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**LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL
NORTHWEST**

ESF CO-FINANCE



Leading learning and skills

EMPLOYER TENDER SPECIFICATIONS

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ESF CO-FINANCE
TENDER
SPECIFICATION



Title: Marketing and Communications Campaign for the LSC's Holistic Skills Offer to Employers

Reference: NW/EMPLOYER/S20

Aim

LSCGM is seeking to appoint a single organisation or consortium of organisations to develop, and deliver, a marketing and communications strategy that will engage large employers and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and employer facing intermediaries across the Merseyside sub-region.

The aim of the programme is to design and deliver a major marketing campaign with the necessary technical support to raise awareness of, and encourage engagement in, the LSC's skills offer to employers including programmes to provide skills for adults and young people who are in employment or seeking work with Merseyside employers. The successful applicant must also be capable of bringing the employment and skills agenda together within a set of coherent messages. One of the primary mechanisms for achieving this will be through the development of a toolkit for use by intermediaries.

Service requirement

Service Requirements

The successful applicant will be responsible for:

- a marketing and communications strategy that promotes an integrated skills offer to employers, both ESF and LSC funded. This should avoid the use of 'clever' marketing language or the use of jargon and avoid taking a reactive or ad-hoc approach to marketing programmes;
- as part of the campaign the development of 3 to 4 clear, memorable and consistent core marketing messages for employers which includes the need to provide young people in jobs with training as well as up-skilling the adult workforce;
- a strategy that can build on the good practice of previous approaches to marketing and communicating with employers, and in particular, makes use of sectoral linkages in Merseyside;
- the maintenance and development of an existing website linked to the SkillWorks programme;
- the development of a marketing and communications tool kit for intermediaries such as learning and skills brokers, providers and other bodies with access to employers such as

property management companies who may have significant business interactions with the large employer and SME target groups, this tool kit must also include sector specific components;

- the development of employer networking opportunities with guest speakers likely to attract hard to reach employers and senior members of the organisation;
- the production of a quarterly newsletter which informs employers and employer intermediaries of LSC and ESF funded opportunities and good practice;
- the production of positive case studies and good news stories worthy of local press interest and ensuring they are published;
- the maintenance and use of a Company Information Record database. The successful applicant will be required to maintain, update and manage processes to make this database a positive marketing tool for cross promotion of LSC programmes with information received from providers.

Tender Requirements

Through this Invitation to Tender, the LSC is seeking a suitably qualified and experienced marketing and communications provider to deliver a fully integrated programme of promotional activity to achieve the responsibilities stated above.

Applicants are therefore required to prepare a tender which comprehensively covers the following areas:

- A fully integrated, balanced and innovative programme of activity, which targets local large employers and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and convinces employers and employees of the need to engage in learning and skills, and clearly articulates the support available to employers and employees through LSC and ESF funding. Applicants are expected to outline in their campaign plans the activity that they will roll-out and provide a rationale of why such activity is likely to be successful.
- How the applicants will continue the development of the SkillWorks website (www.theskillworks.co.uk), currently developed and maintained by 'Clarity'. The successful applicant will also be required to develop and maintain the SkillWorks brand and manage the handover of the brand or closure of the brand at the end of the programme. In particular, the successful applicant will need ensure that the Skillworks brand is appropriately positioned with and linked to the Train to Gain brand, which is the overarching brand for the LSC and partners' skills offers to employers. The successful applicant may also be required to signpost employers to the Train to Gain Skills Brokerage Service / SkillWorks Gateway following initial contact from marketing as an integral part of the programme.
- The successful applicant will need to demonstrate a knowledge of the Merseyside economy and how local partnership infrastructures operate as well as demonstrate a track record of successfully working with training providers and SMEs in the North West if not the Merseyside area.

- The successful applicant will need to demonstrate an ability to continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign. This will include methods of monitoring the conversion rates of leads generated into successful outcomes, tracking activity throughout the duration of the contract and providing statistical reports to report on the targets agreed between the LSC and provider.
- How they will engage large employers and SMEs generally and, in particular, how they will engage employers in Merseyside's growing sectors. Applicants are also asked to demonstrate how they would engage "hard-to-reach" companies with a poor track record of investing in training for their staff. Proposals should also describe how latent demand will be identified and actualised and what specific tactics would be used to ensure that "hard-to-reach" employees are engaged in learning that will benefit themselves and their employer. In addition, applicants should set out how they will ensure an integrated approach to employer engagement, working closely with Business Link NW who deliver the Train to Gain Skills Brokerage Service and who are also targeted with driving up engagement with large employers and those that are hard to reach.
- Applicants should outline which organisations they would work with to develop routes to market, including both traditional and non-traditional routes e.g. Business Link NW, Banks, Professional Firms, Chambers of Commerce, Trades Unions and other potential channels to market and learning and skills brokers, and companies such as local property management organisations.
- Applicants should also set out how they will ensure their campaign will be consistent with the LSC national marketing campaigns and comply with LSC branding guidelines, particularly Train to Gain, and timings of national LSC promotional campaigns <https://brand.lsc.gov.uk/faq.asp>.
- The provider should also demonstrate that they have a full appreciation of European Funding including ESF, and in particular, the publicity requirements necessary to satisfy the European Commission and European Court of Auditors.

