

Report on the aacs launch and the South East advancement prototypes



Leading learning and skills

31 October 2008

1. The new adult advancement and careers service (aacs) will deliver information and advice on learning, skills and careers through a range of different channels and seamless access to wider sources of personal advice. The aacs is linked with Skills Accounts and will create a single system responsive to the needs of individuals.
2. The prospectus for the aacs *Shaping the future – a new adult advancement and careers service for England* was launched by ministers John Denham and Tony McNulty on 29th October 2008. It will be developed over the next two years and come into operation in 2010 offering a service that will be:
 - nationally consistent
 - customer centred and tailored to need
 - joined up with wider services – no wrong door
 - flexibly delivered:- web, telephone, text, face to face
 - with a free skills health check
3. Key messages from the two ministers at the launch event were as follows:
 - The new service will be **transformational** in spite of the economic situation.
 - The prototypes need to learn from each other, including what does not work, there will be failures as well as approaches that look unpromising but come out well in the end.
 - The simplicity of the offer to the individual is crucial.
 - There must be **flexibility** and the ability to **finesse** the offer.
 - There is no upper age limit.
 - Public investment must be focussed on those not able to benefit from workplace training.
4. There will be national support for the prototypes from DIUS consisting of:
 - A national stakeholder group
 - Web resource
 - An 'Ideas forest' blog. <http://ideas.iagreview.org.uk>
5. The standard national Goods and Services contract will be used, the draft advancement pilot schedule is attached at Annex 1 to this paper.

Advancement network prototypes in the South East

6. LSC SE region has been given the green light to develop 3 advancement network prototypes in Brighton and Hove, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) area and Slough.
7. The prototypes will trial different ways of delivering the new service by developing partnerships linking together advice on jobs, training, childcare, living costs, health, transport and career development. Each prototype has a different approach:

Brighton and Hove

8. This is a local authority led partnership which will implement a hub and spoke model focusing on the development of people and organisations, tools to assist them and the co-location of delivery from a wide range of advice and support services to provide a better coordinated, multi-agency approach to service delivery. Partners within the prototypes include Jobcentre Plus, VT Careers Enterprise, Sussex Partnership Trust (PCT Commissioners for Mental Health Services), Pathways to Work and ESF programme providers (DWP and LSC), City College Brighton and Hove, Social Welfare Law Network (ASSG) and Brighton and Hove CVS Advice Services Network.

PUSH, South Hampshire

9. The network will introduce a simple single multi agency approach, incorporating all parts of the public and voluntary sectors to deliver a “no wrong door” model to provide information and advice on overcoming barriers to progression. It will combine “advancement experts” with a customer centred approach to helping the low skilled into sustainable employment. It will co-locate staff from key agencies in “hubs” and satellites across the area defined by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, to give clients the shortest route to as wide as possible a range of advice and help. It will link with the IES trial in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Discussions are taking place with IT consultants Plan-it on extending an existing information tool used in schools to provide an information service for adults.

Slough

10. The prototype will put in place the infrastructure and delivery mechanisms needed for the service to offer well organised multiple access points sourced from a range of generic and specialist, community, learning, health, social, housing, careers and business advisory services. Regular meetings are taking place to enhance the existing hub and spoke network of local community centres.

Creator Tish Mason
Job title Skills Development Manager
Email letitia.mason@lsc.gov.uk
Phone 07799 860813
Date created 31 October 2008

LSC office **LSC South East Region**

Annex 1: Draft advancement pilot schedule

Schedule 1

Contract No:

SERVICE SPECIFICATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT NETWORK PROTOTYPES

THE CONTRACTOR'S OBLIGATIONS

The CONTRACTOR will deliver the Advancement Network Prototype from **insert date here** to 31st March 2010 against the service requirements set out in this Schedule.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Service aim

The aim of the advancement network prototypes will be to ensure “no wrong door” access to advice on skills and careers that packages advice with other aspects of key advice that an individual may need to tackle their personal barriers to learning and progression in work.

2.2 Service priorities

Service priorities for the delivery of the Advancement Network Prototypes are to:

- Bring about significant improvements to tackling community disadvantage, raising aspirations, addressing barriers to progression and enabling individuals to reach their full potential.
- Ensure, as a minimum, access to sources of information and advice on housing, employment rights, childcare and health as well as skills and jobs, but also include other areas of advice in line with local area priorities
- Ensure relevance to the whole of the working population- those in and those out of work - and have links into business, the workforce, community development and young people’s careers information and advice services.
- Explore and develop effective practice across a range of different approaches to establish what works in different settings to stimulate change and, in the longer term, support economic growth.

