

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Peer Network Invitation to Tender

The New Anglia Peer Network Programme, is part of a national initiative funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) being delivered in collaboration with the LEP and the New Anglia Growth Hub. The LEP team are inviting proposals from prospective Facilitators for network support.

Background

The BEIS Business Productivity Review in 2019 found that businesses that adopt formal management practices are more likely to achieve higher turnover, employment levels and productivity growth. Evidence also shows that businesses that seek external advice or undertake formal training are more likely to improve their overall business performance and illustrates the importance of business managers learning from peers, particularly in their local area.

The Programme's longer-term aims are focused on reducing the UK productivity gap by helping business leaders find practical solutions to strategic and operational challenges driving longer-term productivity gains. The Programme also forms part of the UK Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing EU transition, seeking to improve the resilience of SMEs, their capability to adapt their business models to the "new normal" and position themselves for future success.

Active involvement in a Peer Network should enhance the leadership capabilities, knowledge and confidence of SME business owners and entrepreneurs, help build regional connectivity and strengthen the SME business community.

A team of three Coordinators, employed by New Anglia Growth Hub, will **manage** the day-to-day delivery of the programme. They will oversee recruitment of SME's including referrals sent from facilitators and carefully consider participants to minimise dropouts. They will arrange the programme schedule and host all peer networking sessions, ensuring all paperwork and data is gathered from the meetings and participants to meet BEIS requirements and deadlines.

The team will **work with** Facilitators to recruit senior managers from SMEs that meet the following eligibility criteria:

Essential criteria:

- In operation for 1 year+
- At least 5 employees
- An aspiration to improve
- A turnover of at least £100,000

Desirable criteria:

- Scale ups
- Exporters and potential exporters

Programme success will be evaluated by independent consultants engaged by BEIS and will be measured by:

- Growth in value added as an indicator of recovery from COVID-19
- Improvements in labour productivity
- Participant views on the resilience of their SME
- Participant views on their leadership and management skills
- The SME's ability to recruit and retain staff where appropriate
- The SME's ability to access cash to continue trading
- Changes in the SME's adoption of technology

Given current social distancing restrictions, sessions will need be delivered virtually, however, there may be a requirement for face-to-face delivery should social distancing restrictions be relaxed. Facilitators will work alongside coordinators to arrange an appropriate location. Account should be taken for the cost of travel to and from venues when submitting your proposal, given the fixed price nature of the contract.

Session Structure

Cohorts will meet fortnightly with their facilitator and coordinator for a 2 hour online or face to face session. Each week the session will focus on a BEIS suggested topic (12 options). Selection of these topics will be determined by participant enrolment data and session one discussions, but facilitators must be prepared for all topic options.

Subject to agreement we anticipate Facilitators will deliver sessions in the following format:

Session 1

- Introduction from the coordinator about their role in the programme and Growth Hub Support pathways
- Facilitator to introduce themselves with an overview of the programme structure and the action learning methodology.
- All participants to introduce themselves and their motivation for joining the programme.
- Facilitator to set tasks for participants to work on between sessions and highlight the importance of accountability for these tasks moving forward.

Session 2-8

- Quick catch up from each participant on how the last fortnight has been for them with an opportunity to discuss any pressing issues (2-3 mins per participant)
- Additional 20 minutes for participants to raise any hot issues for further discussion
- Presentation by the facilitator on the weekly topic – 10 minutes
- Open discussion with the participants bringing issues they have faced to the group around this topic. Potentially utilise break out rooms to encourage quieter members to have the space to talk.
- Set task for participants to work on between sessions based on the topic and outline following weeks topic.

Session 9

- Quick catch up from each participant on how the last fortnight has been for them and any pressing issues.
- Additional 20 minutes for participants to raise any hot issues for further discussion
- Discussion to bring the programme to a close and find what people have learnt from the sessions and what they hope to take forward from them.
- Coordinator to give a short talk on further Growth Hub pathways

There is an expectation that social media tools (WhatsApp, LinkedIn etc) will be used to stimulate engagement between sessions and help increase the prospects of networks enduring following programme close.

Colleagues at BEIS have suggested the following topics could be addressed by cohorts (these are not obligatory):

- Finance
- HR
- Sales
- Marketing (including social media)
- Business Model Innovation
- Change Management
- Leadership
- Embedding formal management processes and systems
- Digital (including adoption and implementation of technology, cyber security)
- Use of data to drive value in the business
- EU transition
- Net zero

Programme Delivery

Delivery will be at a fixed rate of £7,000 per cohort delivered, including facilitation and direct one to one support up to 19 cohorts of 11 SME managers who must receive a minimum of 18 hours support in 9 x 2.25-hour sessions accompanied by a minimum of 3.5 hours of direct one to one help. Facilitators will also be required to assist the Growth Hub team with participant acquisition and in collecting evidence of the resulting personal and business impacts.

