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**Young People's
Learning Agency**



SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY

On behalf of the YPLA

ESF 2011-2013 – North East

Tender Ref: itt_29035

NE/YP/01 – Engaging Vulnerable Young People

October 2010

Contents

- 1. Introduction to Tender**

- 2. Specification: Engaging Vulnerable Young People**
 - a. Specification Questionnaire**
 - b. Profile Spreadsheet**

1. Introduction to tender

1.1 Background

Overview:

The Skills Funding Agency is an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The Agency funds and regulates adult FE and skills training in England and forms part of a network of organisations in the country who commission, manage and market training for adults. The mission is to ensure that people and businesses can access the skills training they need to succeed in playing their part in society and in growing England's economy. The Agency do this in the context of policy set by BIS and informed by the needs of businesses, communities and regions, and sector and industry bodies.

The Skills Funding Agency is the ESF co-financing organisation.

A Shared Service Agreement between the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) agrees that the Skills Funding Agency will operate on behalf of the YPLA for the 14-18 ESF provision. The YPLA is sponsored by the Department for Education and exists to support the delivery of training and education to all 16 – 18 year olds in England. The YPLA and Local Authorities have the statutory duty to secure sufficient education and training provision for all young people aged between 14 and 18 and for 19 to 25 year olds assessed for a learning difficulty and/or disability, in their respective area.

The Young People's Learning Agency has produced this specification on the basis of the needs identified in local areas.

National context of provision

ESF Priority 1 focuses on unemployed people and those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Skills Funding Agency (operating on behalf of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)) is using its ESF funding for 14-18 year olds for provision including qualifications ranging from Entry Level skills up to Level 4, where these can be delivered under ESF Priority 1.

The main focus for ESF monies for the period 2011-13 will be securing the continued provision of individually tailored packages of education and support which will assist in the engagement of young people Not in Education and Employment. As well as increasing participation in education and training, this will close the attainment gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged young people at Level 2 and 3. This was a high priority for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and continues to be so for the YPLA and Local Authorities.

Regional context of provision

In the North East, the ESF provision will target at participants aged 14-19 (including 19 year olds).

Engagement in learning and educational attainment are major factors which support young people in achieving good life outcomes and fulfilling their potential. Conversely non-participation in education, employment or training after compulsory education – in other words, being NEET – is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression and poor physical health. Disengagement during the compulsory education phase is a strong predictor of young people becoming NEET. Education is also key to breaking long term cycles of deprivation.

While the proportion of young people who are NEET in the North East has fallen recently reflecting concerted efforts by local partnerships, it remains higher than any other English region. The November 2009 to January 2010 average shows that the NEET rate in the region is now 9.0 per cent, compared to 6.4 per cent nationally¹. The proportion of young people who are NEET varies significantly between and within local authority areas.

The overall NEET rate obscures different rates at individual ages and for specific vulnerable groups. The proportion of young people who are NEET increases with age, particularly at age 18. The latest 2009-2010 average puts the NEET rate amongst 18 year olds at 12.3 per cent (compared to 8.1 per cent nationally)². This older group is more likely to be in the labour market and has felt the impact of increased levels of youth unemployment in the region, which both preceded and has been compounded by the recession. This older group is also likely to have already been involved in post compulsory learning and is often the most difficult to engage.

The group of young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET is not homogenous. We know from current activity with NEET young people and analysis of the NEET cohort that those most at risk are those young people who have multiple vulnerabilities and/or live in the most disadvantaged communities. These young people often face complex barriers to learning and require the greatest support to engage and stay in learning.

It is important to raise the aspirations of all young people to participate and progress in learning, and to close the gap in outcomes between the most vulnerable young people and their peers, so that all young people regardless of their backgrounds can fulfil their potential in life and in work. There are examples of good practice in the region where programmes have been successful in engaging the most vulnerable young people. The most effective have been locally defined and have involved targeted, personalised, intensive and flexible programmes of support.

