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PROPOSALS

For

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

For

16 – 19 YEAR OLD LEARNERS

In

LINCOLNSHIRE

On behalf of the

LEARNING & SKILLS COUNCIL, LINCOLNSHIRE and
RUTLAND



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Vocational training for 16 – 19-y.o. learners in Lincolnshire

1. Introduction:

Bennington Training Services Is a long-established provider of vocational training for young people in the government's New Deal Programme for 18 to 24 year olds and for unemployed people in the Work-Based Learning for Adults (WBLA) Programme under contract to Jobcentre Plus.

In April 2006, the company merged with StudyXpress Training Limited, a dynamic and forward-thinking company specialising in vocational training in Construction, Logistics, Motor Vehicle, Retail and Hairdressing.

StudyXpress works closely as a partner with schools and colleges in numerous projects for the 14 to 19 Agenda.

2. Operating Principles and Delivery of Training:

2.1 Location:

it is the companies' aim to set up dedicated vocational skills centres (Skillcentres) within the county. In the Lincolnshire Wolds, the principal Skillcentre will be established at Louth, with satellite centres at other appropriate locations, e.g Caistor, Market Rasen and/or Mablethorpe, with the aim of reducing time spent by students in travel.

2.2 Transport:

A major success in developing the partnership's Skillscentre Model, is the inclusion of a minibus pick-up and delivery service for learners. The system is operating successfully in existing centres and is included in additional centres scheduled to open in 2007 – 2008.

2.3 Enrolment of students

Bennington operates a policy of roll-on, roll-off enrolment for 48 weeks in each year for all users. Experience shows that the constraints of a 36-week educational year frequently act as a deterrent to the continuity of learning. It may also act as a deterrent and a demotivating factor if a learner is required to wait until September to enrol.

Again, experience shows that, when a centre is open and operating, many other referral agencies will wish to become involved. For example existing centres have students referred from Connexions, Jobcentreplus, the Probation Service,

Social Services, as well as other local Education & Business Partnerships and even local Colleges of Further Education. Many of this group become actively involved as member of the Steering Group for each project.

2.4 Configuration of Skillcentres:

The StudyXpress Skillcentre model varies in size, depending on the geographical area and feeder population. At Louth, for example the centre will require to be c.5,000 square feet in area, whilst satellite centres may be up to 3,000 square feet each. In a current project, the skillcentre in refurbished accommodation in Southampton is 5,500 square feet.

Each Centre Is laid out in a workshop, lecture/computer study rooms, offices and student rest room format. Workshops are fully equipped and vending and refreshment areas are provided for all learners. It is anticipated that, at Louth, the centre will require to be c.5,000 Sq Ft to accommodate both the breadth of the curriculum and the size and likely diverse nature of the users.

2.5 Curriculum Breadth:

A choice of subjects will be made available, depending on the immediate needs of the users. As a minimum, it will comprise:

- Construction, including Bricklaying. Plastering, Tiling, Basic Plumbing, Painting and Decorating, Basic Carpentry;
- Motor Vehicle;
- Hair and Beauty.
- Retail

Additional optional subjects may include Care, Travel and Tourism, Hospitality and Catering, but Bennington will normally provide its students with opportunities to "sample" other occupations, either by way of live work experience placements or by simulation. Company practice is to build up networks of local employers, both for that purpose but also to participate in Steering Group or Programme Review and Development activities so as to ensure that the curriculum on offer caters for all local employer needs.

StudyXpress (Holdings) Limited – the "parent" company in the group – also operates a construction company, SX Contracting, that is able to offer real work experience to construction students whilst, at the same time, undertaking work for such prestigious national companies as Wimpey.

2.6 Qualifications:

All courses lead students to national, industry-recognized and marketable Vocational Qualifications, matched to students' needs and levels of ability. All programmes have learning support and structured progression routes. Additionally, StudyXpress is itself accredited to deliver a range of BTEC, City & Guilds and VTCT qualifications at Levels 1 and 2.

Part of the StudyXpress philosophy is to offer on-line underpinning knowledge elements of qualifications. The company has developed learning packages to support each curriculum subject and qualification offered. Each package is hosted on an Internet-based system that allows learners to access material from work, schools, training centre or from home. Users are allocated a unique registration number and usage and progress may be monitored remotely by tutors, so that additional one-to-one support might be given where appropriate. The system allows peer comparisons to be made and norms to be established for each student group.

