

**Partnership Opportunity: Employability Skills Provision for Building Better Opportunities - Age of Opportunity Project (Lancashire)**

**Reference:** **DN398859**

**INVITATION and INSTRUCTIONS**

**TO TENDER**

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# BACKGROUND

Selnet Ltd is the Social Enterprise Network for Lancashire and for over 10 years Selnet has supported social enterprises across Lancashire. In 2015/16 the organisation led a 12-month process to develop a Lancashire-wide partnership to provide specialist employability and skills support to people aged 50 and over, the project is known as Age of Opportunity and is part of the national Building Better Opportunities programme. Our partnership consists of over 20 diverse delivery partners from the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sectors, coming together to deliver specialist support for key groups across Lancashire. Selnet is the lead partner and does not undertake any delivery or direct support to participants.

Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is a national programme funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 to invest in local projects tackling the root causes of poverty, promoting social inclusion and driving local jobs and growth. Over three years, 1500 people aged 50 and over will benefit from support tailored to their individual needs and interests to overcome complex barriers and move towards work and training.

The project integrates targeted services to deliver a personalised offer of support for the identified needs of individuals accepted onto the project. BBO project delivery staff work to enable participants to overcome obstacles to sustainable employment arising out of their situations, circumstances and behaviours: helping to build resilience, self-esteem and self-confidence in working towards successful employment and training outcomes. Each project offers practical support including; money and budgeting advice, IT skills, business start-up help, CV building, interview practice, confidence building activities, volunteering experience, basic skills, support with childcare, emotional wellbeing support and more.

The need for additional skills provision has arisen due to the withdrawal of some employability partners leaving gaps in volume of provision and gaps in geographical provision. A difficulty for other partners in identifying people within the over 50 age group who meet the criteria of the project has also contributed to the need for additional employability provision.

## The project has been operational since August 2016 and will deliver to 31st March 2020 subject to funding.

## Project Participants:

## All participants must meet funder eligibility criteria. Participants must be unemployed or economically inactive, with low or no skills. BBO projects are specifically for people who are most at risk of social exclusion and specific demographics are also applied to participant throughflow such as gender and ethnicity.

## Participant eligibility is tested in terms of the mandate from the funders and a diagnostic tool is used to assess the participant’s barriers to progression. Once the participant is accepted on to the project, and an action plan created, an ‘Output’ is counted, and support begins. There is no predetermined package of support or set timeframe in which a participant is on project – all support is tailored to the needs of the individual. The project is designed to support participants with multiple and complex needs and the current delivery partners strive to help participants overcome all of an individual’s barriers to economic activity.

## Project Targets:

The successful applicant(s) will be allocated Output, Result, and Soft Outcome targets.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Borough** | **Outputs** | **Results:**  **Into Employment/ Self Employment**  **OR**  **Into Training or Education** | **Soft Outcomes\*** |
| Pendle | 21 | 3 | All participants achieving at least 3 of the 12 soft outcome indicators |
| Preston | 31 | 4 | All participants achieving at least 3 of the 12 soft outcome indicators |
| West Lancs | 8 | 1 | All participants achieving at least 3 of the 12 soft outcome indicators |
| Wyre | 8 | 1 | All participants achieving at least 3 of the 12 soft outcome indicators |

## \*Outputs, Results and Soft Outcomes for the project are at Appendix 1.

# BRIEF

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced organisations to provide employability skills support to Age of Opportunity participants from specified Boroughs within Lancashire. Proposals are sought from organisations that can demonstrate competence in delivering relevant support to people aged over 50 with multiple and complex barriers to employment or learning. The delivery partner will be expected to carry out a diagnostic assessment with potential participants to determine eligibility, suitability and need. This will be followed by a comprehensive action plan to agree a course of action for the eligible participant which will improve their lives and ultimately take them closer to work or learning. The delivery partner will be the key contact for the participant and will introduce the participant to a variety of specialist partners within the project should their services be needed. These specialist services include, financial capability support, digital skills, volunteering, business start-up support, and emotional wellbeing help.

The successful applicant will become an Age of Opportunity Delivery Partner and will sign the Partnership Agreement alongside current partners. **The Partnership Agreement can be found at Appendix 2.**

Prospective partners should outline their qualifications, experience, track record and proposed offer in their tender submission by answering the set questions. As the successful delivery partner(s) will be expected to identify their own participants to support it is important that the submission outlines evidence of previous experience of relevant engagement.

