

**i** For information

**>lsc**

Leading learning and skills

# Information on Tendered Learning & Skills Provision starting in 2008/09

## January 2008

Of interest to providers wishing to deliver  
LSC-funded provision



Leading learning and skills

**Learning and Skills Council**

**Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09**

**PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO COMPLETE THE ON-LINE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST OR THE PRE-QUALIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE.**

**January 2008**

**Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of  
learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09**

## **Contents**

Introduction.....	1
The Requirement.....	1
Description of the required provision.....	2
Funding limits.....	3
Procurement Approach & Timetable.....	3
Qualified providers (qualified in September 2007) .....	3
Providers wishing to qualify to be invited to tender .....	4
Note on Expressions of Interest.....	5
Consortia and Sub-Contracting .....	5
Deadline for submission of expressions of interest and responses to the PQQ.....	5
Invitations to Tender.....	5
Open suppliers' meetings.....	5
Submission of tenders.....	6
Service offering discussions.....	6
Contractual discussions .....	6
Award of contracts .....	6
Summary of the planned procurement timetable .....	6
Completing the PQQ .....	7
Costs of expressing an interest and completing the PQQ.....	7

## Introduction

- 1 The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers by providing funding for the provision of learning and skills<sup>1</sup>.
- 2 Whilst the majority of our funding is allocated by negotiation with existing providers, we intend to allocate some £1.9 bn of funding over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11 by inviting existing and potential providers to tender, competitively, for funding for the delivery of learning and skills provision to employers, employees and young people across England.

## The Requirement

- 3 The categories for which we wish to procure provision are:
  - a **For young people's learning: (£ 500m approximately over three year period)**
    - o 16-18 Apprenticeships
    - o Entry to Employment
    - o Specialist provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
    - o Specialist provision to engage young people who are currently not in education, employment or training
    - o Specific areas of provision identified in Regional LSC Commissioning Plans.
  - b **For programmes and provision for adults: (£ 1.4 bn approximately over three year period)**
    - o Provision for individuals to prepare them for sustainable employment
    - o Skills for Jobs
    - o Basic Skills and Employability provision for Jobcentre Plus customers
    - o A range of enhanced skills and employment activities
    - o Apprenticeships, Work Based Learning [16-24 year olds]
    - o Apprenticeships for Adults, Work Based Learning [25+]
    - o Train to Gain training provision (including Skills for Life, level 2 and level 3 learning).

We will tender for provision in the categories above and also for packages of provision that constitute more than one of the categories.

---

<sup>1</sup> Information about our targets and priorities and investment strategy (funding models) can be found in our *Statement of Priorities, Better skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives*, which is available at: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/publications/recommended/Better-skills-Better-jobs-Better-lives---Our-Statement-of-Priorities.htm>.

## **Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09**

- 4 We also wish to receive expressions of interest from organisations interested in managing and delivering an integrated **Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS)** for offenders throughout the duration of their sentences.
- 5 The LSC is interested in receiving expressions of interest and, where appropriate (see paragraphs 18 to 24 below), responses to its pre-qualification questionnaire from organisations who are already, or have been in the past, in receipt of LSC funds and also those that wish to access LSC funds for the first time.
- 6 In the Invitations to Tender we will set out the volumes and funding we wish to let against each category of provision in each region and we will also set out our expectation of the approximate number of providers we are looking for to meet this need. We will ask all providers at Invitation to Tender stage to let us know the minimum, maximum and optimum numbers of places they could provide in any areas that are being let.
- 7 The LSC intends to let contracts for provision in 2008/09, 2009/10, and 2010/11. However, the value of these contracts in 2009/10 and 2010/11 is dependent on the availability of funding, and also on provider performance and compliance with the terms and conditions of contract.
- 8 Note that there will be further opportunities to bid for provision within this three year period (expected to be January 2009 and January 2010).
- 9 Note that the LSC intends to retain an element of funding to enable it to respond to employer choice in year (the Employer Responsive Regional Fund). That is, to award new contracts for provision in addition to any let as a result of this procurement, where employers select quality providers of their choice.

