services, linkages must be established with local stakeholders, which as a minimum will include schools, FE colleges, independent private and IAG providers, and the providers of other relevant ESIF projects. In particular:   * Linkage with the successful Big Lottery Fund NEET Provider * Linkage with the current National Careers Service Provider in the West of England * Linkages with EFA/SFA funded mainstream provision to ensure the target group have access to appropriate technical skills training   Other links with relevant stakeholders to be made as required.  The successful Candidate will meet representatives from West of England LEP on a quarterly basis.  The successful Candidate will be a required to:   * 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 * Engage with LEP / ESIF oversight and scrutiny activity to support LEP's. * Undertake a quarterly (minimum) joint meeting with the SFA, LEP, or their nominated representative * Undertake an on-going review to ensure the regional/sub-regional/LA requirements are being met, and to report the findings of the review when requested to do so by the LEP, or their nominated representative * Undertake an 18 month wider strategic evaluation of NEET activity and the impacts that have been delivered which is carried out by the NEET Co-ordinator, and to share the results of this evaluation with the LEP or their nominated representative * Attend the LEP Employability Group meetings to report on contract progress | |
| **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**  Target Group: Young People aged 15-24 who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET.  Eligibility:   * Aged 15-24 at the start of the activity * Classified as NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET   Priority Groups:   * Care Leavers – Including young people leaving aged 18-24 * Disabled people – Including young adults aged 19-24 who face barriers to employment due to their physical impairment or due to mental ill health * Young Males * Lone Parents * BAME * Young offenders | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership area.  Specifically the area of delivery will be:  West of England wide taking into account the specific characteristics and challenges facing young people in the four Unitary Authority areas (down to ward level):   * Bath and North East Somerset * City of Bristol * North Somerset * South Gloucestershire   Ensure a focus on the following Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas:   * Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone * Avonmouth / Severnside Enterprise Area * Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area * Emersons Green Enterprise Area * Filton Enterprise Area * J21 Enterprise Area | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £1,714,275 will be available for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 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.  All activity needs to be achieved within the lifetime of the contract.  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 | 958 | £50 | £47,900 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £151,200 | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  |  | £136,050 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 296 | £675 | £199,800 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 67 | £400 | £26,800 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 269 | £675 | £181,575 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 134 | £675 | £90,450 | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 40 | £325 | £13,000 | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 222 | £500 | £111,000 | | SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | 50 | £333 | £16,650 | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 202 | £500 | £101,000 | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 101 | £500 | £50,500 | | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 30 | £333 | £9,990 | | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | 222 | £1,000 | £222,000 | | SU12 Sustained Unpaid Employment 6 Months | SU12 Sustained Unpaid Employment 6 Months | 50 | £667 | £33,350 | | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | 202 | £1,000 | £202,000 | | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | 101 | £1,000 | £101,000 | | SU15 Sustained Traineeship 6 Months | SU15 Sustained Traineeship 6 Months | 30 | £667 | £20,010 | | Total £ |  |  |  | £1,714,275 | | |