

Commissioning Specification

1 Introduction and context

The Oldham Partnership has established the Economy and Enterprise Commissioning Board. It is responsible for the implementation of the Economic Development and Enterprise Strategy and Action Plan. Oldham Partnership, by deployment of Area Based Grant funding (ABG) invested through the Economy and Enterprise Commissioning Board, must achieve measurable performance against the Local Area Agreement's indicators.

The Economy and Enterprise Commissioning Board wishes to reduce the number of young people, 16 to 19yr old who are not in education, employment or training. (NEET)

Whilst statutory provision exists across the Borough through the work of Connexions and Positive Steps Oldham to support this group, The Board recognises the need for additional complimentary activity within Oldham's most deprived wards.

Evaluation of earlier delivery has shown that the Voluntary and Community Sector play an important role in engaging and supporting young people, including those regarded as "harder to reach" by providing facilities in local communities that are accessed by those who are NEET and those who are at risk of becoming so. **As such the Board is seeking Expressions of Interest from this sector alone** to put forward proposals to engage with this cohort and provide activities and ongoing support that progresses this particular client group onto Education Employment or Training (EET) programmes.

Accordingly, **Expressions of Interest** are invited for delivery of the following:

NEET re-engagement programme:

The current target for young people aged 16-19 years to be in Education, Employment or Training (EET) is 83.1%. In June 2008 78.7% was achieved. For this target to be reached, an additional 430 young people need to progress onto Education, Employment or Training (EET) activity. The majority of this will be achieved through existing activities that Connexions undertake, however there is a significant proportion of the cohort that are disengaged. It is proposed that this programme will engage 150 young people of which, 100 will progress onto EET activity, as well as providing preventative support for the pre-16 cohort.

It is anticipated that the number of young people engaged will be achieved in the form of smaller groups across several locations.

In line with the Local Area Agreement targets, commissioned activity will be targeted in key geographical areas that have the greatest need (Alexandra, St. Marys', Hollinwood, Waterhead, St. James, Coldhurst, Medlock Vale and Werneth).

It is anticipated that this work will comprise of the following elements:

- A. NEET Client engagement – including outreach, assessment, information, advice and guidance and referral;
- B. Sustained client engagement activity – Provision is sought that will improve the basic employability and occupational skills of the client group to improve their employment prospects or alternatively provide activities that support entry into educational provision.
- C. Progression – supporting progression outcomes into either education, employment or training.
- D. Preventative Activities- supporting individuals who are identified as at risk of becoming NEET

All commissioned organisations will be required to work with Connexions, supplying relevant data on the cohort that has been engaged to Positive Steps Oldham (the Connexions provider) for verification and to ensure progression outcomes for targeted young people are accurately monitored

Commissioned activity will begin from 1st October 2008 and will continue until 31st March 2011, subject to an annual review of performance.

Expressions of Interest will be considered from consortia and individual organisations. All potential Delivery Agents must demonstrate how they intend to link in with the work of other providers. Similarly, all potential Delivery Agents will have to commit to collaborative working and will have to demonstrate a good awareness of other current provision in this field of activity.

Expressions of Interest should be submitted on the template provided and addressed as below to arrive no later than: **4.00 p.m. on Friday 5th September 2008**

**Private and Confidential
(Ref: LAA 24-08 EE/ NEET)
Karen Wells
Oldham Partnership
Commissioning Unit
Oldham Business Centre
Cromwell Street
Oldham
OL1 1BB**

Programme Specification

Elements of the Activity to be Commissioned	NEET re-engagement programme
A. NEET Client engagement	Delivery of services which include outreach and engagement of 150 16-19 years that are not in education, employment training (NEET). Activity should demonstrate how clients will be engaged, assessment of clients, and delivery of information, advice and guidance support.
B. Sustained client engagement activity	Provision is sought that will improve the basic employability and occupational skills of the client group to improve their employment prospects or alternatively provide activities that support entry into educational provision
C Progression onto Education, Employment or Training	As a consequence of the above activities (A&B) is expected that 100 16-19 year olds will progress onto either mainstream further education, employment or training opportunities.
D. Preventative activities	Additional activity is sought which can evidence activity, which supports young people (14-19) to be retained within education, employment or training provision.
Partnership Working	The successful Delivery Agent will be expected to cooperate and collaborate, where appropriate, with other Delivery Agents (specifically the Connexions service) undertaking activity commissioned on behalf of the Oldham Partnership
Duration of programme	Commissioned Activity to be completed between 1st October 2008 and 31st March 2011.
Funding available	£50,000 from October 1st 2008 – 31st March 2009, and £100,000 per annum thereafter (Total available = £250,000) (Value for money will be taken into account during the assessment of Expressions of Interest received)

Payments

Payments relating to the four key elements of the Commissioned Activity will be made mainly on the basis of specific outcomes achieved in relation to individual clients (Elements A-D)

Payments will not be made solely for the activity undertaken. A significant proportion of the payments will only be triggered at the point of achievement of any of the four outcomes detailed above.

The Economic Development and Enterprise Block has not specified the payment rates for the FOUR designated outcomes. Instead, prospective Delivery Agents, in their Expressions of Interest, will be asked to state their proposed client unit cost for each of the four outcomes, which they will be working to achieve. These costs must be realistic, soundly calculated and offer value for money.

General information

Expressions of Interest by potential Delivery Agents must take into account that clients will require different levels of assistance from every element of the programme's provision.

From the clients' perspective, the assistance available under the commissioned activity should appear 'seamless'. Therefore, potential Delivery Agents must demonstrate clearly where their proposals will embed within the overall provision on offer and how they intend to 'receive' or 'forward' clients from one stage of the programme to another

The Economic Development and Enterprise Block is seeking to ensure a degree of flexibility in approach by commissioning a 'pool' of Delivery Agents to undertake activities under the three specified areas of work. In this way, clients should be able to have their individual needs met from a wide-ranging 'menu' of activity.

Although funding is available until 31st March 2011, activity will be subject to regular reviews of delivered outcomes and ongoing evaluation. The Economic Development and Enterprise Commissioning Board has the ability to decommission and re-commission activity depending on performance and changes in needs. Adoption of this flexible approach will ensure that the ability to allocate resources is maximised, whilst the opportunity to reward successful Delivery Agents with extended contractual periods is retained. The Commissioning Panel may also opt to create a pool of reserve activities, which can be called upon, when required.

APPENDIX A

The Economic Development and Enterprise Commissioning Board has identified the following LAA outcomes and indicators as those to which the Commissioned Activity will contribute in the long term.

LAA Indicator	LAA Target	Contribution towards the achievement of the LAA target
NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)	5.8% by 2008/9	100 16-18 year olds will be engaged and progress into education, training or employment
NI 79 Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19	76.1 by 2010/11	100 16-18 year olds will be engaged and progress into education, training or employment of which a proportion will progress onto level 2 provision.
NI 91 Participation of 17 year olds in education or training	tbc	100 16-18 year olds will be engaged and progress into education, training or employment of which a proportion will be 17 years olds.