### **Description of the required provision**

#### **Apprenticeships**

- 10 Apprenticeships develop employee skills through a blend of on-the-job training, classroom learning and workplace experience. An Apprenticeship is not a qualification in itself, but contains a knowledge based element in the form of a technical certificate, a competence based element typically assed via an NVQ, key skills and employment rights and responsibilities. The framework for each Apprenticeship is designed by the relevant Sector Skills Council. See <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/>.

#### **Entry to Employment**

- 11 E2E aims to help young people aged 16-18 who want to enter Apprenticeships, Further Education or employment and need a short period of learning to help them do so. It is an individually designed programme within an overarching framework, which will respond flexibly to meet the young persons' needs. See <http://e2e.lsc.gov.uk/>.

#### **Train to Gain – training provision**

- 12 Train to Gain is a national skills service to support employers of all sizes and sectors to improve the skills of their employees as a route to improving their business performance. An element of the service to employers is publicly funded training at Levels 2 and 3 and Skills for Life. See <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/>.

#### **Skills for Jobs**

- 13 The Skills for Jobs programme supports the integration of employment and skills services for an individual. The Skills for Jobs programme will consist of a range of services and programmes to increase skills interventions in the form of new services or extend existing good practice. The key aim of Skills for Jobs will be to help individuals

## Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09

gain sustainable employment through support, learning and achievement of qualifications.

### Employability Skills Programme

- 14 The Employability Skills Programme (ESP) is a key component of the LSC's flexible and responsive provision under the *skills for jobs* umbrella of activities. ESP offers basic (literacy, language and numeracy) and employability skills and qualifications to Jobcentre Plus customers. All Jobcentre Plus customers aged 18 and over with basic skills needs are eligible to be referred to an LSC-funded provider for an assessment of needs. Both qualifications and job outcomes are recognised outcomes for funding purposes. A key aim of the Programme is that learners who go into jobs continue in learning to complete and achieve relevant qualifications in order to support sustainable employment.

### OLASS

- 15 The LSC issued its Prospectus: Developing the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service, in September 2007 taking into account the Government's Green Paper: Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment (December 2005) and the subsequent Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment Next Steps Document (December 2006). The Prospectus covers proposals relating to all offenders in custody in English public sector prisons and to those under supervision in the community, including young people.
- 16 An exciting and major challenge for the integrated service will be to further develop a seamless learning journey for offenders, making their learning relevant to the needs of the labour market. The integrated service will involve different ways of working, new relationships and providers, and the LSC will want to ensure that the positive and effective aspects of current service delivery are enhanced. The LSC will be looking for innovative approaches to the delivery of the key elements of the integrated service that it is seeking to procure and a key focus for the new service is that offender learners are supported and able to access the benefits of LSC funded post-16 mainstream provision.

### Funding limits

- 17 The LSC sets a recommended funding limit for each business or charitable organisation beyond which the LSC would not seek to fund the organisation in a single funding year. This is taken into account in determining the total value of any contract or contracts which may be awarded to a provider.

## Procurement Approach & Timetable

- 18 Potential providers that wish to be invited to tender must qualify, or must have qualified already.

### Qualified providers (qualified in September 2007)

- 19 Potential providers that have already qualified are those who responded to the pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) published by the LSC in September 2007 *and were informed that they had qualified to be invited to tender*. This group includes potential providers that updated pre-qualification information originally supplied in early 2007 and those who responded to the PQQ for the first time in September 2007.
- 20 In response to the invitation to express an interest published on the LSC's e-tendering portal on 31 January 2008 these potential providers should indicate for which provision they wish to be invited to tender by completing the "*Expression of Interest*" section of

## Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09

the on-line PQQ and, where appropriate, update the information they provided in September 2007<sup>2</sup>; for example with a new set of accounts or Ofsted report.

