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**SPECIFICATION**

**INVITATION TO TENDER: itt\_29913**

**SPECIFICATION REFERENCE: 15-001**

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

**GREATER MANCHESTER**

**DATE: December 2015**

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| **EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND – NEET SPECIFICATION**  **Greater Manchester LEP – NEET Participation and Skills Progression Programme**  **ITT\_29913-15-001** | |
| 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.  **Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership (GMLEP)**  GMLEP covers the same area as that of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, covering the 10 Local Authority (LA) areas of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.  Greater Manchester (GM) has two key priorities; delivering sustainable economic growth and ensuring that all residents can contribute to, and benefit from that growth. GM’s vision is to become a financially self-sustaining city region, closing the £4.5bn annual gap between total public spending and tax income. The GM Strategy ‘Stronger Together’ and GM Growth and Reform Plan each set out how this ambition will be achieved: by delivering growth; investing in infrastructure; skills and business. To realise GM’s two key priorities, however, GM residents need to be connected to the opportunities that this growth will bring, becoming more independent and reducing the demand for expensive public services.  For young people, the GM Raising of the Participation Age (RPA) Strategy will support the delivery of the agenda outlined in the Government’s publication ‘Building Engagement, Building Futures’ by ensuring that the building blocks for long-term employment, through engagement in appropriate learning and training, are in place.  The RPA Strategy highlights the need for a strategic approach to increasing the levels of participation for young people across the city region in order to support growth in skills relevant to the labour market. Despite the fact that in recent years the number of GM residents engaged in learning has increased, there remains a significant number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET. At the end of 2014, 5% of 16-18 year olds were NEET across GM and 7.3% were Not Known. At 18 7.3% of young people were NEET with 14% Not Known.  In GM there are particular concerns about the additional disadvantages faced by some young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), by teenage parents and by young people who have English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) needs. Specific additional interventions are required for these groups:   * High functioning autistic young people or young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) coupled with social, emotional, mental health issues possibly with School Action/School Action Plus (SA/SA+) and SEND Information in school * Young people with severe emotional and behavioural issues who need support accessing mainstream for whom intensive and long-term interventions will be necessary * Young people who could have an Education and Health Care (EHC) plan but don’t – may have been SA/SA+ and SEND Information in School * Young people with medical needs * Young people with severe anxiety who need long-term therapy and support to leave the home * Young people who are not Traineeship-ready but who could benefit from a ‘supported internship’ model such as that reserved currently in the mainstream for those with High Needs, but could be part of a Study Programme.   The GM NEET target for 2020 is 2.7%, this will require a total reduction of 2,756 16-18 year olds that are NEET (versus the 13/14 figure). The Services that the SFA is looking to procure will support the implementation of the GM RPA Strategy by reducing the number of young people who are NEET, at risk of becoming NEET or classed as ‘not known’ in the area.  NEET reduction is one very significant element of raising participation levels across Greater Manchester. Equally, young people who are at risk of becoming NEET must be able to sustain their engagement in mainstream routes pre and post 16 through individually tailored interventions in order to progress to opportunities that conurbation can offer through its devolved status. The delivery of the Services must take account of these opportunities when engaging with young people.  In line with the approach to Growth and Reform in GM (as set out in the GM Growth and Reform Plan), the Services must build on and integrate with other support available for the target group ensuring that the right support is available at the right time. In particular, Candidates should note that it is intended that there will be a separate ITT released in due course for the delivery of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in GM including to young people. The successful Candidate will be required to ensure that the Services are informed by any IAG provided to young people as part of that IAG programme.  The Greater Manchester LEP is clear that it not only wants improved participation but within that good progression reflecting the ambitions and previous attainment of the young person.  Greater Manchester LEP is clear that supporting young people to engage with and progress through mainstream provision is the ultimate goal. Approximately 45% of young people across GM do not achieve 5A\*-C including English and maths which is prohibitive to some young people in finding work or progressing to apprenticeships and or further study. Maths and English learning opportunities along with employability and vocationally related skills and experiences are also critical to the development of this programme.  Reducing NEET is one of 4 key priorities identified in the GM Participation Strategy. As a result a NEET sub-group will be operational to lead work across GM. This group will inform the LEP and the participation strategy group on the progress of the NEET programme and ensure activity brings about the outcomes GM wants. | |
