



**European Union**  
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Investing in jobs and skills



**Young People's  
Learning Agency**



**SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY**

**On behalf of the YPLA**

**ESF 2011-2013 - Youth**

**Specification Questionnaire EE/YP/02**

**PATHWAY TO APPRENTICESHIPS**

October 2010

**• DETAIL OF PROVISION**

The Skills Funding Agency, working on behalf of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), is seeking tenders to engage young people aged 16-19 in work-based training through apprenticeships.

Currently over 6% of young people in the East of England who are aged 16-18 are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Many of these would prefer to be in sustainable employment, but do not have the right skills. Many will take on short term employment – perhaps seasonal work or low-paid, low skilled jobs that do not last long – but often find themselves back in unemployment again and again. This cycle tends to lead to longer term economic disadvantage.

Offering these learners a way to up-skill will allow them to access more sustainable employment. And if we prepare them for a route into apprenticeships, they can develop increased skills in their chosen sector, leading to recognised qualifications that give them long-term economic viability, even in a volatile job market.

Some of these learners will need to overcome significant social, cultural and economic barriers in order to access apprenticeship learning, so a this programme will play a major role in ensuring that these learners are ready for the workplace and that employers are willing to take them on.

**Specification requirements**

We are seeking tenders to cover the whole of the East of England, which comprises 11 local authority areas.

Successful organisations/s are likely to have a successful track record of working with the 16-18 NEET client group and be able to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the needs of these young people.

The successful organisations will be expected to engage with key partners and stakeholders including local authorities, Connexions services, other training providers, voluntary sector organisations and employers as appropriate.

An effective and robust process must be in place for the referral of learners and for the planning of suitable provision and this needs to involve the local authority Connexions Service at all stages.

Effective quality assurance must be an integral part of the programme and successful organisations must demonstrate a track record of quality outcomes for this learner group.

**Delivery Model**

Identification of learners mostly will be through referrals from services in each local authority area.

The main elements of the programme would be as follows:

### **(a) Preparation for apprenticeships**

Individuals must be provided with access to a comprehensive bespoke learning programme that meets their individual educational and personal aspirations, from the menu below to allow them to progress into an employed apprenticeship or other work /learning.

- An initial assessment of their needs, goals and prior attainment.
- Identification of potential barriers to participation.
- Robust initial information advice and guidance (IAG) to support them in developing their preferred route.
- A learning plan that provides a clear progression pathway with an appropriate mix and balance of provision leading to accredited outcomes where possible.
- A package of pre-employment training and support, that may include:
  - access to taster sessions in the workplace to contextualise vocational learning
  - interventions that will develop life and employability skills
  - realistic work experience opportunities for learners with local employers and/or voluntary organisations
  - delivery of functional skills where needed
  - delivery of accredited vocational learning relevant to the employment sector in which a learner wishes to work
  - an introduction to portfolio-building and an understanding of how NVQs work and are assessed.
- Ongoing review and assessment to ensure learners are supported in making the transition onto their new programme, and for a minimum of three months once the individual has progressed.
- Support to access EMA or Care to Learn, where eligible or equivalent financial support as outlined on page 4 of the tender document.

Delivery of vocational learning will be at Level 1 for many learners, but it is essential that learners are prepared for the weight of the learning required on a level 2 apprenticeship programme, so it may be desirable for the learner to undertake some level 2 units so that they start to develop skills at the level at which they will be required to operate.

It is envisioned that the duration of this phase of the programme will typically be between 3 and 6 months, depending on learner need, before they progress into an employed apprenticeship placement.

### **(b) Support to enter an employer-based apprenticeship programme.**

It is essential that, as part of this overall package, learners on this programme are supported into an employer-based apprenticeship programme. This is the desired end-result, although it is recognised that some learners may progress into work without training or may decide to go to college for further learning.

The successful organisation/s would need to provide the following support:

- Work search/completion of applications
- Support in using job search websites and the apprenticeship vacancy matching service
- Interview techniques
- Matching the right learners with the right employed placements
- Supported transition into employment
- Supported employer placements for some learners\*

To deliver this aspect of the programme, successful organisations would need to demonstrate an ability to engage new employers and work effectively with a range of employers across many sectors in order to source new public sector and private sector work placements and apprenticeship places for learners.