This specification is for a number of coordinated projects to increase young people's participation in education, employment or training (including Apprenticeships) through locally defined and delivered interventions.

¹ 16-18 adjusted NEET rate (NCCIS) – November 2009 to January 2010 averages.

² 18 yr old adjusted NEET rate (NCCIS) – November 2009 to January 2010 averages.

Projects will comprise three strands: **Prevention**: activity to ensure early intervention and support for young people at risk of disengaging, and for their families, in order that they remain engaged; **Transition**: activity to support young people moving between stages or types of education, employment or training to ensure a smooth transition; and **Re-engagement**: interventions to support NEET young people back into education, employment or training.

It is important that interventions are coherent, integrated and effectively co-ordinated and add value to the local area's strategy to increase the participation, attainment and aspiration of its young people.

Information, Advice and Guidance

Effective Information, Advice and Guidance are an important aspect of this programme. Successful providers will either hold the Matrix standard* or will provide an equivalent level of support, for example by sub-contracting this aspect of delivery to partners who are Matrix-accredited. Applicants must state whether they hold the Matrix standard for IAG or are working towards it.

* the Matrix standard is the unique quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. Further information may be obtained from www.matrixStandard.com

Quality

Applicants must demonstrate in their tenders how they will provide training to the required quality, as detailed below.

- Providers will need to demonstrate they have a track record of delivering high quality provision to learners, employers or employees. Evidence of inspection grades of 3 or above or external quality assurance such as Training Quality Standard accreditation or application made to become accredited, awarding bodies' external verification reports, ISO9000 accreditation and Investor in People status will serve to support providers' applications.
- Providers should note that the direction of travel for the Skills Funding Agency is that the preferred external accredited standard is the Training Quality Standard.

EMA / other future targeted support

The Comprehensive Spending Review (20 October 2010) announced that EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) is to be replaced with more targeted support for the disadvantaged. It would still be helpful, however, for tenders to reflect how you propose to assist young people with their applications for EMA or any other future targeted support as part of this project. Where specifications refer to EMA, please bear this in mind.

Your tender should reflect how you propose to assist young people with their applications for EMA (or any other targeted support) as part of this project. Where applicants are not eligible for EMA or any other future targeted support, it is anticipated that payment of a training allowance will be paid to learners. Any training allowance payment would be from the overall budget for this programme and providers must build this in to their costs

1.2 ESF requirements and information

Contractual requirements

Applicants should refer to the sample contract documentation issued with the ITT

Contracting requirements

Please read the READ ME FIRST document as there is important information contained in this document relating to current and future contracting requirements.

Cross Cutting Themes

Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities:

Gender Equality (GE) and Equal Opportunities (EO) is a cross cutting theme of the Competitiveness ESF Framework. The National Operational Programme maintains the dual approach to promoting gender equality and equality of opportunities by funding specific activities which target women and disadvantaged groups as well as integrating equal opportunities into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme as a whole.

Action to promote equality and diversity is an integral part of the Skills Funding Agency business objectives. A world-class workforce can only be created if we remove barriers, eliminate discrimination, address disadvantage and raise the aspirations of both present and potential learners.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development (SD) activity is a mandatory requirement of all projects funded through the ESF programme. Applicants will be required to have in place an operational SD policy and implementation/action plan within 6 months of the project start date. Performance monitoring of the project will include a review of progress against the implementation/action plan on a quarterly basis.

Eligibility

Any statutory training, for example training that employers must provide under Health and Safety legislation, is not eligible for support through ESF projects.

Priority groups

The following table outlines the expected targets for all contracts unless specific targeting is defined within the specification.

PRIORITY	1
Participants with disabilities or health conditions	22%
Participants from ethnic minorities	8%
Female participants	51%
Number of Participants who are Lone Parents	12%

SPECIFICATION : NE/YP/01 – Engaging Vulnerable Young People

Aim

To increase vulnerable young people's participation in education, employment or training (including Apprenticeships) through locally defined and delivered interventions focusing on: work to **prevent** young people disengaging; support for young people during periods of learning **transition** and; work to **re-engage** those young people NEET.

