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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29919**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 21-003**

**ESF funded activity to support individuals who are NEET in LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE LEP area**

**LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION – LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP - NEET and Youth Unemployed Support (Aged <24)**  **ITT\_29919-21-003** | |
| BACKGROUND | |
| **General**  The contracting authority is the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills acting through the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), an executive agency of the Department for Business Innovation and Skills exercising functions to fund adult education and skills.  The SFA, acting as an Opt-In Organisation for the European Social Fund (ESF), is procuring education and training services to meet priorities identified by Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area European Structural and Investment Funds Sub–Committees. As an Opt-In Organisation the SFA provides match funding at Priority Axis level utilising sources of public funding as match for ESF funded activity.  This Invitation to Tender (ITT) supports ESF Investment Priority 1.2 where the need has been identified both in the LEP area and European Structural and Investment Fund Strategies.  The SFA is looking to procure an organisation to deliver education and training services to support young people who are 16-24 who are not in education employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET in the LEP area set out below.  **Leicester & Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)**  This activity fully aligns with the LLEP’s ESIF strategy and with the City Deal (signed March 2014).  In particular, the high level objectives in the LLEP ESIF strategy that are relevant to this procurement include:   * Reduce youth unemployment by 50% by 2018 * Reduce 16-19 NEET by 50% by 2018 * Improve employability skills amongst those seeking to enter the labour market * Reduce the proportion of the working age population with no qualifications * Improve the match between the aspirations of young people and the opportunities in the labour market   Under Thematic Objective 8 in LLEP ESIF strategy the LEP have identified indicative activities for those aged under 25 to support entry into employment which include:   * Structured programmes to help young people become job ready. This will include careers advice and guidance, preparation activities, confidence building, development of employability skills and interventions aimed at improving job readiness (e.g. work placements) * Structured programmes and activities to support NEET and young unemployed people to acquire relevant skills including basic maths and English language skills to help labour market entry * Transition support for young people in the transition from education to work including work experience and work placements.   This procurement aims to deliver these indicative activities for the NEET and unemployed cohort of young people.  This activity builds on evidence of what works from current programmes delivered by Princes Trust (such as Get Into and Get Started), Connexions, Prospects, VCS organisations in our area, FE Colleges and training providers. LLEP have engaged in widespread consultation with partners which has confirmed a significant need for the interventions in this procurement.  The activity is to support young people into employment primarily and also training/learning which will ultimately lead to employment. It is aimed at those who face complex needs and barriers who have not benefitted sufficiently from mainstream interventions to date. Some of these people lack confidence and are not engaged in any training, learning or job search activities. Consultation with partners suggests that some young people are ‘recycling’ and coming in and out of the system rather than securing sustainable employment.  Current unemployment, NEET statistics can be summarised as:  Leicester City: NEET running at 6.3% in December 2014 – 771 young people (from years 12 to 14). A number of groups feature significantly in the NEET cohort including – 75% of teenage mothers, 14% of LLDD, 47.6% of those supervised by the youth offending team, 28.9% of looked after children. In addition, a high proportion of white males from disadvantaged backgrounds across the City with no or low attainment levels are in the NEET cohort.  Leicestershire County: NEET running at 3.1% in December 2014 – 653 young people. A number of groups feature significantly in the cohort including teenage parents, LLDD, young offenders, care leavers, looked after children.  Leicester City: 18-24 JSA claimants – 1,325 (2.8%) – 305 have been unemployed for over 6 months  Leicestershire County: 18-24 JSA claimants – 875 (1.4%) – 180 have been unemployed for over 6 months  In terms of qualifications:  Leicester City: 13.7% have no qualifications (working age population)  Leicestershire County: 8.8% have no qualifications. 35% of Leicestershire 19 year olds and 41% of Leicester 19 year olds do not attain Level Two including English and maths – a key threshold qualification to jobs with prospects. | |
| 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 Services need 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 support those aged 16 to 24 into employment or further training/learning through local and targeted programmes of engagement, confidence building, high quality Information Advice and Guidance (IAG), skills development and work experience.  The Services must be centred on the needs of the individual and take a holistic approach to address the often complex problems or barriers that young people face.  The Services should aim to increase commitment and motivation to achieve and focus on supporting many to attain to Level 2 including English and mathematics – the key threshold qualification level to employment.  The Services must be delivered to those most in need of support and at highest risk of long term unemployment.  The objectives of the Services are:   * To contribute to the reduction of the proportion of people with no recognised qualifications (currently 13.7% in Leicester City and 8.8% in Leicestershire County). * To contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment by 50% (currently 2.8% in Leicester City – 1,325 JSA claimants and 1.4% in Leicestershire County – 875 claimants) * To reduce NEET for year 12-14 by 50% (Dec 14 figures show NEET at 6.3% in Leicester City – 771 young people and 3.1% in Leicestershire County – 653 young people) * To secure better outcomes for those in the target groups specified in section 4.5, which feature strongly in the NEET statistics (e.g. in Leicester City 75% of teenage mothers are NEET, 14% of LDD, 47.6% of those supervised by Youth Offending Team and 28.9% of looked after children).   The Services should be delivered working with other training / employment agencies and the voluntary and community sector where applicable to ensure continued cross referrals and joint-planning.  The Services should build on current mainstream provision, delivering more intense support to those that need it most and who might not have been successfully supported by mainstream provision to date and is additional to the proposed Employment Gateway service (also an SFA opt-in) and the National Careers Service offer.  