**\*Supported employment placements** - In the current economic climate, finding new apprenticeship places is very difficult, especially for when trying to recruit SMEs in the private and third sectors employing no more than 250 full time equivalent staff. It may therefore be necessary to offer some support for employers when taking on an apprentice. This may be necessary for:

- SMEs offering Apprenticeships for the first time;
- SMEs returning to recruiting an apprentice after a lapse of twelve months or more;
- SMEs already employing apprentices but who may be convinced to employ more 16-18 year olds than they otherwise would;
- Particularly focused in areas of high disadvantage/high unemployment;
- SMEs that have a history of employing young people in jobs without training.

For small employers who are not used to taking on apprentices, it is recognised that there is a significant burden involved in taking on a new recruit:

- Additional supervisory time for the employer to work with the apprentice.
- Additional pastoral support which may include mentoring and lifeskills/familiarisation with the working culture.
- Additional off-the-job interventions.
- Additional support at the start of the programme for the employer where the apprentice is less productive.
- Travel costs.

In these cases, a staged training/support allowance may be offered, of up to £2,000 per learner, which would be payable over a 26 week period. If the employer ceased to continue employing the learner beyond the 26 week period, then there would be a claw-back of a portion of the funding.

The delivery of the apprenticeship training programme is funded outside of this programme from mainstream employer-responsive funding and will be undertaken by a training provider.

Successful organisations are expected to outline how the supported employer

placements would be administered, with a more specific targeting plan and to demonstrate how they will provide ongoing support and reviews for the new employer and apprentice.

Where learners have additional needs that cannot be addressed through their learning programme, the tutor/provider should provide appropriate referrals to other services.

Tenders will need to demonstrate how their planned model will seek not only to engage learners, but to provide stimulating and enriched programmes of learning. Organisations must also demonstrate how their employer engagement strategy will develop new apprenticeship places and how they will work with LSPs and economic development teams in local authority areas to ensure link up to other activity.

The successful organisations(s) would have full responsibility for the health & safety of learners (see contracting section) and would be expected to demonstrate their adherence to IAG standards.

### **Partnerships and sub contracting arrangements**

This provision needs to be made available to learners across a wide area and across many sectors. It is therefore recognised that one organisation is unlikely to be able to deliver this alone. Successful bids will therefore need to demonstrate a collaborative approach with a proven history of supporting learners and planning for progression whilst working with the local authorities, connexions, other providers and employers.

Local authorities are key partners in this work because they, through their economic development and regeneration strategies, are already working with local employers and many authorities already have existing apprenticeship schemes to which this programme can be linked to widen the offer.

Successful bids must list all stakeholders and delivery partners to whom part of the delivery will be sub-contracted. Information must include their individual contributions to the programme and provide information on their track record of delivering the required outcomes for learners, for example volumes of learners successfully re-engaged in past cohorts and programmes.

Successful organisations must be prepared to work in partnership with and report to a project steering group that will include National Apprenticeship Service, YPLA, local authority and Connexions representatives. This will ensure that programme delivery is linked into existing local activity, the right learners are targeted, referrals are made promptly and that progress can be monitored effectively.

Referrals of employers engaging with supported employment placements must be agreed with the National Apprenticeship Service to ensure that they fit the criteria.

This provision must not be viewed as a stand-alone programme that more difficult learners are farmed out to, but must become an integral part of the overall provision in the local authority area. It must, as such, offer progression routes from and back

into the mainstream-funded learning offer or into sustainable employment opportunities.

Successful organisations must demonstrate efficient partnership working across public, private and third sector organisations.

• **TARGET GROUPS & PRIORITIES**

The East of England wish to offer a total of 1,000 places across the region initially, with the possibility of a greater number of places later if funding becomes available.

Young people eligible for this programme are those who are aged 16-19 and NEET - not presently engaging in any form of learning or employment. Some of these learners may not yet have the skills needed to access work opportunities; some may be recently unemployed; others will have gained some qualifications, but require support to access training or work opportunities.

According to national figures, whilst 25% of young people will experience being NEET at some stage;

- 2% will be NEET for up to one week
- 9% will be NEET for one week to a month
- 25% will be NEET for one month to three months
- 21% will be NEET for three months to six months
- 43% will be NEET for six months or more.

It is the core sustained NEET who have long term problems that this provision intends to tackle. These young people are unlikely to re-engage without interventions, they often have negative experiences of education and they face multiple barriers to progression.

Many of these young people may have social and behavioural problems or face issues such as a lack of parental and peer support, housing, drug misuse or alcohol dependency, pregnancy and care responsibilities, low educational achievement etc. Those in scope for this project include young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that have had a learning difficulty assessment under Section 139a of the Learning and Skills Act 2008 (Learning and Skills Act 2000).