Applicant Capability

The Learning and Skills Council requires that potential providers satisfy the following requirements:

- The demonstration of their ability to be flexible in their approach and be able to respond to a rapidly changing learning and development agenda.
- They have a thorough understanding of LSC funded programmes on Merseyside and understand the benefits that each can bring to local businesses
- Demonstrate an understanding of how the Train to Gain Brokerage service provides the primary referral point for employers who wish to access learning and skills opportunities for their workforce and how the applicant's marketing and promotional activities will enhance other activities which aim to stimulate demand for Train to Gain
- Have a track record of delivering marketing campaigns at a sub-regional level to the SME and large employers. The successful applicant will be expected to work with LSC funded training providers, ensuring that the marketing and promotional programme is fully

understood and embraced by providers. Applicants are therefore asked to set out their experience in working with training providers on Merseyside or elsewhere.

- Possess the technical ability to design and maintain an existing website and manage a major employer database. The successful applicant will manage and maintain a large database of local employers and ensure that positive media relationships (using the best case studies) are maintained and developed. This will involve the timely requesting of information from providers, updating and maintaining the website and positive use of this tool for promotion purposes;

Applicant presentations

Applicants who score sufficiently well, as part of the assessment process will be requested to present to LSC and potentially other stakeholder groups. The topic of the pitch or presentation will be the providers ability and experience in delivering promotional campaigns such as the one detailed in this invitation to tender. Applicants should consider market segmentation by sector, location (borough, street or building focus) or size in planning to target companies. The presentation will be no longer than 30 minutes excluding time for questions. Dates will be clarified with selected providers.

Target groups & priority

The main focus of this programme are Small and Medium Size Enterprises and large employers, who are eligible for support from LSC Co-financing programme and other LSC funded activity as a by product.

Geography / area of delivery

The marketing and promotional campaign will cover the LSC Greater Merseyside boroughs of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens and only companies in these boroughs should be targeted. Individual employees in these companies can be supported, regardless of the location of their home address. Tenders should preferably detail experience of working within these boroughs and associated partners, the North West or similar areas addressing a similar employer audience working alongside training providers.

Outputs

Proposals should identify delivery of the following outputs:

Output	Total for programme
Annual marketing plan completed. Production of a fully costed marketing & promotional plan, setting out the details of the actual cost associated with this delivery, including staffing, and covering all activities cited in "Activities to be Supported" above (delivery ref: 41);	Annual
Promotional events organised and delivered (delivery ref: 43).	15
3 to 4 key marketing and communications core messages developed and delivered (delivery ref: 45);	3 to 4 key messages (reviewed annually)
Intermediary toolkit developed and produced including sectoral components (delivery ref: 46).	300

Results

This programme should generate the following results:

- The attraction of hard to reach Large employers SMEs into learning and skills;
- Higher levels of employer investment in learning and skills;
- More employers accessing LSC services such as Apprenticeships and Train to Gain;
- More employers with an incentive to engage with the Train to Gain Brokerage service and Skills Pledge.
- 2,000 referrals to Train to Gain Brokerage service;
- 1,000 company commitments to Skills Pledge. (Applicants should consider market segmentation by sector, location (borough, street or building focus) or size in planning to target companies);
- 2,000 company referrals to LSC ESF Co-financing programmes.

Other outcomes

The following outcomes are required:

- Production of a quarterly newsletter to a minimum of 17,500 businesses each quarter which informs employers and employer intermediaries of opportunities and good practice;
- In addition to the above raising the awareness of the LSC ESF Co-financing portfolio of opportunities for to 7,500 companies during the lifetime of the contract;
- Production and publication of 40 new good news case studies;
- 100 intermediaries using / applying the toolkit.
- Maintenance of the company database and referral of information to Government Office North West, providers and other on behalf of LSC;
- Monthly reports to LSC detailing progress against the campaign and contract.

Funding available

The total amount of funding available for this invitation to tender is £1,500,000. This contract will be subject to annual review by the LSC and may be terminated at these review points without further notice and the contract re-tendered. Payments will be made on a monthly basis in accordance with a profile agreed between the LSC and the provider which will relate to the achievement of the outputs, results and other outcomes required by this Tender Specification.

Start and end dates

Projects must not start activity before 4 August 2008 and must complete all of their activity by 31st December 2010 (including evaluation and dissemination activities). Projects must not undertake activity if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project. The LSC reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

Contracting details

LSC Greater Merseyside would expect no more than 1 contract to deliver this programme.

The LSC may also choose to invite projects to be retained on a reserve list to enable them to be funded at a later point.

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