The successful organisation must deliver the targets for the whole of at least one area listed below. An organisation can apply to deliver in as many areas as they wish. In the event of there being more than one successful delivery organisation the total budget will be allocated across organisations. Please note that all Building Better Opportunity activity must represent additional activity to any delivery paid for by any other means.

**Funding available:**

A total of £106,080 is available for the delivery of employability skills to Age of Opportunity participants, and this is allocated to individual Boroughs as listed below. This must provide support for at least 68 participants, with value for money a consideration in assessment of proposals. An indicative breakdown of funding and participants across Lancashire is outlined in the table below.

Where there is more than one high scoring tender for an area, Selnet Ltd reserves the right to distribute the total funding between multiple organisations in order to obtain the best possible offer for project participants.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Indicative funding distribution** | **Participants (Outputs)** |
| Pendle | £32,760 | 21 |
| Preston | £48,360 | 31 |
| West Lancs | £12,480 | 8 |
| Wyre | £12,480 | 8 |
| **Total** | £106,080 | 68 |

# PARTNER REQUIREMENTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

**We are looking for organisations:**

* With experience and track record in providing end to end employability support to people aged 50 and above with multiple and complex needs
* Committed to collaborative, partnership-focused working
* Committed to changing the lives of disadvantaged people
* Ready to commence delivery no later than June 2019
* Who can add value to BBO projects
* With capacity and capability to manage the strict requirements of our funders European Social Fund and National Lottery Community Fund.

**Existing Partners**

Existing BBO partners from all three projects led by Selnet Ltd are welcome to apply in the interests of diversifying or increasing their role in the programme, but they will not be at an advantage, with all tenders reviewed objectively and awards made on merit.

**Due Diligence**

Successful organisations will be subject to a full due diligence process to assess financial management capacity, financial stability, staffing capacity, and relevant policies and procedures. Successful partners will be supported where possible to meet minimum requirements.

**Delivery Dates**

Delivery will start as soon as possible after award and no later than June 2019 and will end in March 2020.

**Discussions are currently taking place at strategic level regarding the extension of BBO projects beyond March 2020. If this project is extended past March 2020 the deliverer may be offered additional time to deliver the work, however this will not affect the agreed budget. We are expecting to know if an extension has been granted by June 2019.**

The dates provided in the table below are indicative only and may be subject to change. They are provided for your guidance.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **PROCESS** | **DATE** |
| Issue Instructions to Tenders | 18/03/2019 |
| Deadline for clarifications | 04/04/2019 |
| Deadline for receipt of Tenders | 12/04/2019 |
| Evaluation of Tenders no later than | 25/04/2019 |
| Clarification Interviews (if needed) | 26/04/2019 |
| Award of Contract | 29/04/2019 |
| Delivery Start Date | No later than June 2019 |

**Partnership Arrangements**

The successful tenderer will become a named BBO partner and will sign a collaboration agreement within which all organisational based targets and financial profiles will be stated. Partners will be expected to operate collaboratively and in the spirit of partnership. There is a requirement to attend relevant partnership meetings and to network with existing BBO partners.

**Marketing**

Selnet hold a central Marketing budget which is used to support engagement and marketing activities for BBO. If your delivery offer requires some marketing activity then this can be explored with Selnet as we may be able to support some or all of the costs of this.

**Guidance and Training**

Support will be offered to the successful tenderer on the subject of financial claims submissions, completing participant documentation and using our client management system (Views). As with all ESF funded projects the level of administrative work involved in the BBO projects is high and it is recommended that a suitable level of admin support is built into the staffing plans within your proposal.

**Funding and Payment**

Payment will be made in the form of a grant. Selnet sought VAT advice at the BBO projects bidding stage and was advised that the grant is not within the scope of VAT. That said it is strongly recommended that the successful bidder obtain their own advice on VAT. As an ESF funded grant programme, grant recipients are not permitted to generate profit, activities are delivered on a cost recovery basis only.

Grant payments will be made quarterly in advance according to an agreed profile, a project expenditure claim must be submitted monthly or quarterly as agreed and any underspend or ineligible spend must be returned to the lead partner. It is the individual partner’s responsibility to ensure that all expenditure is made in line with Big Lottery Fund and European Social Fund requirements. Guidance will be provided within the collaboration agreement, through a partner handbook, and via a dedicated BBO partner website. Where staff who are wholly employed on BBO, full salaries will be paid. For staff working only some of their time on BBO, they will be issued with an agreed hourly rate by Selnet and will use this on a project timesheet to claim for time spent on the project.

