

# Commissioning Specification

## 1 Introduction and Context

The Oldham Partnership has been awarded a total of £685,660 of Deprived Areas Fund, (DAF), monies for use over the next two years, (£360,827 of which is to be spent by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008). This funding will be deployed to contribute to the achievement of specified Local Area Agreement Indicators, (see Appendix 1), and to meet the objectives of the Greater Manchester City Strategy, (see Appendix 2).

The main aim will be to increase the proportion of residents living within Oldham's designated Greater Manchester City Strategy Wards, who are able to access sustainable employment. It is expected that 500 workless Oldham residents will secure employment as a result of commissioned activities funded by DAF up until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. With regard to 2007-08, it is envisaged that **250 workless residents will gain employment by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008**.

20% of the available DAF monies will be spent on activity to complement and enhance the current, borough-wide Jobcentre Plus provision for Oldham residents. The remainder will be targeted at clients living in the Borough's designated Greater Manchester City Strategy Wards, (originally Alexandra, Coldhurst, St Mary's, St Paul's, Werneth, Hollinwood and Lees).

DAF aims to support workless individuals to access sustainable employment, particularly people claiming the following benefits:

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Lone Parent Income Support

In addition, DAF is intended to be used for reducing the specific barriers to employment encountered by the following groups:

- Black and Minority Ethnic
- Residents aged 50 and above
- Ex Offenders
- Individuals with no qualifications

Accordingly, the Economic Development and Enterprise Block of The Oldham Partnership is seeking to commission three main elements of activity for 2007-08 under the generic heading of:

### **Get Oldham Back on Track**

**Expressions of Interest** from potential Delivery Agents, (consortia or individual organisations), are therefore invited for delivery of one or more of the following elements:

**A. Engagement Of Workless Oldham Residents-** including outreach, assessment, information, advice, guidance and referral, and culminating in entry onto a training programme. (Target clients will include those under notice of redundancy)

**B. Improving The Basic Employability And Occupational Skills Of Those Not In Work-** reducing the barriers to employment faced by workless individuals through the provision of appropriate, coordinated training, (job-specific where required), which will enhance those individuals' employment prospects.

**C. Employer Engagement** – securing sustainable job outcomes by convincing employers to recruit workless Oldham residents. Establishing productive relationships with employers and providing practical assistance with general recruitment and workforce retention issues.

**All activity commissioned for 2007 - 08 must be completed by 31st March 2008**

## Payments

Payments relating to the three elements of the Commissioned Activity will be made ONLY on the basis of specific outcomes achieved in relation to individual clients. These are as follows:

1. Client's Entry onto Training Programme
2. Client's Completion of Training Programme
3. Client's Commencement of Employment
4. Client's Completion of 13 Weeks of Employment

### **N.B.**

Payments will not be made for the activity undertaken. 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, (e.g. in line with Jobcentre Plus costs for similar interventions).

## General information

Expressions of Interest by potential Delivery Agents must take account of the overall aims of the 'Get Oldham Back On Track' initiative. The three elements of activity to be commissioned under the programme mirror the three key stages along an individual client's journey towards employment, as detailed in Appendix Two, (*Implementing the City Strategy*). However, it is recognised that not all clients will require assistance from every element of the programme's provision.

From the client's perspective, the assistance available under the GOBOT initiative 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

As the main objective of GOBOT is to secure sustainable employment for workless Oldham residents, the Commissioning Panel will give priority to submissions from potential Delivery Agents that suggest they will lead to guaranteed job outcomes.

Therefore the Panel is likely to support submissions, similar in style and concept to the "Passport to Employment" programme undertaken in the Borough, in which employers were engaged both in the design of the initiative and the recruitment of participants. Wherever possible, therefore, proposals should demonstrate plans for collaborative working with employers.

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.

To this end, Expressions of Interest are invited from consortia and individual organisations. All potential Delivery Agents must demonstrate how they intend to link in with the work of other providers. (This will obviate the duplication of effort and work in terms of visits to

employers etc). 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.

Although funding is available until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009, activity will be commissioned on an annual basis. However, the Economic Development and Enterprise Block will have the power 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.

Finally, with regard to considerations of equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity, potential Delivery Agents will need to show in their submissions, how they would engage individuals such as BME residents, ex-offenders, over 50s and individuals with no qualifications, who face particular barriers to employment. The proportion of clients from these categories, who benefit from the Get Oldham Back On Track programme, will be rigorously monitored.

**Expressions of Interest** should be submitted on the template provided and addressed as below **to arrive no later than 4.00 p.m. Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007**

Private and Confidential  
(Ref:) GOBOT  
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OMBC – Commissioning Unit  
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Oldham  
OL1 1XL

## Appendix One

1. LAA Indicators and Targets, relevant to this Commissioned Activity.			
Ref	LAA Indicator	LAA Target	Contribution towards the achievement of the LAA target
1	Increase the number of Lone Parents moving into employment	3% increase – 628 LPs into work	The programme will engage with and support Lone Parents into employment. 80% of the client group will be living in the City Strategy Wards.
2	Reduce the overall benefit claim rate for those living in the worst initial labour market position	8,759 in 07/08 (27.2%) 8,243 in 08/09 (25.6%)	The programme will offer support into employment, providing a range of bespoke training and employment opportunities leading to job outcomes. 80% of the client group accessing this provision will be living in the City Strategy wards, including residents over 50 years of age or individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic heritage.
3	Reduce the difference between the overall benefit claimant rate for England and the overall rate for the worst local labour market Gap is 14.7%	Gap 13.1%	The programme will offer support into employment, providing a range of bespoke training and employment opportunities leading to job outcomes. 80% of the client group accessing this provision will be living in the City Strategy wards, including residents over 50 years of age or individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic heritage, reducing the gap from 14.7% to 13.1%.
4	B – The number of adults achieving literacy, language or numeracy qualifications at entry level 3, level 1 or level 2. Stretch target	1366 in 07/08	ESOL issues, poor numeracy and literacy are major barriers to residents accessing sustainable employment. The programme will support access to Skills for Life training. However, this must utilise LSC core funded provision as a priority.
5	Proportion of young people with Learning & Other Disabilities in Employment, Education or Training (EET)	82.5% by December 2008	This programme will seek to improve significantly the chances of progression into EET for young people with LDD who leave school at 16 years of age.
6	Proportion of teenage parents in Employment, Education or Training (EET)	50% by December 2008	This programme will improve significantly the chances of progression into EET for young people with Teenage Parents who leave school at 16.
7	Percentage of 16-18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training	5.8% Stretch target	This programme will improve significantly the reduction of 16-18 NEET by December 2008.

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8	Payment of 50% of reward grant above, conditional on lowest performing ward (Alexandra) achieving no higher than the following percentage:	10.5%  Condition of Stretch target	This programme will improve significantly the reduction of 16-18 NEET in Alexandra ward by December 2008.
9	Reduce the proportion of adult offenders and prolific and other priority offenders who re-offend	To be set	The client group will be drawn from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prolific offenders</li> <li>• high risk offenders</li> <li>• substance using offenders</li> <li>• substance users</li> </ul>