The Growth Hub team will work with Facilitators to create a series of peer networks, each cohort consisting of 11 SME owners or managers meeting regularly over a number of months.

Facilitators are required to lead these networks, typically meeting fortnightly to deliver 2-hour **action learning sessions** (participants receiving a minimum of 18 hours) over approximately 18 weeks. The coordinator will host the online video conferencing session via Zoom with the Facilitator leading the pre- prepared session that has been confirmed to the coordinator in advance of the cohort start date.

Beyond these sessions Facilitators will support participants on an individual one-to-one basis (offering coaching, mentoring, or advice) to help to implement and manage change. Each participant must be provided with a minimum of 3.5 hours support of this kind.

One to one support should accelerate the professional and personal growth achieved through the group sessions and must be specific to the individual needs of participants. This support may need to address a wide range of personal development or business issues.

The Programme seeks Facilitators with experience in deploying an action learning style to deliver high-impact outcomes. Facilitators must have the skills, experience and qualifications needed to successfully facilitate interactive and engaging sessions and be able to evidence a track record in similar work.

Suppliers should use the response form below to provide an overview of their experience and skills in providing one-to-one support, detailing the coaching, mentoring, or advice, the approaches deployed, what a typical one-to-one session resembles, and how the impact and outcomes for the individual participants and their organisation could be measured. Suppliers must also clearly demonstrate an ability to provide advice to local businesses looking to diversify into new markets and processes to combat the impact of Covid-19. To ensure this is possible, suppliers will need to understand the local business support landscape within New Anglia to ensure their work complements and adds value to the support currently available.

Response Form

Please Note: No activity may be subcontracted as part of the delivery of this work:

Name of main contact	
Trading name	
Registered company name (if different from trading name)	
Address	
Telephone number	
E-mail address	
Company registration number	
VAT registration number (if applicable)	
Website address	
Please demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and experience of the New Anglia SME business environment, and the challenges and opportunities for business growth. Maximum 500 words.	
Outline how you would undertake the requirements confirming your capacity and availability.	



Maximum 1,000 words

Provide details of your track record in the design and delivery of SME leadership, business growth programmes and small group facilitation as well as how you have led a client growth journey through leadership and business growth via participant learning, one-to-one coaching, mentoring and/or advice. Maximum 500 words

Provide details of your approach to action learning, including your approach to the development of sustainable learning practices, how you intend to use them in delivery and how you will build a supportive environment that engenders trust within group members. Maximum 500 words

Outline how will you ensure participants receive high-quality one-to-one support experiences that reflect and draw from current best practice, whilst also accommodating their differing developmental needs, styles, and levels of expertise. Explain how will you support their immediate needs whilst helping them to develop independently over the longer term. Maximum 500 words

Explain how you normally assess the impact of any facilitation and one-to-one support you provide. Maximum 250 words

Detail any additional value you can add or any additional benefits your proposed approach will deliver – above and beyond the deliverables. Maximum 500 words

Provide details of up to three contracts/projects/assignments you have delivered within the last two years for similar services relevant to our requirement. VCSEs may include samples of grant-funded work. Maximum 1,000 words

Detail how you propose to work with the Growth Hub team to assist with the recruitment of participants and provide an indication of the number you would hope to achieve. Maximum 250 words

Confirm your willingness to work with the Growth Hub team to establish evidence of the personal learning and business impacts resulting from network participation. Maximum 250 words.

Provide details of any quality assurance certification that your company holds (e.g. ISO 9001 or equivalent standard). If no accreditation is held, please provide documentary evidence and brief description of your quality assurance capabilities (e.g. your internal quality policy or manual, GDPR, data security and protection policies). Maximum 250 words (copies of policies you supply will not included in the word count)

Please provide profiles of all team members involved in delivery to accompany your proposal, including skills or relevant qualifications and/or accreditations, their experience related to the services required, role in your team structure. Maximum one side of A4 for each person.

Send a link to a 3-5 minute video clip explaining your delivery style and how you will incorporate the action learning methodology into your sessions. This link can be uploaded via YouTube or another format of your choice.

Finally, please also provide a detailed budget setting out the costs involved in delivering your proposal.