- 21 Note that these responses will not be re-evaluated. These qualified potential providers will receive invitations to tender for each category and region in which they have expressed an interest.
- 22 Note that the latest invitation presents the requirement for provision in more detail than those published in early 2007 and September 2007. This is to ensure potential providers receive invitations to tender only for areas in which they are interested in tendering. It is, therefore, in your interests to complete the section of the on-line response form entitled "*Expression of Interest*".

### Providers wishing to qualify to be invited to tender

- 23 Note that those potential providers that qualified in early 2007, but who did not respond to the PQQ in September 2007 are not qualified for this round and must re-qualify if they wish to be invited to tender.
- 24 Potential providers that are not yet qualified to receive invitations to tender<sup>3</sup> should complete the on-line PQQ which can be found at the LSC's e-tendering portal (the portal): <https://lsc.bravosolution.com>.
- 25 The LSC will examine responses to the PQQ to select potential providers to be invited to tender in addition to those who qualified in September 2007. The criteria to be used to judge which potential providers receive invitations to tender are:
  - a Quality – Assessment of the competences of the organisation in the area of quality. To assist you to complete or updating your Quality section there is a note on Ofsted and ALI inspection grades at Appendix 1 of this document
  - b Equality & Diversity - Assessment of the competences of the organisation in the area of equality & diversity.
  - c Health & Safety - Assessment of the competences of the organisation in the area of health & safety.
  - d Financial Health of the provider- Assessment of the organisation's financial position. This may entail independent financial checks.
- 26 Note that you must complete in full the on-line documentation and comply with the requirements. **Failure to comply with or fully respond to any of the questions may result in the LSC not proceeding further with your submission.** However, you should note that the information provided under the heading "*Staffing information*" will not be evaluated at this stage.
- 27 Note that some potential providers will not qualify because they do not match the evaluation criteria for qualification.
- 28 Those providers that do qualify will be invited to tender for all areas in which they express an interest.

---

<sup>2</sup> The LSC has now implemented a further module of the e-tendering service known as e-vendor management which allows organisations to refresh some of their data each time they respond to an LSC PQQ without having provide the same information each time.

<sup>3</sup> That is, new providers that have not attempted to qualify before, those that qualified in early 2007 but did not respond in September 2007 and those that failed to qualify in either early 2007 or September 2007 but who believe they now can.

## Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09

### Note on Expressions of Interest

- 29 In completing the expression of interest organisations should select the categories and regions in which they are interested in supplying provision. Although at this juncture we may not be inviting tenders in all categories in all regions, by indicating that you are interested in more than one region you will help us to plan for future invitations to tender.

### Consortia and Sub-Contracting

- 30 Expressions of interest, and tenders if so invited, may be submitted by consortia, but if a consortium is to be awarded a contract then one member (legal entity) must be the contract holder, responsible for the performance of the contract, with the others as subcontractors.
- 31 Where a consortium or subcontracting approach is proposed, all information requested should be given in respect of the proposed contract holding legal entity or consortium leader. Relevant information should also be provided in respect of consortium members or subcontractors who will play a significant role in the delivery of services under any ensuing contract including the proportion of delivery that each member will be delivering. Responses must enable the LSC to assess the overall offering from the consortium.

### Deadline for submission of expressions of interest and responses to the PQQ

- 32 Expressions of interest and, where required, responses to the PQQ should be submitted, using the portal, by **7.00 pm** on Monday 3 March 2008.
- 33 If:
- a you have any doubts about what is required in your expression of interest or in your response to the PQQ or
  - b you are unable to provide information in the form required
- then please contact us as soon as possible using the messaging service available on the portal. We will respond to your enquiry during business hours as quickly as possible. We reserve the right to tell other potential providers your question (anonymised) and our answer to help others with the same query.
- 34 If you experience any technical difficulties with the portal then please contact the e-tendering help desk at [help@bravosolution.co.uk](mailto:help@bravosolution.co.uk), where possible providing them with a "screen dump" of the error message you are receiving
- 35 To ensure that technical difficulties do not prevent you submitting a response, please try to load any required documents and complete and publish your on-line response well before the deadline.