The benefits accruing to students from this approach are already well established in existing projects. They include:

- **Increased levels of attendance and retention by students who might otherwise eschew the classroom or lecture room environment to "vote with their feet";**
- **Increased student motivation by leading the programme with practical skill acquisition, supported by the detailed on-line underpinning knowledge package;**
- **Increased levels of attainment of Basic Skills.**

This delivery model is particularly appropriate to students who are traditionally disengaged from conventional teaching and learning strategies, NEETS (those not already in Education or Training).

2.7 Added Value:

As a matter of course, all Bennington provision encourages on-going entry to careers and occupational information, advice and guidance. As well as instruction and support with individual job-search, each learner undergoes an on-line Basic Skills Assessment, not as a barrier to enrolment, but to ensure that the correct level of learner support is made available.

In addition, all students may access additional work-related courses such as Manual Handling, First aid or Health & Safety at Work, certificated by the Institute of Environmental Health, St John Ambulance and the Health & Safety Executive respectively. Only tutors are used on these courses who are qualified to deliver by the accrediting body.

2.8 Staff Recruitment:

It is Bennington company policy always to recruit management, instructional and administrative staff locally from suitably qualified applicants. Comprehensive staff induction, training and personal development programmes are implemented at each major Skillcentre or geographical group of centres.

3. Meeting Regional Needs, LSC And LEA Requirements:

The strategy outlined above is designed to meet all local requirements as set out in the strategy paper "Statement of Need" which appears on the LSC's 16 – 19 website in that:

- 3.1 It is intended to be supplementary to, and not to replace, existing local provision within a locally-coherent structure and may be influenced by other needs identified by local providers and integrated into other provision. Co-operation and collaboration with existing post-16 providers is seen as an essential ingredient for success which, historically, has always been part of the companies' joint philosophies. Bennington Training Services will be lead partner and will manage the project; StudyXpress Training will be responsible for delivery
- 3.2 With a fully-integrated structure, there will be no adverse impact on existing successful 16 – 19 provision. In fact, with an alternative route for lower academic achievers, it will strengthen that provision. The strategy has a proven record of success in other locations by increasing levels of participation, retention and achievement in terms of progression, job outcomes and qualification to Levels 2 and 3.

(For example, in the first three months of a regeneration construction programme in Brighton, 47 learners enrolled, 20 successfully completed with a qualification and 12 job outcomes were obtained immediately.)
- 3.3 The project will be up and running by mid-2007 in all locations agreed with the LSC at an overall capital cost of £ 306,200, made up as under:

(Assume one centre occupying 5,000 square feet and up to three satellite centres at 3,000 square feet each – a total of 14,000 square feet)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Rent of industrial units at (average) of £7.50/sq.ft | £ 105,000 |
| Conversion to agreed specification @ £2.50/sq.ft | £ 35,000 |
| Furniture and equipment, etc | £ 80,000 |
| IT equipment | £ 20,000 |
| Business rates @ £0.44 | £ 46,200 |
| Computer software | £ 20,000 |
| Total capital cost | £ 306,200 |