| **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 becoming 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.  **Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND):** Children with special educational needs have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn compared to other children.  Children with these needs may also have disabilities and these are defined in the Equality Act 2010.  **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.  **Greater Manchester LEP specific**  The Services should result in a continued reduction in the number of young people aged 15-19 (or 15-24 if they have SEND) who are NEET or are at risk of becoming NEET in GM.  The Services are intended for those requiring intensive interventions to help them address the specific barriers to sustained participation in learning including early intervention for those identified as at risk of becoming NEET and on-going tracking of young people supported to ensure continued participation.  The Services must be tailored to meet individual needs. This should include gaining an understanding of the barriers that individuals face and thereby enabling young people to re-engage with mainstream provision and/or further learning; statutory education; progress successfully into work; Traineeships or apprenticeships.  The Services must be delivered in local venues so as to address some of the issues around young people accessing local provision and transport routes.  The Services must use innovative activities to overcome barriers to participation, they must take into account, and build on, previous interventions that individuals may have received during their time in the education system and/or while engaged in other re-engagement, education or work-related support programmes as identified during the initial assessment.  The Services must be delivered as part of a locally determined approach to form part of an integrated service offer, which may include Voluntary, and Community sector, Housing, IAG services and cross LA services such as the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and SEND.  The Services must be designed in consultation with key stakeholders including young people themselves.  The Greater Manchester Raising Participation Partnership made up of the 10 Local Authorities identified through local intelligence three specific groups of young people facing significant barriers to sustained participation. These groups are: SEND; young people with ESOL needs and teenage parents. Referrals to the Services for these groups must come directly from the LA, which may involve contacts with more than one person to ensure full intelligence on these groups is acquired.  The young people who have SEND are specifically those who are:   * High functioning autistic young people or young people with ASD coupled with social, emotional, mental health issues possibly with SA/SA+ and SEND Information in school * Young people with severe emotional and behavioural issues who need support accessing mainstream for whom intensive and long-term interventions will be necessary * Young people who could have an EHC plan but don’t – may have been SA/SA+ and SEND Information in School * Young people with medical needs * Young people with severe anxiety who need long-term therapy and support to leave the home * Young people who are not Traineeship-ready but who could benefit from a ‘supported internship’ model such as that reserved currently in the mainstream for those with High Needs, but could be part of a Study Programme.   For the SEND group the Services must include:   * Intense pastoral nurturing which is centred around the individual * Resilience building and support to re-engage and make the transition to mainstream education and employment * Life skills * Bespoke provision at key transition points, during summer holidays, etc. to maintain engagement * Provision that includes wrap around support in line with the principles of Study Programmes. * Sustained support once in provision   Young people who have ESOL are at a high risk of becoming NEET when they leave school post-16. The Services must be delivered in conjunction with LAs to identify those young people with ESOL needs as the Services must provide ESOL support alongside other interventions for this group, while gathering information about what the biggest barriers to participation are, in order to inform future provision for this growing group.  For teenage parents there are already a number of successful programmes working with different LAs to support this group. The successful Candidate must work with each LA to determine the best way and most appropriate time to engage with individual teenage parents building on, and adding value to the programmes already underway in the area. The delivery of the Services must take account of their particular circumstances and care responsibilities, and support must be given at the right time depending on each young person’s particular situation.  **Detailed Services Requirements**  Referrals to the Services must be secured through locally determined mechanisms which may include the following:   * The ten GM Local Authorities including Troubled Families Leads * Schools and post-16 education and training providers * Providers of local programmes * Public sector employers * National Careers Service and other IAG providers * Jobcentre Plus * Third sector and voluntary organisations * Apprenticeship & other skills providers * GMLEP and other local economic partners.   The Services must provide an initial assessment of the young person’s needs, goals and prior attainment. Each young person will agree an individualised Support Plan with their Mentor. The Support Plan must be agreed in consultation with the young person’s school, or post-16 education provider where relevant.  The Services must provide trained and competent mentors, who will help young people to overcome barriers to participation in education, training and employment, and who will undertake reviews to monitor progress, and support retention, success and progression. The mentors should offer pastoral and nurturing support, building the young person’s readiness to engage with the Services and may include providing appropriate support within the family context while maintaining a focus on the young person. The mentor must meet with the young person on at least a fortnightly basis or regularly, in agreement with the young person’s school or post-16 education provider where relevant. The mentors must provide young people with advice and support in accessing bursaries, grants or other financial support, which might be available to help them to continue to or re-engage in education, training or employment including apprenticeships and Traineeships.  