### Invitations to Tender

- 36 The target date for the issue of Invitations to Tender (ITT) is 28 March 2008. Potential providers will be notified of any change to this target date via the portal.

### Open suppliers' meetings

- 37 Once the ITT have been sent, the LSC will hold open meetings in each region for those invited to tender to brief them about the requirements and what is required in tenders. Dates and locations for the meetings will be published after the deadline for responses to the PQQ.

**Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of  
learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09**

**Submission of tenders**

- 38 The required response to the ITT will be defined in the ITT, as will the final date for the receipt of tenders by the LSC. However, the target date for Tenders to be submitted is 9 May 2008.
- 39 The LSC will examine the tenders received and use the criteria to be defined in the ITT to select providers to offer contracts to.

**Service offering discussions**

- 40 During tender evaluation of the ITT the LSC may wish to discuss particular aspects of a potential provider's tender to clarify aspects of it or improve the LSC's understanding of the offer. Visits to referees or presentations by, or interviews of, potential providers may be required at this stage.

**Contractual discussions**

- 41 The contract documents to be enclosed with the ITT will contain the terms and conditions and outline contract schedules which will apply.

**Award of contracts**

- 42 Note that the LSC reserves the right not to award contracts in any or all categories as a result of this procurement.

**Summary of the planned procurement timetable**

- 43 A summary of the planned timetable for the procurement of the framework agreement is given in the table below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
3 Mar 08	Deadline for receipt of PQQ responses
28 Mar 08	ITT issued to qualified potential providers
Early April 08	Regional Open Suppliers' Meetings
9 May 08	Deadline for receipt of tenders
20 Jun 08	Notification of evaluation results
30 Jun 08	Contracts awarded

## **Completing the PQQ**

- 44 When completing those parts of the PQQ that have a limit of 2000 characters, please ensure you do not exceed this as we will only evaluate up to this limit. Please note that in this instance a character is any or all of the following:
- a A letter
  - b A number
  - c A punctuation mark
  - d A character space
  - e A line space
- 45 These instructions are designed to ensure that all organisations are given fair and equal consideration. **It is important that you provide all the information asked for in the format and order specified.** If you have any doubts as to the requirements, or you have difficulty in providing the information requested, please make use of the messaging service which is available on the e-tendering portal. We will endeavour to respond to your query within 48 hours and will reserve the right to respond to either all responders or individuals dependent upon the nature or content of the message.
- 46 If you are experiencing difficulty or need assistance in completing your on-line pre-qualification questionnaire you should contact the e-tendering Helpdesk at [help@bravosolution.co.uk](mailto:help@bravosolution.co.uk) supplying a “screen dump” depicting error messages you have received
- 47 It is not appropriate to contact the Learning and Skills Council by any means other than by using the messaging service on the portal as this may compromise the procurement process.
- 48 The LSC reserves the right to modify, amend or request/provide further clarification on the on-line pre-qualification questionnaire and associated documents at any time prior to the deadline for completion, by notification either direct to each respondent or on the e-tendering portal. Where such modifications constitute a significant change, the LSC may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for completion of the on-line documents.
- 49 Organisations are advised that nothing in this document or any other communication between the LSC, or any part thereof, and another party shall be taken as constituting a contract, agreement, or representation between the LSC and any party (save for an award of a contract made by the LSC) nor shall it be taken as constituting a contract, agreement or representation that any contract shall be offered in accordance herewith or at all.
- 50 Organisations are further advised that the LSC cannot guarantee that any of the requirements listed in this document will be included in the tender at the second stage of the procurement process. All requirements listed in the document are therefore provisional at this stage and subject to actual need and confirmation of funding.