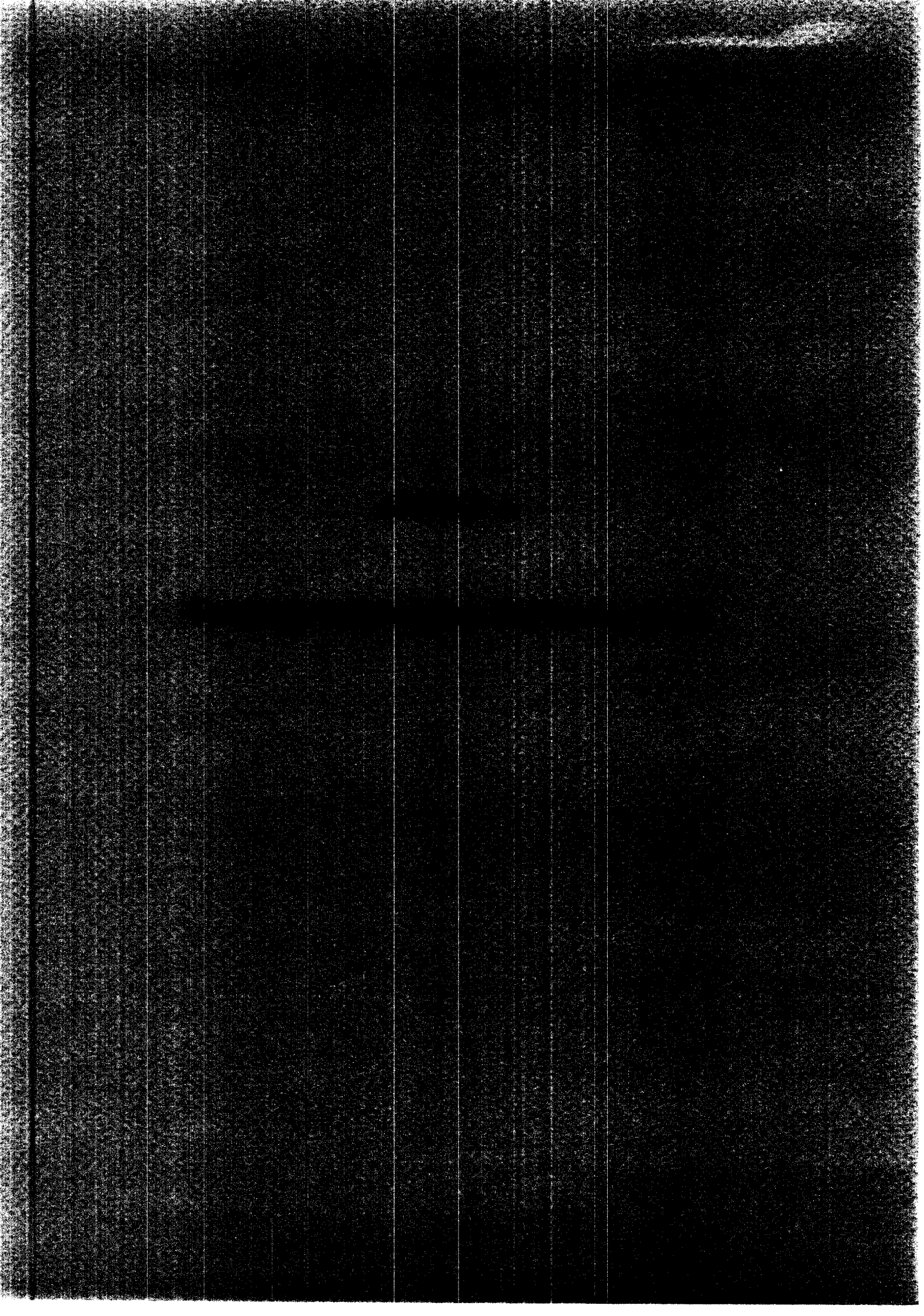
The provision outlined will cater with ease for up to 200 students in any one year. By operating outside normal school hours for, e.g. users wishing to enhance existing skills or attempting to learn new skills, this figure could easily double.

Its success is almost guaranteed, thus sustaining the provision would become a regional priority for those interested in ensuring future prosperity within the region, particularly local employers and employing organizations.

Bennington welcomes the opportunity to operate within partnerships and consortia or to participate in loose, collaborative ventures. It already participates in such within Hampshire, Sussex and the West Midlands.

- 3.4 The flexible and extensive curriculum choice will enhance opportunities for local students of all types and levels of ability. It is particularly appropriate for those with lower levels of academic attainment. It offers progression routes into other occupations vital to the region, particularly Logistics, as well as into Further or even Higher Education for some who might otherwise not have been encouraged to progress.
- 3.5 By being particularly appropriate to lower achievers, the strategy will produce a "knock-on effect in that those who would normally gain a qualifications will be encouraged to enhance these by seeing the success of others who might not normally achieve. This knock-on effect will be sustained throughout the student population, thus helping the already well-performing region to enhance its own performance vi-a-vis qualifications.

The strategy outlined will involve close co-operation with local employers and employing organizations, thus assisting to make local learning opportunities even more appropriate to local needs.



STUDYXPRESS (HOLDINGS) LIMITED

Annex A

Company information:

The Group comprises four, wholly-owned trading subsidiaries:

- Bennington Training Services Limited - a vocational training and outplacement company;
- StudyXpress Limited – a training company, specialising in construction, logistics, retail, hairdressing & beauty, motor vehicle engineering and care;
- SX (Contracting) Limited – specialist building contractors;
- Effective Outcomes – a management, sales & marketing and training consultancy, specializing in organisational development and effectiveness surveys.