- The budget should give an indication of the cost of each deliverable
- Day/hour rates including and without expenses
- Please state your proposed stages of payment in delivery of the project
- All prices quoted should be **inclusive of VAT**

Contracts

Contracts will permit delivery until **30 March 2022**.

Price

This will be a fixed price for this contract. No additional charges/cost variances will be accepted unless signed off by the LEP in writing, prior to spend. The price per cohort is fixed at **£7,000 (incl. VAT)**. This price must cover delivery of all the aspects outlined in this ITT. Suppliers may propose delivery of more than one cohort.

Potential Extension of the Contract

If the LEP secures additional funding for the Programme beyond the above-mentioned dates, then contract(s) could be extended on the same terms.

Submission

Please send the information requested above in electronic format to Rose Joy **before 5pm on Friday 25th June 2021**. via email: hayley.dawson@newangliagrowthhub.co.uk

Short-listed companies will be invited by email to interviews to take place **w/c 28th June 2021**. If your organisation is approved as a supplier for the Programme, you will be notified on **Friday 2nd July**.

Tender process

Suppliers will be shortlisted based on their proposals which will be assessed on the following basis:

Criteria	Weighting
Capability/similar examples of the type of work being contracted for	40%
The approach for satisfying the contract	25%
Experience of the personnel to be used	25%
Value for money	10%
Total	100%



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for Norfolk and Suffolk

Timescales and Milestones

- Closing Date for proposals – **Friday 25th June 2021**
- Interviews with shortlisted applicants – **w/c 28th June 2021**
- Awarding of contract(s) – **Friday 2nd July 2021**
- Cooling Off Period Ends – **Tuesday 13th July 2021**
- Start of the contract(s) delivery – **Monday 19th July 2021**
- Inception meeting with supplier(s) - **w/c 12th July 2021**

Main Contact

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ANNEX 1

Role and Duties of the Facilitator

The role of the Facilitator is critical to the successful management and optimisation of the impact of each peer network, in supporting the rapid building of trust and collaborative relationships between participants, in providing strong leadership and direction, in driving the in-session action learning process and in follow-up to deliver tangible actions and solutions for participants.

Facilitators are expected to provide all equipment and materials required for the virtual delivery of the Programme, unless agreed in advance through specific arrangements. The wider use of digital technologies to support the efficient, effective, and timely administration, and delivery of activities is encouraged.

A Peer Networks branded presentation template will be provided to facilitators to add their own content.

The Facilitator's main responsibilities will be:

- Management and direction of their peer network(s) and its successful facilitation using the principles of action learning
- Arranging and delivering individual one-to-one communication with each participant to support reflection and provide signposting to the most appropriate local support.
- Completion of individual notes and 1:1 session records monthly. The coordinators are responsible for capturing of information, data, and insight to help inform the contract manager about the frequent topics/questions/needs of participants.

To enable participants to get the most benefit from their experience Facilitators will encourage participants to:

- Express and discuss their ideas, concerns and understanding of the business situation facing them
- Reflect on and learn from things that did not turn out as expected
- Take responsibility for their own decisions, plans and actions
- Work together to agree both group and personal objectives
- Undertake constructive and interactive exploratory discussions within the cohort and avoid conflict.
- Maximise opportunities within their existing business
- Review their progress and identify realistic and practical options to realise their goals
- Connect with other sources of information, advice, or further support when appropriate

Working to action learning principles the Facilitator will have the ability to:

- Respect the needs of participants
- Listen and respond effectively and check understanding
- Keep their promises



- Empathise with a range of different feelings and experiences
- Build and maintain an effective relationship with their participants
- Manage group dynamics and deal with conflict
- Generate creative energy within the cohort
- Develop a resourceful state in others
- Handle and respond effectively to change
- Encourage the group to focus on the output
- Shift group and individual perspective
- Evaluate people and processes
- Ensure the people involved retain ownership of the solutions arrived at
- Challenge people to think

Activities

Facilitators are expected to undertake the following activities:

- Facilitation of the Peer Network, hosting a series of pre-prepared/agreed sessions that are inspirational and engaging
- Use the principles of action learning to successfully facilitate each session
- Work with participants to develop a collaborative and open culture and supporting behaviours within the peer network cohort
- React and respond to the specific issues presented by participants within the sessions
- Focus the session topics on specific issues as suggested by the cohort participants or BEIS
- Champion the programme, its benefits, and its impact on productivity
- Gather and capture learnings and good/best practice and provide feedback insight, share best practice, and identify opportunities for improvements and new initiatives
- Work collaboratively with programme colleagues and other facilitators to ensure high quality service provision
- Be flexible and responsive to the needs of participants and the programme managers
- Participate in programme-specific training and orientation
- Maintain participant 1:1 activity records and documents
- Conform with all relevant contractual requirements, targets, outputs and reporting
- Comply with all aspects of the programme's Quality Assurance Framework
- Support in-programme and post-programme review and evaluation activities