Detail of provision

Successful proposals will demonstrate how all three strands – prevention, transition, and re-engagement will be delivered in one overarching project to meet the specific needs of those young people NEET or at risk of becoming NEET in each local authority area.

Partnership working is essential to the design and delivery of this project. Interventions should be in line with and complement the local vision for young people in the area and add value to the local area's strategy to increase the participation, attainment and aspiration of its young people. The delivery model should take account of a broad cross sector approach to the delivery of the project and ideally include; local authorities, schools, FE colleges, work based learning providers, voluntary and community sector, with strong links to the Connexions Service.

Successful applicants will demonstrate a good track record of co-ordinating **multi-agency activity** to bring about: improved identification and tracking of young people NEET or at risk of becoming NEET aided by improved data sharing; and targeted personalised interventions that maximise successful outcomes for the young people involved. Support structures should also take into account collaborative working with existing partners and agencies, for example, Youth Offending Teams and Leaving Care Teams.

Projects should build on existing local infrastructure where there is evidence that these have been working well. This includes links to existing community based projects.

Successful applicants will demonstrate how they **will make links between youth and adult services** e.g. those of Jobcentre Plus to ensure wrap-around support for young people, particularly at age 18.

Applicants should also show evidence of **effective engagement/involvement of employers** in developing and implementing strategies to reduce the numbers of young people NEET in particular in support of progression to employment outcomes.

Proposals should seek to focus support on those **young people who are over**

represented in the NEET cohort, as described in the 'Target Groups and Priorities' section.

Activities

All activities should be underpinned by high quality, impartial information, advice and guidance to ensure that young people are able to make informed choices.

Proposed activities should include intensive interventions to support 'high risk' young people. It is therefore expected that successful organisations will manage their spend in accordance with meeting the targets laid out in Annex A. This may involve a mix of high and low cost support, though all participants must engage in either accredited or non-accredited learning as part of their programme, in keeping with their individual needs.

Activities should also align with and support the development and implementation of Foundation Learning.

1. Prevention

Focus: activity to ensure early intervention and support for young people at risk of disengaging, and for their families, developing aspirations and motivation in order that they remain engaged.

Activities may include:

- Increasing practitioners' (e.g. teachers, FE lecturers, trainers, youth workers, mentors) awareness of (and focus on) identifying young people at risk of becoming NEET.
- Ensuring effective referral of young people identified as disengaging, effective assessment of barriers to engagement and developing appropriate personalised support.
- Improving the understanding and awareness of parents, carers and practitioners regarding curriculum choices, learner support, progression routes and career opportunities.
- Using vocational learning with appropriate support to provide pathways to employment and further learning for young people who may be at risk of becoming NEET.
- Engagement to bring together young people and employers in effective 'pre-employability routeways'.
- Continuous monitoring of young people following preventative intervention.

2. Transition

Focus: activity to support young people moving between stages or types of education, employment or training to ensure a smooth transition.

Activities may include:

- Ensuring early identification of young people who are likely to find transition difficult, or those showing signs of difficulty following transition, and ensuring both a positive referral and transition plan for those young people.
- Developing personalised, flexible programmes of learning, and appropriate support packages to support the transition of young people to further learning or employment.
- Concentrated interventions for 'high risk' transitions for example: those young people at age 17 in transition from a one year (Year 12) programme; 18 year olds in their progression choices from post-16 provision; young people leaving care and young people moving through the youth justice system.
- Using transition mentors to support learners and to raise awareness amongst parents, carers and practitioners (e.g. teachers, trainers, youth workers) of additional transition support available to young people.
- Ensuring young people receive wrap around support at transition points (such as 16 and 18) through integrated youth support services and close joint working with Jobcentre Plus.

3. Re-engagement

Focus: interventions to support NEET young people back into education, employment or training.