2.3 Service Delivery Arrangements

Management and co-ordination of the service

THE CONTRACTOR will manage, coordinate and deliver the Advancement Network Prototype in line with the specification and Schedules in this contract and ensure the delivery of services at local level across the whole of the geographical area as defined in **Schedule X. DN: Schedule X will contain specific objective, outputs etc for each individual project.**

THE CONTRACTOR will provide for effective planning and coordination of the Advancement Network Prototype through:

- Clear joint strategic planning for services to customers and through participation in any relevant regional planning groups by agreement with the COUNCIL.
- Active and effective communication between Advancement Network Prototype staff and **nextstep** at management and operational levels.
- Robust partnership arrangements and collaborative working with those key partners, referral agencies and networks that will have a specific link to the Adult Advancement Network Prototype.
- Sharing knowledge and building effective relationships with other relevant key partners and services in the area at management and operational levels

Coherence with other agencies, services and trials

The Advancement Network Prototypes will be implemented alongside the reshaping of the **nextstep** service, the integration of the Careers Advice Service (CAS - formerly learndirect) and a series of trials, such as the collocation of nextstep services with Jobcentre Plus and the Skills Health Check, which are testing the key components of an Integrated Employment and Skills service in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

THE CONTRACTOR will be required to work collaboratively with nextstep, the CAS and in support of other trials taking place in their area.

The CONTRACTOR will also ensure that the Advancement Network Prototype reflects the wider context of local area agreements and/or multi area agreements with a particular focus on integrating the range of advisory services specified and aligning these with the work of Jobcentre Plus and the evolving neighbourhood strategies drawing, where appropriate, on the Working Neighbourhoods fund.

Approaches to Service Delivery

THE CONTRACTOR will ensure that approaches to the Advancement Network Prototypes;

- are innovative in their approach to improving services for adults, many of whom face multiple barriers to improving their lives;

- strengthen partnership working across the local area including with Jobcentre Plus in linking employment and skills services, engagement of the third sector and taking account of neighbourhood and community development needs;
- Build in development of capacity and capability to develop a sustainable approach, with alignment of resources across partners to support delivery, common service standards, and coherent joint marketing and communications;
- demonstrate success within the local community and on the national stage;
- become an advocate for 'joined up services' in a coherent way which makes sense locally;
- Provide support and influence national policy and the development of the adult advancement and careers service.

Arrangements must include at least one or a combination of the following approaches to delivery:

- creating a network of "advancement experts" who act as focal points in the wider system of advice on the full range of barriers to learning and progression
- developing comprehensive service standards across careers advice and wider advice services, so that people get to the personalised advice they need as quickly as possible
- establishing full or partial co-location of careers advice services in other advice services, so that advisers can work quickly together to respond to an individual's needs.

Scoping the service

THE CONTRACTOR will be required to scope the range of advisory services including:

- Establishing a clear understanding across partners of roles and responsibilities
- Proposing effective arrangements between organisations for sharing facilities and services
- Setting out innovative ways of working across partners, in particular integrating voluntary and community services
- Showing a coherent approach to pulling together initiatives and sources of funding
- Agreeing common quality and service standards from a customer perspective
- Establish joint coherent marketing and communications arrangements.

Best practice

The CONTRACTOR will also establish mechanisms to identify and report on best practice that will:

- investigate the effectiveness of the chosen approach in improving individuals' access to the full range of advisory services for adults, providing support and addressing and overcoming barriers to skills development and progressing in sustainable employment, including raising personal income;
- identify which services can be linked effectively into networks and how advice from a range of services can be brought together in one place for the individual; and
- identify who benefits most from different approaches and what particular impact advancement networks can have on different groups/segments of society and on participation and achievement in learning.

Governance and Reporting

Advisory Group

An Advisory Group will be established comprising representatives from advisory services in the regions and key national partners to inform the development of the full Adult Advancement and Careers Service (aacs) as we move towards 2010. This Advisory group will report to the aacs Project Board within DIUS, which draws in key partners from the LSC, DWP, Jobcentre Plus, DIUS, Ufi, and others.

