

Descriptive Document

Grant funding to produce easy read materials for prisoners

Background and policy context

1. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is committed to fairness for all. We treat our staff properly and ensure equality of opportunity. We deliver our services fairly and respond to individual needs. We insist on respectful and decent behaviour from staff, offenders and others with whom we work. We recognise that discrimination, harassment and bullying can nevertheless occur and we take prompt and appropriate action whenever we discover them.
2. The offenders in our care have the right to expect fair, transparent and equitable treatment. Equality and diversity are central and integral to all business activities within NOMS.
3. The Equality Act 2010 [The Equality Act](#) created a specific Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to government organisations, including NOMS, stating those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
4. The 2010 Equality Act defines disability as a 'protected characteristic' under the law. This includes hidden disabilities such as learning disabilities/difficulties. In order to meet government policy, public bodies are directed to consider how they communicate policy to those affected. NOMS develops significant numbers of policies, most of which affect the lives of offenders/prisoners/staff and visitors. Therefore NOMS must ensure that the delivery of offender facing information is available in an Easy Read format benefiting those prisoners with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Timescales and funding

5. This is a grant funding opportunity, running from 01 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, with the option to extend for a further 1 year.
6. The total funding available under this grant is up to £100,000 per year.

Project Approach

7. In their application the successful grant recipient will need to present a proposal which has a particular focus on the development of tangible products, tools and recommendations about promising approaches for long term development of easy read for offenders throughout NOMS. This will include but is not limited to:

- Designing a prisoner led approach to producing good quality Easy Read documents.
- Supporting the upskilling of prisoners in the production of Easy Read materials
- Assessing current written communications and recommend improvements to ensure all prisoners can access critical information
- Working with NOMS policy leads in prioritising the prisoner information to be translated
- Working with NOMS policy leads to ensure future easy read materials are produced
- Exploring future funding opportunities to ensure the continuation of the project.
- Measuring the cultural shift resulting from improving communications, with 'Easy Read' at the centre of the approach.

Project Outcomes

8. NOMS commissioning intentions¹ include provision to commission services which will “enhance public protection and ensure a safe, decent environment and rehabilitative culture”. This is a new area of work and the grant recipient will be required to ensure that they take account of the evidence which shows how successful offender outcomes are achieved and demonstrate the impact of their proposal.
9. The funding seeks to enable the following outcomes:
 - a) The production of a prisoner led approach to delivering Easy Read materials for use within custody.
 - b) Developing prisoners through an accreditation led programme to produce Easy Read materials.
 - c) Ensure required NOMS Policy documents are available in Easy Read format.
 - d) Identify opportunities for the continuation of the project after the end of the grant.
 - e) An evaluation which meets NOMS' standards in identifying the extent to which the supported activity has impacted upon defined key outcome indicators; including, how their work will add to the evidence base in terms of what works to reduce reoffending or to achieve intermediate outcomes.
 - f) Resources which inform development of practice and build capability of Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to adopt these approaches more widely. This might include provider neutral toolkits, training courses, workshops or awareness raising events.

Bidders should evidence how their solutions achieve the outcomes. The Authority will assess how the bids received achieve these outcomes.

Invitation to tender

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/noms/commissioning>

10. Bidders are invited to put forward proposals which achieve these project outcomes, and any others pertinent to the context in which this funding is offered.
11. The successful recipient will be:
 - One organisation who can deliver the scheme.
 - A lead organisation establishing partnerships with other bodies who can deliver the scheme.
 - A consortium formed from a number of organisations with shared objectives and agreed arrangements for leadership and governance to deliver the scheme.

Skills and knowledge

12. Bidders will need to show that they:
 - *Experience of training prisoners in a custodial environment.*
 - *Have experience of producing Easy Read materials across a diverse range subjects*
 - *Have experience of managing projects/grants/contracts within a specific timescale, meeting set milestones and achieving objectives set out, through a project plan and within the budget set.*
 - *Understand the environment in which they will be operating and have the skills to deliver successfully within it;*
 - *Have the ability to oversee projects, evaluate and report on outcomes and manage grant finances.*

Equalities

13. Bidders are required to set out how they will ensure that equalities issues are considered in their proposal. This should include an explanation of the way in which it will address the needs of the population of offenders with, for example, learning disabilities and difficulties, and across the nine protected characteristics specified in law.

Costs, monitoring, and evaluation of the scheme

14. Bidders will be expected to forecast costs for the duration of the grant and will meet with NOMS representatives regularly to discuss progress and review expenditure.
15. Bidders are required to provide an implementation/project plan for the duration of the Grant period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 detailing realistic timescales, key stages and milestones, proposed stages for progression of agreements and commitments, engagement with key partners/stakeholders, as well as any other relevant considerations.
16. The successful recipient will be required to deliver the work outlined in the implementation/project plan (to be agreed as part of the grant agreement) within a budget of up to £100,000 per annum. Payment will be made evenly in the financial year 2015/2016 in advance. Services may be delivered after 31 March 2016 but no further payments will be made after this date unless a decision is taken to extend the grant agreement.

17. Bidders will be invited to describe how their scheme can be evaluated in ways that will add to the evidence base in terms of what works to:
- a. produce easy read materials for prisoners
 - b. ensure a safe and decent environment.