Activities may include:

- Working with providers and key partners to make quick and positive referrals when a learner fails to start a programme they have enrolled on or leaves before the end of the programme.
- Ensuring effective and continued engagement with young people who are NEET in order to effectively assess the barriers faced by these young people.
- Producing and implementing flexible, bespoke, multi-agency learning plans for individuals, which should include their learning, support and curriculum needs as well as impartial IAG.
- Providing appropriate provision (including work experience, mentoring and volunteering) for individuals, based on their learning plan, that will encourage re-engagement and prepare them for progression to further learning or employment.

- Using appropriate mentors to encourage re-engagement.
- Ensuring there is continuous monitoring of progress against the young person's learning plan.
- Greater collaboration with Job Centre Plus to identify and support those young people actively seeking employment.

Target groups & priorities

The target group for this project is 14-19 year olds resident in the North East region who are NEET or identified as at risk of becoming NEET.

The project will specifically seek to prioritise and focus support on those young people who are over represented in the NEET cohort, including, but not exclusively those who:

- have Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD), including those with moderate LD (without a statement), mental health and other illnesses, young people with BESD
- are supervised by youth offending teams
- are in care or leaving care
- young carers
- are parents
- are 17 - 19 years old and NEET
- live in a deprived area
- have no or low level skills.

These young people will often have multiple and interrelated issues that are potential barriers to learning. Those with the most complex needs will require the most intensive support packages. It is important that **robust local intelligence** on patterns of young people who are NEET/at risk of becoming NEET informs the targeting of provision at the local level. Proposals should demonstrate capacity in the forensic use of data and intelligence to create highly focussed and targeted interventions.

It is recognised that these intensive support packages will have high unit costs. Applicants should demonstrate how, within the funding available, they will manage a portfolio of support distributed between high cost and lower cost interventions as appropriate to the individual support needs of learners.

Geography / area of delivery

Projects should be defined by the needs of young people in each local authority area. Within the proposals submitted some may focus on particular localities and NEET 'hotspots' according to need.

Funding available

Output	No of Learners	Unit cost	Funding available
S2 Start – Participant Assessment, planning and support	6250	£200	£1,250,000
S4 Start on non-accredited learning	3127	£550	£1,719,850
S33 Start on non-defined accredited learning Activity	3123	£550	£1,717,650
A2 Completion of non-accredited learning activity	2502	£1,000	£2,502,000
A28 Completion of non-defined accredited learning activity	2498	£1,000	£2,498,000
P1 Progression/destination to learning except Higher Education	1475	£1,000	£1,475,000
P3 Progression/destination 'into employment'	1375	£1,000	£1,375,000
P6 Participant in work 6 months after leaving the programme	1625	£268	£435,500
Total funding available			£12,973,000
M4 – Project evaluation completed	0	£0	£0

Breakdown of funding by local authority in Annex A

Outputs

Description	Number of participants
No of participants who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET	6,250
No of participants in work on leaving programme	1,375
No of participants in work six months after leaving programme	1,625
No of young people NEET in Education, Employment or Training on leaving programme	2,850

Breakdown of outputs by local authority in Annex A

Other outcomes

- Improved and sustainable processes and infrastructure to continue to increase participation
- Improved collaborative structures, including with Jobcentre Plus
- Identification and sharing areas of effective practice with the other projects in the region.
- Inform the development and implementation of Foundation Learning
- End of project evaluation

Start and end dates

It is expected that the contract for delivery will run from January 2011 to December 2013. However this may be subject to review.

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

Contracting details

The Skills Funding Agency wishes to contract down to local authority 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.

Applicants are invited to submit proposals for one, or more of the geographical areas within the funding available. In the instance of an applicant securing provision for more than one local authority area, the contract issued will differentiate between these areas.

Contracts will be subject to regular review and we will expect successful contractors to submit quarterly monitoring reports.

SPECIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE	
TENDER TITLE:	NE/YP/01 – Engaging Vulnerable Young People
ORGANISATION NAME:	Please enter the name of the organisation here
LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA:	Please enter the local authority area in which you intend to deliver

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	<p>What is your proposed delivery model and what structures will you use to support the model? (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 200)</p> <p>Tips This section should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe your delivery structures; • If applicable to your delivery model, outline your main partners/subcontractors and their respective roles and responsibilities; • describe your role in the management and coordination of delivery; • demonstrate how the model is appropriate for the geographic location in which you propose to deliver and for the target groups with which you propose to work; • demonstrate your track record (and that of any sub-contractors) in successfully delivering projects involving a wide range of multi-disciplinary partners; • (where not already established) describe how you will secure the commitment of potential partners/sub contractors before contract start date; • demonstrate how your model will lead to improved and sustainable processes and infrastructure to continue to increase participation. <p>Ref: [Q1]</p>
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Please enter your answer here

2	How will you manage and deliver the proposed activity
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	<p>(Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 250)</p> <p>Tips This section should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detail the proposed activities and describe how these will be developed, implemented, measured and evaluated, including timescales for implementation; • demonstrate how these activities will deliver the aim and service requirements of the specification; • demonstrate how your activities are innovative and/or build on effective practice to achieve impact and results; • describe how the project will be managed including the staffing resource allocated to the project; • demonstrate how you will manage a portfolio of support distributed between high cost and lower cost interventions as appropriate to the individual support needs of young people. <p>Ref: [Q2]</p>
<p>Please enter your answer here</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>What is your experience of working successfully with the target group? (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 200)</p> <p>Tips This section should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate your track record (and that of any others involved in the delivery model) in delivering <u>successful</u> outcomes for the proposed target groups; • describe how this activity has impacted on the cohort of vulnerable young people NEET in the locality you were delivering. <p>Applicants who do not have a track record of working with the proposed target groups must describe how they and/or their partners have worked with similar groups and explain how this experience will inform their work</p> <p>Ref: [Q3]</p>
<p>Please enter your answer here</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>How will you engage with and meet the needs of the target groups? (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 200)</p> <p>Tips This section should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly indicate the target groups with which you propose to work, in doing so, demonstrate your understanding of the make-up of the NEET cohort in the local area; • demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and the needs of

	<p>each target group with which you propose to work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate how the activities have been designed to meet the needs of each target group, including engagement, retention and progression activities; • outline your approach to identification and tracking of these young people; • describe your approach to initial assessment and information, advice and guidance; • describe your approach to continuous assessment, monitoring and review; • demonstrate how <u>individual</u> needs will be identified and addressed in a flexible and innovative way. <p>Ref: [Q4]</p>
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Please enter your answer here

<p>5</p>	<p>How do your proposed activities complement and link in to other activities that are available to the target group? (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 100)</p> <p>Tips This section should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly indicate the geographical area in which you are proposing to deliver; • display an understanding of local strategies and action plans to address the needs of the target groups; • demonstrate how your project will complement and link into other initiatives already available within the locality; • demonstrate how you will make links between youth and adult services e.g. those of Jobcentre Plus to ensure wrap-around support for young people; • describe how you will work with other relevant agencies to ensure the needs of participants are met in a coherent way; • explain the links you have within your partnership to enable progression to further learning; • provide evidence of effective engagement/involvement of employer in particular in support of progression to employment outcomes. <p>Ref: [Q5]</p>
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Please enter your answer here

<p>6</p>	<p>How will you ensure the quality of provision? (Maximum character limit = 9000) (Maximum score = 50)</p> <p>Tips: This section should be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe your quality assurance arrangements and how you will monitor programme activity and learner needs
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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• monitor financial spend including internal audit arrangements• ensure value for money is demonstrated across all strands of the project• demonstrate how activities will be evaluated and explain how you will share effective practice• describe how you will undertake the management of records/data across any organisations involved in your delivery model in order to meet ESF reporting requirements |
|--|---|

Ref: [Q6]

Please enter your answer here