Mentors must refer young people to other ‘wrap around’ Services where appropriate to their wider needs as identified in their Support Plan, e.g. for health, housing, dependency, childcare or other support.  The Services must provide young people with any small items of equipment and clothing, and cover costs, such as travel and childcare, which would otherwise present a barrier to that young person attending education, training or employment including job interviews. As appropriate, the Services may also provide any financial or other incentives to encourage retention, achievement and progression. The funding for any of these costs should be met from the unit costs for the Services.  The Services must provide young people with accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities as part of their Support Plan, where appropriate to their needs, goals and aspirations as identified at initial assessment. Learning opportunities will differ for each young person and might include English, maths, ESOL, employability and vocational skills including units and full qualifications.  The Services must provide employability skills to encourage individual behavioural, personal and social development alongside generic skills such as teamwork and time management. Help with CV writing, job applications, interview preparation, and job-search may form part of the non-accredited learning package.  For those identified as being at risk of becoming NEET, the Services must provide learning opportunities that add value to the education or training they are currently engaged in and, as part of the Support Plan, must be agreed in consultation with the young person’s school, or post-16 education provider where relevant.  For those identified as being at risk of becoming NEET, the Services must provide support to ensure continued engagement in the relevant education or training. This is particularly important for those of statutory school age and the Services must be delivered in conjunction with the school; parents/carer; the LA and IAG services to ensure the most appropriate next steps can be taken in accordance with local practice. However, for those aged 16+, should the mentor or young person believe that an alternative education, training or employment opportunity would be a better option for the young person, to ensure continued engagement, then the young person must be provided with IAG to help them identify suitable alternatives.  Where young people have expressed an interest in self-employment, the Services should include exploring the opportunities for enterprise and the provision of basic entrepreneurial skills with referral to more specialist support in cases where this appears to be a viable option for the individual.  The Services must provide young people with the opportunity to undertake a period of work experience where appropriate to their needs, goals and aspirations as identified at initial assessment. This may be via volunteering, work placements or supported ‘internships’.  The successful Candidate must track young people’s progress against their Support Plan and how successful they have been, including via self-assessment methodologies and the measurement of ‘distance travelled.’  The successful Candidate must collate the views of those young people who have not engaged with the Services to help inform the development of the Services.    The successful Candidate must establish a young person’s forum and undertake regular surveys of the young people engaged in the Services, to ascertain their views of the support they have received, informing continuous improvement and Service development over time.  The successful Candidate must provide on-going and progress updates under the direction of the GMLEP and its appointed NEET Steering Group, regarding the status of each young person supported to the relevant LA, tracking young people to ensure their continued engagement and progression.  The successful Candidate must attend meetings of and provide Greater Manchester pre-determined information at a level that supports ongoing monitoring as well as informing future provision, including mainstream, via the programme information to GMLEP/GMCA (and/or sub-groups of their choice) to support the on-going monitoring of the Services, as follows:   * a breakdown of referrals and deliverables achieved by LA area, and split down according to:   + source of referral   + NEET / at risk /   + Niche or priority group * analysis of data from young people surveys (see above) * analysis of data from longitudinal survey (see above) * case studies * Breakdown of LEP determined vulnerable groups and niche groups by local area and LEP area plus narrative describing what is working well and where the barriers are that still need to be removed.   The successful Candidate must complete a mid-point evaluation of the Services as well as a final evaluation, which complies with any requirements set out by the GMLEP and the SFA.  Timescales and requirements of the evaluation will be determined by the GMLEP and the successful Candidate must ensure that they comply with these requirements.  Funding for the evaluation is embedded within the unit costs, which are paid to the successful Candidate for the delivery of Services. To inform the evaluation, the successful Candidate must undertake a longitudinal Survey of a ‘test group’ of young people who have been referred throughout the duration of the Services. The longitudinal study alongside the evaluation is a piece of work that the GMLEP values highly and the Candidate must work with the GMLEP and its partners to ensure this work is a credible piece of research to inform provision and local commissioning beyond 2021. | |
| **Horizontal Principles** |