Facilitators are expected to identify opportunities where participants could benefit from a referral to the Growth Hub and at the end of the sessions the Facilitator will hold a one-to-one review with each individual participant to help consolidate their experience into potential next steps. As part of the process the Facilitator will:



- Undertake a structured one-to-one 'review and next steps' discussion to understand the challenges and opportunities the participant needs to address
- Identify opportunities for further business support and ensure effective signposting, referrals, and connections with a short plan detailing the actions
- Link clients into further one-to-one support if not already connected and liaise effectively to support relevant account management activities
- Undertake any necessary handover requirements

Key skills and qualifications

Facilitators should have a range of competencies. All will have the following attributes:

- Strong facilitation capabilities and toolset – including the use of action learning principles
- Proven facilitation track record built through work performed with small-businesses, entrepreneurs, ambitious business owners and leaders
- Technical skills to run and manage groups virtually using video conference/collaboration tools
- Excellent understanding of the range of business issues associated with growth, productivity, innovation, strategy, people and skills, driving change, resilience, technology adoption
- Good understanding of the specific needs, characteristics and issues faced by SMEs with the local region
- Appreciation of the business and economic challenges posed by COVID-19

Key characteristics:

Essential

- Optimistic, enthusiastic, and self-motivated, with an empathetic approach
- Engaging personal style, energetic personality
- Understanding and appreciation of smaller business – from micros to large SMEs
- Passionate about getting the best out of people, with a genuine interest in supporting others to excel
- Integrity, independence, and patience
- Knowledge and application of facilitation methodologies and toolsets – including action learning styles
- Proven track record in high-impact facilitation in the SME space
- Strong interpersonal skills, with a robust but respectful and constructive approach to facilitation
- Able to offer constructive challenge
- Credibility, a strong business acumen, commercial mindset, and excellent project management skills
- Able to interact comfortably at owner/MD/CEO/Board level, with great



communication, collaboration, and storytelling skills

- Flexible approach to solving business problems and the ability to articulate solutions
- High degree of personal ethics, able to understand and reflect LEP/GH/BIES strategy and values
- Ability to rapidly evaluate the needs of participants and suggest appropriate support based on their capacity, ability, and motivation
- Practical understanding of the current landscape of publicly funded business support (local and national)
- Strong IT/technical skills, including an understanding of video conference platforms, computerised management information systems, diary management, and CRM databases
- Excellent stakeholder management and relationship management abilities

Desirable

- Experience of developing and leading peer-to-peer groups, peer boards, or peer networks
- Experience of operating in senior leadership positions within an SME
- Experience setting up, running, and growing an SME business
- Professional experience of managing and delivering business assessment, advice and development
- Ability to analyse and present complex ideas/data and to resolve complex problems
- Relevant qualifications and accreditations

One-to-One Support

The Peer Network Programme provides additional one-to-one support for each participant. A minimum of 3.5 hours of business-focused coaching/mentoring/support should be provided to individual participants through a mixture of consultations and signposting.

The main duties of the one-to-one support include:

- Analysing the specific difficulties posed to the business by the impact of COVID-19 and what actions should be taken by the SME participant to tackle those issues, in conjunction with their learning from the peer networks
- Agreeing with the SME participant ways to maximise opportunities within their existing business
- Encouraging the SME participant to express and discuss their ideas, concerns and understanding of the business situation facing them
- Supporting participants in creating both business and personal objectives and goals
- Helping the SME participant to review their progress and set realistic and practical options to realise their goals
- Helping the SME participant to reflect on and learn from things that did not turn out as expected
- Signposting the SME participant to other sources of information, advice or further support when appropriate



- Encouraging the SME participant to take responsibility for their own decisions, plans and actions.
- Work with participants to understand their strategy, the challenges and opportunities they face, and agree a plan for follow-on advice which will address specific barriers to productivity and growth
- Deliver a series of structured one-to-one sessions to help address the identified challenges and opportunities
- Provide wide-ranging coaching, mentoring, support and direction tailored to individual participants
- Understand the local business support landscape to ensure effective signposting, referrals, and connections
- Refer clients back into (or onto) appropriate LEP/Growth Hub support and liaise effectively to support their account management activities
- Effective record keeping of subjects discussed and actions taken
- Booking one to one sessions directly with the participants