Between them, the four companies offer clients:

- in excess of 20 year’s experience in management, vocational and job-search skills training; careers advice and guidance;
- specialist vocational training in a wide range of occupations;
- high-level software development services;
- management and training consultancy services.

Features of vocational training:

- skillcentre-based or on client/school/college premises;
- multi-curriculum training with a “hands-on” focus;
- initial induction, with on-going advice and guidance;
- progression routes for 14-year-olds onwards;
- specialist 14 – 19-year-old provision;
- weekly rolling on-take for students;
- large, local networks of employers to provide work-experience placements and job opportunities;
- keyed-in to Jobcentre Plus and other referral agencies;
- job-search and careers guidance included in all vocational courses, including c.v. preparation, job applications and interview skills, techniques and practice.

Student base:

- Schools, particularly 14 to 16-year-olds
- Jobcentre Plus, including New Deal 18-24 y-o and 25+
- College partnerships;
- NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) 16 to 19-year-old
- Private- and public-sector companies and organisations.

Qualifications:

- All training leads to nationally-recognised qualifications
- Qualifications are matched to client needs, their time-frames, individual ability and desired outcomes
- Where suitable qualifications do not exist, StudyXpress creates a “customized” BTEC qualification to suit individual needs
- StudyXpress uses an on-line learning package to support each curriculum or qualification offered; each package is hosted on a system that allows learners to access the material from work, school, a training centre or from home.
- Local employer engagement ensures work-experience placements, practical assessment opportunities and job outcomes.

Funding streams:

- Jobcentre Plus, through contracted providers
- Local referral agencies, e.g. Social Services, Probation Services
- Local authority initiatives
- Learning & Skills Councils and European Social Funding
- Direct funding from schools
- Mainstream college funding
- Private- and public-sector companies and organizations.

Value Added:

- Employment Agency support (Bennington Training Services)
- Management and Training consultancy and Training (Effective Outcomes)
- Construction work-experience placements, “tasters” and job opportunities (SX Contracting)
- Mentoring support, Information, Advice & Guidance, Job-search (including interview training and developing effective curriculum vitae) (Bennington Training Services)
- Training and Educational software packages (StudyXpress)
- All tutorial and instructional staff recruited and trained locally
- Comprehensive in-house staff training and development programmes
- Job-search training and careers guidance included on all courses

Accreditations:

- Bennington Training Services and Effective Outcomes are both accredited to MATRIX (Information, Advice & Guidance) and to European Quality Standard ISO 9002-2000
- StudyXpress and SX Contracting are both accredited to Investors in People.

Locations:

StudyXpress (Holdings) Limited operates or is negotiating leasehold training centres, skill centres or other training accommodation in:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Hampshire | Dorset |
| East and West Sussex | Gloucestershire |
| Suffolk | Norfolk |
| Somerset | Gloucestershire |
| | Surrey |
| Birmingham (from September 2006) | Windsor (2007) |
| Croydon (from 2007) | Kent (2007) |

Sample current projects:

ESF Regeneration Programme, Brighton – construction skills centre
LSC Logistics up-skilling, Hampshire – LGV Driving
Multi-curriculum schools skills centres – Hampshire, Sussex, Birmingham
LSC Logistics (LGV Driving), Birmingham (MG Rover re-training programme)
Jobcentre Plus – all aged, including New Deal 18-24 and 25+; vocational training in construction, motor vehicle engineering, LGV driving, hairdressing, care, catering, retail, PCB manufacture
Solent Skills Quest (14 to 16-y-o) – education and business partnership, co-ordinating activities in schools for vocational courses and “tasters”
City College Brighton & Hove – non-engaged 16 to 19-y-o
Equal, Brighton & Hove (ESF-funded) – as above
Birmingham LSC – Partnership 14 to 16-y-o – construction and motor vehicle engineering
Pride in Pompey – Portsmouth City Council – community-based training in construction, hairdressing, motor vehicle engineering and LGV driving
Portsmouth Probation Service – Young Offenders vocational “tasters”
Fareport Training, Fareham – E2E (Entry to Employment), 16 to 19-y-o)
Crescent Training – sub-contracted to provide vocational training for adults in construction and LGV driving
Norfolk LSC – care project
HM Prison Service – construction training – Ford Open Prison