Any learners on the preparation for apprenticeships programme must complete the activities before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday and successful organisations must give sufficient lead-time before starting the learner on a full apprenticeship. This is because of funding restrictions.

Successful organisations would need to demonstrate how they will engage these learners (including under-represented groups such as BME or where there is traditionally a gender imbalance etc) in the programme and support them through to a positive progression. Progression routes for learners is an essential component of this provision.

- **GEOGRAPHY / AREA OF DELIVERY**

This programme will need to be offered across the East of England in the 11 local authority areas of:

- Essex
- Southend on Sea
- Thurrock
- Bedford Borough
- Central Bedfordshire
- Luton
- Hertfordshire
- Peterborough
- Cambridgeshire
- Norfolk
- Suffolk

Applicants are invited to deliver this programme across the whole region or to deliver across specific sub-regions or in specific local authority areas.

- **FUNDING AVAILABLE**

The following tables identify the volumes of learners within each of the identified geographical areas that must be supported into positive destinations over the three years of the contract and the requirements for learners undertaking the funded activity.

<b>Output target across the region based on a £3 allocation</b>	<b>No of Learners</b>	<b>Unit cost range</b>	<b>Funding available up to</b>
Essex	266	£1,000 - £3,000	£798,000
Southend on Sea	41	£1,000 - £3,000	£123,000
Thurrock	32	£1,000 - £3,000	£96,000
Bedford Borough	28	£1,000 - £3,000	£84,000
Central Bedfordshire	32	£1,000 - £3,000	£96,000
Luton	43	£1,000 - £3,000	£129,000
Hertfordshire	151	£1,000 - £3,000	£453,000
Peterborough	51	£1,000 - £3,000	£153,000
Cambridgeshire	82	£1,000 - £3,000	£246,000
Norfolk	145	£1,000 - £3,000	£435,000

Suffolk	129	£1,000 - £3,000	£387,000
	<b>1,000</b>		<b>£3m</b>

The Skills Funding Agency reserves the right to adjust the overall funding available subject to the availability of funds at the point contracts are awarded.

The above shows the numbers of learners that must be engaged and supported into positive progressions. It may be necessary to engage a larger number of learners in order to allow for drop-outs. The cost range includes potential training allowances to small/new employers.

Organisations will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the needs of the locality in which they propose to deliver and to outline how they would approach delivery, working with local authorities.

Young people will require different interventions and differing levels of support as provision must address their individual needs and aspirations but there are key milestones at which payments will be generated as follows:

<b>Output Targets</b>	<b>No of Learners</b>	<b>Amount</b>
S2 Start – Participant Assessment, planning and support	1,000	£50
Delivery of accredited and non-accredited preparation for apprenticeships training	1,000	Dependent on programme
Into recognised positive progression	1,000	£100
Into apprenticeship placement	Minimum 500 new places	Training allowance if required
Still on employed apprenticeship programme 6 months later	500	
M4 – Case studies and project evaluation completed	NIL	
New deliverable – Regarding requirements of the Cross cutting themes - to be defined	NIL	

A minimum of 500 supported employment placements into new employer apprenticeships is expected as an outcome of this programme.

• **START AND END DATES**

**January 2011 – December 2012 (with possible extension to December 2013)**

Successful organisations will start working with identified learners from January 2011. It is expected that it will be possible to deliver the above numbers in a shorter timeframe than the three year period. In the case of earlier delivery, and if further

funding becomes available, it may be possible to extend the programme with additional numbers and funding.

Successful organisations will operate a roll-on-roll-off programme with a view to engaging and working with learners until they have developed the skills to enable them to move into an employed apprenticeship place or other positive progression and to track and support them for three months afterwards (or for longer where a training/support allowance is paid to the employer). For some learners, there may be a very short and targeted intervention; for others, there may be a longer programme of support that is needed.

Monitoring of individuals must continue throughout the programme and for a minimum of three months after entering into a positive progression.

Successful organisations must demonstrate the ability to be able to put in place all of the required infrastructure, systems and processes, programme design, partnerships and sub-contracting arrangements in readiness for delivery to commence in January 2011.

Projects must not recruit individuals if there is insufficient time available to allow them to achieve the outcomes of the project.

The Skills Funding Agency reserves the right to extend the end date of individual contracts where necessary.

#### • **CONTRACTING DETAILS**

The indicative contract funding available for this programme across the region is £3m.

There will be an expectation that the successful organisations will produce case studies to demonstrate programme operation and outcomes (level and timing of this to be agreed) and produce a final evaluation of the outcomes of the programme by the end of December 2012.

