



European Union
European Social Fund
Investing in jobs and skills

LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL NORTH WEST



Leading learning and skills

Invitation to Tender

Train to Gain and the Third Sector

1. Introduction and Background

The government recognises the important role third sector organisations can, and do, play in the delivery of public services particularly to disadvantaged communities and individuals. The skills of the third sector workforce – both paid staff and volunteers – are a critical component of ensuring that high quality services are delivered. Access to appropriate and affordable staff development opportunities is, therefore, a priority for the sector.

One important source of support is the Train to Gain service from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It has always been available to third sector organisations for their paid workforce, but has recently been extended to cover volunteers as well. This will provide real opportunities for third sector employers to access support, advice and (in some cases) funding to boost the development of their paid and unpaid workforce and increase the effectiveness of the sector.

There remain, however, challenges to encourage and increase third sector participation in Train to Gain and to overcome these it is vital that brokers and providers understand the breadth and variety of the third sector and its workforce.

The LSC is now looking to support a project which will strengthen the links between the third sector and Train to Gain and increase the numbers of third sector organisations and volunteers accessing the service.

2. Objective

The objective of this project is to pilot an approach that will encourage the third sector to benefit from the Train to Gain service.

3. Overview and Key Activities

Experience has shown that the third sector trust and work best with local representatives from their own sector and we are therefore, looking for a third

sector intermediary, or a partnership of intermediaries, to promote Train to Gain amongst the third sector in the North West.

The successful applicant(s) will deliver a programme of Train to Gain awareness and engagement with up to 400 of the larger third sector organisations, in terms of both employees and/or volunteers. This, in turn, will lead to 200 referrals to the Skills Brokerage Service, with at least 100 organisations accessing an Organisational Needs Assessment (ONA) and subsequently demonstrating increased take up of Skills for Life, Level 2, Level 3 and Leadership and Management qualifications. In addition, we anticipate at least 75 organisations to sign up to the Skills Pledge.

The 100 third sector organisations accessing the ONA will be drawn from across the North West with at least 10 in each sub region (Cheshire & Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire). We anticipate a similar profile for the take up of the Skills Pledge.

It is anticipated that the project will focus on a range of sectors in which the third sector plays a key role e.g., health, social care, education and with a variety of variety of companies including BME third sector organisations.

The successful applicant(s) will need to work alongside the LSC to develop a model for third sector referrals to the North West Skills Brokerage Service and provider network, which adds value rather than duplicates the existing methods of engagement.

4. Key outputs

- Development of a plan for the engagement with third sector organisations in the region, promotion of the Train to Gain service and achievement of project targets.
- Produce and undertake a marketing and communications plan which will result in increased awareness of the benefits of the Train to Gain service amongst 400 of the larger third sector organisations.
- Establishment of a sustainable way of working which encourages the third sector to benefit from the Train to Gain Service and a programme of activities to promote awareness of Train to Gain
- Establish a robust referral process to ensure 200 organisations access the Skills Brokerage Service.
- Development of good practice guides to support the third sector to understand training needs within their organisations and to support intermediaries and brokers.
- Engagement with a range of third sector organisations in different sectors to ensure 100 organisations engage with Train to Gain through an ONA (carried out by the North West Skills Brokerage Service), with at least 40 organisations enrolling employees or volunteers on Skills for Life, NVQ Level 2, NVQ Level 3 or Leadership and Management provision.

- Engagement with a range of third sector organisations in different sectors to ensure 75 organisations commit to the Skills Pledge
- Identification of a number of these organisations who would be prepared to act as champions with the sector including 10 case studies.
- Monthly activity reports which would include numbers of organisations engaged, ONAs undertaken, successful referrals, Skills Pledges signed, analysis and feedback on the process, provision and the Brokerage Service.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach for sustained engagement.
- Dissemination of findings

5. Timescales

The contract will run from October 2008 to 31 March 2009.

6. Funding

There is a maximum of £120,000 inclusive of VAT available for this project of which we would expect one third (£40,000) to be spent in Greater Merseyside.

7. Applicant Requirements

In making their application organisations should complete the Application Form which is included at Annex 1.

7.1 Meeting the needs of the third sector

The proposal must clearly set out:

- A track record of working with third sector organisations in promoting access to learning and training programmes through a variety of media including web based systems.
- An understanding of the support needs of the third sector
- A comprehensive network of relations with third sector networks and organisations including those representing BME organisations.
- Experience in dissemination of information to the third sector.

7.2 Understanding of Train to Gain

The applicant should demonstrate:

- Experience and understanding of the Train to Gain Service
- Knowledge of regional skills and training issues.