**Management information and Security**

Successful partners will be required to use the management information systems and processes provided by Selnet for all participants records and financial claims. You will be required to comply with data security requirements as outlined in the Partnership (Collaboration Agreement) in line with the General Data Protection Regulations.

**Quality, Compliance and Evaluation**

Successful partners will be expected to fully take part in quality and compliance activities facilitated by Selnet and external evaluators and auditors. Partners will be expected to regularly self-assess delivery quality, and to make files and documentation available for regular audits and spot checks by Selnet and the funders.

**Legislation / Health & Safety**

It is expected that it is your policy, as an employer, to comply with your statutory obligations under the key legislative equality acts including but not limited to those listed below:

* Equality Act 2010
* Human Rights Act 1998
* Any other Acts or Legislation that is either in force or comes into force during the contract period for the purposes of this Contract

and accordingly, your organisation’s policies and procedures should not treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their colour, race, nationality, ethnic origin, disability or gender in relation to decisions to recruit, train or promote employees.

**Selnet Ltd reserves the right at any time to vary, add to, delete, withdraw from, suspend or terminate the Procurement Procedure, any part of the Procurement Procedure by notice in writing to the tenderers.**

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR TENDER SUBMISSION

**Your Tender must be submitted electronically via The Chest - an Electronic Tendering System. Tenders will not be accepted by any other means.**

The Tender Return Document attached must be completed and uploaded by you as part of your submission.

|  |
| --- |
| Information to be provided |
| 1. Selection Questionnaire: **Important -** please note that you are required to complete a number of elements of the Selection Questionnaire directly on The Chest supplier portal. You must also complete the questions included in the Tender Return Document. |
| 1. References - within Tender Return Document |
| 1. Method Statement Responses – within Tender Return Document |
| 1. Pricing Information – within Tender Return Document |
| 1. **Signed Declaration / Form of Tender –** within Tender Return Document |
| 1. **Certificate of Non-Collusion and Non-Canvassing –** within Tender Return Document |
| 1. **Confidential & Commercially Sensitive Information -** within Tender Return Document |

Your Tender must be received no later than the indicated deadline. **It is important that you allow sufficient time to upload your response to The Chest as any responses received after the closing date and time will register as a late Tender and will be disqualified.**

If you encounter any technical problems associated with this opportunity, please log issues via [ProcontractSuppliers@proactis.com](mailto:ProcontractSuppliers@proactis.com) or go directly to <http://proactis.kayako.com/default>. For critical and time-sensitive issues (normally requiring resolution within 60 minutes) then please call 0330 005 0352. Supplier help guides are also available on “The Chest” from [www.the-chest.org.uk](http://www.the-chest.org.uk).

**Clarification**

Should you require clarification in respect of anything contained within this Invitation to Tender please submit your question via the Messaging section on The Chest only. Clarifications must be received by 04/04/2019. Clarifications received after this date may not be responded to. Correspondence sent elsewhere will not be processed. Selnet Ltd reserves the right to circulate your query and the response, to other Tenderers.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA / PROCESS**

Tenders will be evaluated by a panel comprised of at least 2 representatives from key project stakeholders on a consensus scoring basis.

Tender submissions will be assessed on the basis of **90% Quality / 10% Price.** The Quality and Price scores will be added together to give you an overall score.

**NB: The maximum grant value is provided within the Brief. Submissions exceeding the maximum grant level for the respective area will be deemed to have failed and will not be scored.**

**How we will evaluate Quality**

To help us judge your capability to meet our requirements you must respond to a number of Method Statement questions (set out in Tender Return Document). Each of your responses will be evaluated using scores that reflect the extent to which the responses have addressed the published criteria. These scores will then have the published weightings applied and will be added together to give an overall Quality Score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Scoring Guide** | **Max Score** |
| 1. Current Delivery | 0 – no projects described  1 – limited info given and/or not relevant to beneficiaries  3 – some relevant examples provided and understands funded projects  5 – fully relevant examples provided and understands funded projects | 5 |
| 1. Experience | 0 – no relevant experience given  1 – limited information given and barely meets assessment requirements  3 – some information given and satisfies assessment requirements  5 – detailed information given and strong response to assessment areas | 5 |
| 1. Partnerships | 0 – no examples in last 2 years  1 – limited information given and barely meets assessment requirements  3 – some information given and satisfies assessment requirements  5 – detailed information given and strong response to assessment areas | 5 |
| 1. Your delivery offer | 0 – delivery offer not at all relevant to specifications requirements  1 – limited information given and barely meets assessment requirements  3 – some information given and satisfies assessment requirements  5 – detailed information given and strong response to assessment areas | 5 |
| 1. Staffing | 0 – no staffing plan provided  1 – limited information given and barely meets assessment requirements  3 – some information given and satisfies assessment requirements  5 – detailed information given and strong response to assessment areas | 5 |
| 1. Delivery capacity | 0 – delivery does not meet the stated minimum number of participants in each area chosen  1 – delivery meets the stated minimums for each area chosen  3 – delivery exceeds the stated minimums  5 – delivery exceeds the stated minimums and provides a solid rationale for retaining quality of provision | 5 |