Successful organisations will be required to submit monthly data returns to the Skills Funding Agency through the standardised data system and to report to the local steering group. Successful organisations are required to have the necessary system capabilities to submit accurate data returns through the individual learner record (ILR) to the Skills Funding Agency in a timely manner in accordance with the requirements of the contract. Any software requirements will be at the successful organisation's expense but should be considered and demonstrated in the tender submission.

Successful organisations will be required to ensure that a high quality programme is delivered and that learners on the preparation for apprenticeships programme move into a positive progression. If performance on the preparation for apprenticeships programme falls below the minimum level of performance for those leaving the project, the contract will be withdrawn.

Successful organisations will be responsible for learner health and safety (national guidance on requirements is available from <http://www.safelearner.info>) while on programme and must therefore be able to demonstrate a good understanding of the health and safety requirements and must ensure that they have staff who are properly trained to be able to assess work placements etc.

The Skills Funding Agency wishes to contract down to either regional, sub regional or LA level, however we are looking to award the minimum number of contracts required in order to ensure both the required full geographical coverage and value for money

## SPECIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

**TENDER TITLE:**

**Pathway to Apprenticeships**

**ORGANISATION NAME:**

**Please enter the name of the organisation here**

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

**Please provide a summary of the activities you intend to deliver. This information will be used as part of the decision making process to provide an overview of the applicant's response to the tender.**

(maximum character limit = 5000)

Ref: [Q Overview]

**Please enter your answer here**

**1** **What is your proposed delivery model and what structures will you use to support the model?**

(Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 200)

**Tips**

This section must clearly demonstrate:

- Your organisation's plans to commence delivery from the planned start date and manage delivery over the specified timeframe.
- Your model of delivery including your management arrangements and infrastructure (include delivery arrangements where the lead organisation is based outside the delivery region);
- Your role for example as prime contractor/lead organisation;
- Where applicable your main partners/subcontractors (and where they fit in) and any potential partnerships that may need to be developed that will enable you to respond to local need;
- Successful experience of leading multi-agency delivery of similar programmes.

**Please enter your answer here**

**2** **How will you manage and deliver the proposed activity?**

(Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 250 )

**Tips**

This section must clearly demonstrate:

- how you will you develop and deliver flexible bespoke training packages for these learners;
- how you will ensure that learners are provided with the specific support they need, including high quality IAG;
- an overview of plans to use QCF approved and accredited qualifications

	<p>and sector-approved or sector specific materials;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how you will provide continuing training and coaching support for participants who leave the programme (positively or not) to ensure that they are continuing in employment, education or training or are referred to appropriate provision (tracking of individuals);</li> <li>• your employer engagement strategies to support learners in accessing appropriate vocational learning or employment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Please enter your answer here</b></p>	
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>What is your experience of working successfully with the target group?</b> (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 200)</p> <p><b>Tips</b> Your response should identify and/or describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• successes and performance (outcomes) in working with these target groups; together with demonstration of successful partnership working in previous delivery.</li> <li>• engagement methods used in each geographical area.</li> <li>• successful track record of managing issues/needs that these young people may have;</li> <li>• previous/other activity targeted at delivering skills programmes and moving young people on to further learning or into work;</li> </ul> <p>This includes the experience of other members of the consortium or partners (where applicable)</p>
<p><b>Please enter your answer here</b></p>	
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>How will you engage with and meet the needs of the target groups?</b> (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 200)</p> <p><b>Tips</b> As a minimum your response should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plans for targeting learners and developing referrals;</li> <li>• engagement methods in each geographical area identified.</li> <li>• <b>past experience of working with the target groups outlined</b></li> <li>• <b>how you will ensure outreach delivery in specific localities as need arises.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Please enter your answer here</b></p>	
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>How do your proposed activities complement and link in to other activities that are available to the target group?</b> (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 100)</p> <p><b>Tips</b> Your response should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how you will ensure join up with existing provision in the area;</li> <li>• how you will work with the local authority and other key stakeholders to ensure delivery that is appropriate to the emerging local need;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how you will develop appropriate progression opportunities for learners;</li> </ul>
<b>Please enter your answer here</b>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>How will you ensure the quality of provision?</b>  (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 50)</p> <p><b>Tips</b>  Your response should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality of existing comparable provision (for all consortium members);</li> <li>• past history of meeting delivery targets;</li> <li>• how you will assure the quality of learning delivered under this programme, by all members of your consortium;</li> <li>• how you will undertake the management and upload of records/data across the consortium;</li> <li>• how you will measure outcomes for learners.</li> </ul>
<b>Please enter your answer here</b>	