| The Services must support the cross cutting themes of the ESF Framework. These are set out below.  Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities and Sustainable Development. The ESF programme maintains the dual approach to promoting gender equality and equality of opportunities by funding specific activities which target women and disadvantaged groups as well as integrating equal opportunities into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme as a whole. Action to promote equality and diversity is an integral part of the SFA business objectives. A world-class workforce can only be created if we remove barriers, eliminate discrimination, address disadvantage and raise the aspirations of both present and potential learners. Performance monitoring of the project will include a review of progress against the implementation/action plan on a quarterly basis included in this specification.  Sustainable Development (SD) activity is a mandatory requirement of all projects funded through the ESF programme. Successful tenderers will be required to have in place an operational SD policy and implementation/action plan within two months of the project Start Date. Performance monitoring of the project will include a review of progress against the implementation/action plan on a quarterly basis included in this specification. Activity will need to promote and engage with priority individuals, such as those with protected characteristics. | |
| ELIGIBILITY | |
| **General**  General eligibility requirements are set out in: the European Social Fund Programme for England 2014-2020 National Eligibility Rules which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/european-structural-and-investment-funds-programme-guidance>  Please note LEP Specific requirements are subject to National Eligibility Rules.  In delivering the Services, the successful Candidate must take into account and support the targets for the following groups where this is consistent with the other Services requirements for addressing the needs of groups identified as priority and meeting the Services deliverables.    Ethnic groups                          min 20%  Female                                    min 45%  Disability/health issues            min 10%  Lone parents                           min 5%  No basic skills                         min 18%  **LEP Specific**  The Services will support young people who are:   * aged 15 to 19 years old (on the day they start on the Services) **or** * for those who are LLDD/SEND aged 15 to 24 (on the day they start on the Services)   **and**   * be identified by the LA in which they live / are on the school roll of as being NEET or at risk of becoming NEET **or** * be identified by their post-16 education provider as being at risk of becoming NEET, with the agreement of the relevant LA **or** * be identified by the LA in which they live / are on the school roll of as being ‘not known’ and, once contacted by the successful Candidate are determined by the successful Candidate, with the agreement of the relevant LA, to be NEET or at risk of becoming NEET * Self-referred NEET 15-24 year olds * Aged 18+ and not claiming benefit   For 15-16 year olds either on or off school roll, the use of ESF funds is restricted to those young people who are disengaged from regularly timetabled learning and are at risk of not participating post-16 or who are on the LA’s Risk of NEET Indicator List. Pre-16 provision will support underachieving pupils in schools/academies and ensure statutory provision for those off the school roll. It is critical to engage with the relevant LA prior to engaging this particular target group.  Priority groups differ across the ten LAs and may differ over time; the successful Candidate must agree priority groups with each LA at the start of the Services and review on a regular basis. It is anticipated that the following will be key priority groups across a number of LA areas:   * young people who are LLDD/SEND * teenage parents * young people with ESOL needs * young people in LA Care / Care Leavers * young offenders * young people diagnosed with emotional / mental health issues * young people of school age who are in elective home education | |
| **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY** | |
| **LEP Specific**  The Services must be delivered within the GMLEP area which covers the ten LAs of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan.  The Services must be delivered from venues located within the GMLEP area, with priority given to young people who are resident in, or on the school roll within, that area.  The successful Candidate must work with the LA to identify opportunities for co-location. | |
| **FUNDING AND DELIVERABLES** | |
| **LEP Specific**  Currently £5.7 million 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.  A specific deliverable has been included in the specification that should support the successful Candidate to work with the agreed niche cohorts for a longer duration recognising the challenges for these young people.  All activity must be achieved within the lifetime of the contract.  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 | 4000 | £80 | £320,000 | | RQ01 Regulated Learning |  |  | £1,500,000 | | NR01 Non Regulated Learning |  |  | £1,455,000 | | PG01 Progression Paid Employment (EMP) | 600 | £800 | £480,000 | | PG02 Progression Unpaid Employment (VOL) | 200 | £200 | £40,000 | | PG03 Progression Education (EDU) | 1200 | £280 | £336,000 | | PG04 Progression Apprenticeship (EDU) | 500 | £600 | £300,000 | | PG05 Progression Traineeship (EDU) | 350 | £600 | £210,000 | | SU01 Sustained Employment 3 Months | 500 | £200 | £100,000 | | SU03 Sustained Education 3 Months | 1000 | £200 | £200,000 | | SU04 Sustained Apprenticeship 3 Months | 400 | £200 | £80,000 | | SU05 Sustained Traineeship 3 Months | 295 | £200 | £59,000 | | SD01 Uplift for any sustained progression of at least 6 months for SEND Learners | 100 | £400 | £40,000 | | SU11 Sustained Employment 6 Months | 350 | £400 | £140,000 | | SU13 Sustained Education 6 Months | 750 | £400 | £300,000 | | SU14 Sustained Apprenticeship 6 Months | 350 | £400 | £140,000 | | |