The Services should include:   * Active community engagement and development of links to reach and support those that are most marginalised. * Tracking of referrals, progression, outcomes and data sharing between partners.   The Services should deliver sector based programmes to encourage those furthest from the labour market to consider key sectors in the local economy such as (but not limited to) manufacturing, logistics, construction and care – linking employers with young people receiving intense support. This will include working with employers to develop their capacity to work with some of the more vulnerable young people.  The Services will be available to non-benefit claimants that face complex barriers to labour market entry.  **Detailed Services requirements**  There must be a referral mechanism that will successfully engage with the target group and roll on roll off flexibility of recruitment.  The Services must provide an innovative induction programme to gain early engagement with young people.  The Services must include an initial diagnostic assessment and needs analysis for all individuals undertaking learning programmes. This will result in a high quality individualised learning and transition plans with progress reviews and exit interviews. The delivery of personalised provision should be flexible (in terms of content, times and location) through the involvement of young people in both the design and delivery of the programmes including training to provide peer support taking into account local conditions and requirements.  The Services should provide tailored IAG for each young person, with intensive personal guidance and help to develop their understanding of the post 16 opportunities available to them. The Services must help young people gain a greater understanding of their own abilities, learning needs and the range of opportunities available supported by the effective use of intensive, enhanced and impartial high quality IAG at all stages of the learner journey.  The Services must provide individual and continuous mentor/key worker support to encourage continued engagement with the Services. The mentor/key worker will be expected to engage with a young person’s parent or carer as appropriate to foster positive outcomes.  The Services should provide a combination of personal progression planning into employment or employment with training or learning, mentoring, coaching, counselling and on-going one to ones and include personal and social development support including post-training and employment entry support. The Services should include activities aimed at developing confidence.  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.  Individual programmes 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 as determined by the LLEP throughout the contract lifetime and local opportunities in particular through apprenticeships or traineeships.  The Services must include specialist help and individualised support with English, maths, (working towards GCSE A\* - C or Level Two in both cases), ICT and English for Speakers of Other Languages.  The Services must include vocational training assessment and specialist bespoke vocational training or signposting to existing vocational training (where this meets the young person’s assessed needs) with a view to securing attainment to at least Level Two wherever possible.  The successful Candidate will need to provide to the LEP a breakdown of performance for each target group and intelligence on what is working well and what could be changed to improve performance and outcomes for young people, in particular performance of white male cohort. | |
| **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 the National Eligibility Rules detailed above.  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**  NEET young people aged 16 to 24.  The Services should support the following target groups in particular (consistent with the LLEPs ESIF strategy and matched to the City Deal proposal). These groups are at greater risk of long term unemployment and face complex barriers to labour market entry.   1. Young people with no qualifications 2. Those with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities 3. Those looked after/in care 4. Carers – own child, parent, other children 5. Care leavers 6. Supervised by Youth Offending Team or Probation Service 7. Teenage pregnancies/mothers 8. Substance misusers 9. Participants in troubled families programmes 10. People with English language needs 11. Other vulnerable groups including ethnic groups that participate poorly in post-16 education and have poor relative levels of attainment.   (Note the LLEP have a separate procurement document for ex-offenders, as this group was highlighted specifically in the City Deal). | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services will be delivered within the Leicester & Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership area.  The Services must be delivered from venues located within the Leicester and Leicestershire LEP area, with priority given to young people who are resident in, or on the school roll within, that area. | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £2,454,500 will be available for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018. This may be increased if additional funding becomes available.  All activity must be achieved within lifetime of the contract.  The table below shows the initial planned outcomes, but performance management may change the volumes and mix during the life of the contract.  From the funding available on the regulated and non-regulated lines, the provider must plan to deliver the appropriate education & training for each participant to enable them to progress.  The minimum service deliverables, values and volumes for which evidence must be provided are:   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Description** | **Volumes** | **Unit Cost Total Value Average per Intervention** | | **£** | | ST01 Learner Assessment and Plan | 1444 | | £50 | £72,200 | | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  | |  | £800,000 | | | NR01 Non Regulated Activity |  | |  | £574,000 | | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 270 | | £800 | £216,000 | | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 40 | | £400 | £16,000 | | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 454 | | £400 | £181,600 | | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 470 | | £800 | £376,000 | | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 40 | | £400 | £16,000 | | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 200 | | £100 | £20,000 | | | SU02 Sustained Unpaid Employment 3 Months | 35 | | £100 | £3,500 | | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 400 | | £100 | £40,000 | | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 400 | | £100 | £40,000 | | | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 35 | | £100 | £3,500 | | | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | 200 | | £100 | £20,000 | | | SU12 Sustained Unpaid Employment 6 Months | 35 | | £100 | £3,500 | | | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | 350 | | £100 | £35,000 | | | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | 348 | | £100 | £34,800 | | | SU15 Sustained Traineeship 6 Months | 24 | | £100 | £2,400 | | | |