THE CONTRACTOR will be expected to contribute to any reporting arrangements or and/or possible attendance at the Advisory Group meetings as agreed with their Regional LSC.

Delivery Plan

THE CONTRACTOR is required to produce a detailed project plan, including specific costings and milestones; resources being aligned or committed by participating organisations (disaggregated by organisation); and an estimate of the staff time and costs involved in developing and overseeing prototype development.

Reporting and monitoring requirements

The CONTRACTOR will provide a written report quarterly (DN: or monthly?) to their LSC Regional Contract Manager including the provision of specific management information as required by the LSC. See also section x Management Information.

Management information

THE CONTRACTOR will:

- Provide robust and timely management information on finance, volumes and required outputs
- Ensure effective referral and tracking systems are in place to identify and monitor impact and outcomes;

Detailed guidance and instructions on the nature and frequency of management information requirements will be provided to THE CONTRACTOR.

The CONTRACTOR will ensure that they have the resources and expertise available to support the implementation of the management information system.

Quality

THE CONTRACTOR will ensure that all providers involved in the delivery of services meet the minimum quality requirements of holding and retaining the **matrix** Standard;

DN: What about relationship of Common Evaluation (CES) for prototypes?

Organisations involved in the delivery of services who have not yet achieved **matrix** accreditation must obtain a certificate of commitment within three months of the award of a contract and must commit to being fully assessed against the standard within nine months from the commencement of the contract. 100% of delivery organisations must have achieved matrix accreditation within nine months of the start of the contract.

In addition, a customer satisfaction measure of 95% of customers in receipt of services being satisfied with the services they receive shall be achieved.

Staff Competence and workforce development

THE CONTRACTOR will be accountable for ensuring that all staff involved in the delivery of services are competent to do so.

THE CONTRACTOR will ensure that robust arrangements for ensuring staff competency framework are in place and this may include:

- mapping existing staff competencies against current service needs;
- plans for continuous professional development;
- areas of service development where competency requirements will need to be addressed, for example:
 - appropriate qualification levels of staff
 - researching, using and applying labour market information;

THE CONTRACTOR will also be required to support any national or regional development objectives for improving the competence and capacity of the workforce in the future.

The CONTRACTOR will ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of the Advancement Network Prototypes are briefed, trained and regularly updated on all aspects of the Prototype.

Evaluation

All CONTRACTORS will be expected to submit two self assessment evaluation reports. This will include an early self assessment review (SAR) by 31 October 2008 and an evaluation report by 31 March 2009. DN: Check dates and content

Further guidance on the nature and content of the evaluation reports will be provided by THE COUNCIL but will include a review of success in terms of:

- positive joining up of services and easier access to range of services by customers
- impact on adults seeking advice
- a review of customer satisfaction levels
- impact on staff

THE CONTRACTOR will also be required to support an independent national evaluation of the Prototypes to contribute to the design and development of the adult advancement and careers service that will, among other things cover:

- The effectiveness and added value of the advancement networks
- How the Prototypes have developed
- The impact on users of the service

Marketing and communications

THE CONTRACTOR will be required to establish joint coherent marketing and communications arrangements in line with the national and regional marketing strategy and guidelines of THE COUNCIL.

THE CONTRACTOR will actively support consistency of marketing and communications, including any branding, by nominating a named contact who will be responsible for marketing and communications linkages, attending meetings, using any toolkits and guidance resulting from THE COUNCIL's marketing and communications strategy and use/purchase materials and resources where available, to avoid unnecessary duplication or cost.

The CONTRACTOR will be required to develop and deliver an effective communications strategy for the Prototypes that will be agreed with THE COUNCIL at Regional level.

Dissemination

The CONTRACTOR will be expected to contribute to sharing knowledge and disseminating information about their network prototypes. This may include:

- Liaising with LSC and press officer regarding press releases, photographs, video interviews, press interviews and articles;
- Speaking at regional/national conferences/events.

Impact – Outputs, targets and key performance indicators

THE CONTRACTOR will be required to deliver the specific key objectives, outputs and targets for the Advancement Network Prototype as set out in Schedule X. DN: Schedule X will be a project specific schedule setting out the specific requirements for each project.

In addition THE CONTRACTOR will be expected to achieve:

- 100% of organisations delivering the service to be accredited to the matrix standard within nine months of the contract. DN: Do we want to require this and is timescale right?
- 95% of service users to be satisfied with the service they receive