- The ability and reputation to operate at a strategic level with the LSC and other key partners including Business Link and the Skills Brokerage Service

7.3 Methodology

The proposal must clearly set out:

- Details of the methodology you will apply including processes for promotion, engagement, referral, monitoring and evaluation
- Availability to undertake the work against the project timetable
- Realistic, deliverable outputs

We will be particularly interested in proposals which demonstrate:

- innovative approaches involving third partners from across the region working closely with the Skills Brokerage Service and relevant providers, and
- The delivery of additional outputs such as underpinning knowledge sessions for brokers and providers, promotion of Apprenticeships and increased Skills for Life provision.

7.4 Management arrangements

The applicant will need to demonstrate that it has sufficient capacity to carry out the responsibilities required of this tender. Please give evidence of capacity in terms of:-

- Organisational structure and the role of individual staff in the delivery of this tender
- Delivery arrangements and quality assurance
- Legal status/Companies House registration
- Trading history
- Financial viability*
- Accounting systems

** If your organisation is not a public body, you need to show that you are financially viable.*

7.5 Capacity to deliver the activity from October 2008

Given the tight timescale of this programme, the successful applicant will be expected to have in place by that time the necessary project management arrangements, relationships and structures in order to maximise the effectiveness of the contract

It is expected that all stages of the project will be completed by 31 March 2009. If applicants are unable to meet this timescale they should not tender

7.6 Costings/Value for Money

The applicant will need to show details of proposed key staff costs allocated to this activity and other costs associated with delivering this contract. This should be given in a quarterly breakdown over the lifetime of the contract

The applicant should demonstrate where they can add value to project.

8. Selection Arrangements and Timetable for Tenders

Tenders will be assessed against the criteria highlighted in this Tender and will be scored as per Annex 2.

Tenders must be submitted by **12.00 noon on Monday 22 September 2008**, electronically to the Bravo Solution website following the detailed instructions and help provided,

It is not appropriate for any Supplier to contact the LSC directly during this process; any queries should be raised using the Bravo messaging service provided for this purpose.

Please ensure contact details for the nominated individual(s) that you would like to be informed at each stage of the selection process are correct within your details held on the Bravo Solution website.

The successful applicant will be **notified by Friday 3 October 2008** and will be expected to be available for **contract clarification week commencing 6 October 2008**.

9. Contract Terms

The Learning and Skills Council's standard terms and conditions will apply to the contract.



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Application Form

Meeting the needs of the third sector (max 2 A4 pages font Arial 12)

The proposal must clearly set out:

- A track record of working with third sector organisations in promoting access to learning and training programmes through a variety of media including web based systems.
- An understanding of the support needs of the third sector
- A comprehensive network of relations with third sector networks and organisations including those representing BME organisations.
- Experience in dissemination of information to the third sector.

Understanding of Train to Gain (max 2 A4 pages font Arial 12)

The applicant should demonstrate:

- Experience and understanding of the Train to Gain Service
- Knowledge of regional skills and training issues.
- The ability and reputation to operate at a strategic level with the LSC and other key partners including Business Link and the Skills Brokerage Service

Methodology (max 2 A4 pages 2 font Arial 12)

The proposal must clearly set out:

- Details of the methodology you will apply, including processes for promotion, engagement, referral, monitoring and evaluation, to deliver the project outputs.
- Availability to undertake the work against the project timetable set out below
- Realistic, deliverable timeframe

Additional information about

- innovative approaches involving third partners from across the region working closely with the Train to Gain Brokerage Service and relevant providers, and
- The delivery of additional outputs such as underpinning knowledge sessions for brokers and providers, promotion of Apprenticeships, increased Skills for Life provision etc.

Management arrangements (max 1 A4 page font Arial 12)

Please give evidence of capacity in terms of:

- Organisational structure and the role of individual staff in the delivery of this tender
- Delivery arrangements and quality assurance
- Legal status/Companies House registration
- Trading history
- Financial viability*
- Accounting systems

** If your organisation is not a public body, you need to show that you are financially viable.*

Capacity to deliver the activity from November 2008 (max 1 A4 page font Arial 12)

Please identify evidence of capacity to deliver including:

- Project management arrangements;
- Relationships and structures in order to maximise the effectiveness of the contract.

Costings/Value for Money (max 1 A4 page font Arial 12)

The applicant will need to show details of proposed key staff costs allocated to this activity and other costs associated with delivering this contract. This should be given in a quarterly breakdown over the lifetime of the contract.



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Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Max Score
Meeting the needs of the third sector	30
Understanding of Train to Gain	20
Methodology	20
Management arrangements	10
Capacity to deliver the activity from October 2008	10
Value for Money	10
Total	100