### **Bidding Restrictions**

- 51 Organisations need not currently be based in the region in which they wish to tender. However organisations that are successful in qualifying to receive an invitation to tender will need to demonstrate their capability to deliver in their tender.

### **Costs of expressing an interest and completing the PQQ**

- 52 Note that you are required to bear all costs incurred by you in expressing an interest and completing the PQQ.

**Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of  
learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09**

**Feedback on the qualification stage**

- 53 Following the completion of the pre-qualification response evaluation, written feedback can be provided on request.

**Freedom of Information**

- 54 The LSC is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Under the provision of the FOIA the LSC is required to provide information it holds in response to a request made in accordance with the FOIA. This includes information about third parties. Organisations are referred to the Learning and Skills Council's Freedom of Information Policy available on its website [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk).

**Further Information**

- 55 Please see <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Providers/funding-policy/> for information on LSC funding policy.
- 56 Also, please take the opportunity to read "*Delivering World-class Skills in a Demand-led System*" at [http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Providers/funding-policy/strategic-overview/Delivering\\_World-class\\_Skills\\_in\\_a\\_Demand-led\\_System.htm](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/Providers/funding-policy/strategic-overview/Delivering_World-class_Skills_in_a_Demand-led_System.htm)

# Statement of requirement and Instructions for potential providers of learning & skills provision to be tendered in 2008/09

## Appendix 1

### Contextual information

There have been two cycles of inspection, based upon the Common Inspection Framework (CIF), since the LSC's inception. Inspections have been, and are, performed by two statutory inspectorates: ALI and Ofsted. The second inspection cycle saw the merger of the two organisations.

The two versions of the CIF mean that there are different terminology and grading processes in place. A brief outline is below:

Ofsted/ALI – Inspection Cycle 1 (2001-05) uses grading 1 to 5.

Ofsted/ALI – Inspection Cycle 2 (2005-09) uses grading 1 to 4.

ALI merged with Ofsted April 2007.

Grade	Descriptors: 2001-05	Descriptors: 2005-present
1	Outstanding or Excellent	Outstanding or Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
4	Unsatisfactory	Inadequate
5	Inadequate/Very Weak/Weak	N/A

### Potential Queries

Under the “*Quality and Accreditation, Ofsted*” section of the PQQ, providers should include ALI inspection reports. Basically, this section should include the provider (if funded by LSC/Jobcentre Plus) inspection reports, when performed by ALI and/or Ofsted, against the CIF i.e. anything pre-2001 should be placed with section 3 ‘other’.

Partial Ofsted inspections should be included in this section.

The following should be included in the “*Not Ofsted or SAR*” section:

- inspections performed by Welsh or Scottish inspectorates
- inspections by the FEFC and/or Training Standards Council (TSC) or another English education and training inspectorate prior to 2001
- commissioned inspections by private inspection firms (this should also include where the ALI was privately commissioned to inspect – it does not include the process of external validation of the SAR).

Under the Capacity to Improve (Ctl) grade, it may be necessary that a grade is not outlined as either a) their last inspection was in the first inspection, where the Ctl was not in use, or b) the inspection was partial, and did not award a Ctl grade.

Providers may wish to indicate the grades for quality assurance and equality and opportunity, as these were listed in ALI reports. They are contributory grades to the overall grade for Leadership and Management, and are therefore not required.

Learning and Skills Council  
National Office

Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry CV1 2WT  
T 0845 019 4170  
F 024 7682 3675  
[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

© LSC January 2008  
Published by the Learning and Skills Council

Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for non-commercial educational or training purposes on condition that the source is acknowledged and the findings are not misrepresented.

This publication is available in electronic form on the Learning and Skills Council website:  
[www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/provider-procurement](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/provider-procurement).