**How we will evaluate Price**

Please complete the Pricing Schedule (included in Tender Return Document). The lowest price submitted (which is assessed as being realistic) will receive the full allocation of marks available. The percentage difference between your submitted price and the lowest submitted price is calculated as follows:

The percentage difference between your submitted price and the lowest submitted price calculated as follows:

Selnet Ltd cannot guarantee the amount of business which will be generated to the successful tenderer - any stated volumes, quantities or usages are a guide only. Should the requirements or budget alter these will be subject to change and may increase or decrease accordingly. It is expected that the successful tenderer is adequately resourced to accommodate such changes and will provide a total supply / service for the required period, whether greater or smaller at the tendered rates.

Please also note that Selnet Ltd will not be liable for any costs / prices not identified in your submission. No responsibility will be borne by Selnet Ltd for errors in the Tenderers pricing submission.

Selnet Ltd reserves the right to clarify aspects of the tenderer’s financial model and pricing (should they wish to do so) as permitted under Regulation 69 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Tenderers should be clear that should their offer be accepted, the submitted method statements and pricing will be integral to the contract and will be enforceable under the terms of the partnership agreement.

**Clarification Interviews**

We reserve the right to hold interviews with tenderers and you **may** be asked to attend a formal interview for clarification purposes. This will give the scoring panel the opportunity to re-visit the method statements and this may result in the initial scoring being altered up or down as appropriate.

Please note that should we choose to undertake interviews these will take place on 26th April 2019. We therefore kindly ask in advance that you keep this date free. Due to the tight timescales for this tender, notification to attend may not be sent until 25th April 2019.

**Due Diligence**

The Preferred Tenderer may be subject to a reality check i.e. this may involve (but not limited to): financial viability/risk checks (D&B), a site visit, checking references, checking capability and track record and, where appropriate, speaking to organisations who will be involved in supporting the Partner.

**Financial** A Mint UK Credit Rating will be obtained for the successful tenderer. As part of further due diligence, should the Mint UK Credit Report identify that a tenderer has anything below a ‘normal’ banded credit rating and that tenderer obtains Preferred Tenderer status then a second credit report will be run through Equifax. Should this Equifax credit report determine that the Preferred Tenderer has a score check grade of D+ to F- then additional financial information (as indicated in the tenderer’s Questionnaire response) will be requested from the tenderer and further analysis will be undertaken. This analysis will form an assessment of the solvency and financial strength of the tenderer to provide the services taking into account:

* The credit rating scores
* Key financial ratios
* Liquidity, turnover and profitability

Selnet Ltd reserves the right not to enter into a contract with the Preferred Tenderer, should any of the financial assessments demonstrate an unsatisfactory financial standing.

**References**

You are required to provide details of two referees by completing the tables in the Tender Return Document. Should we decide to obtain references the referees will be asked a series of questions around but not limited to the following:

* + What type of service you provided
  + Period
  + Value
  + Current relationship
  + Reliability
  + Flexibility
  + Communication
  + Compliance
  + Quality of Monitoring

Selnet Ltd reserves the right not to enter into an agreement with the Preferred Tenderer should any of the references prove unsatisfactory.

**Data Privacy**

Selnet Ltd is the Data Controller for the personal information you have provided in this tender. Selnet’s Data Protection contact is Liz Tapner [liz@selnet-uk.com](mailto:liz@selnet-uk.com) Any personal information included in your bid submission will only be used to clarify and evaluate your bid as part of the procurement process. If your bid is successful we will also use the information to form a collaboration agreement which will be signed and shared with all Age of Opportunity partners, held at Selnet, with a copy being held by the project funders National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund.

We may ask one or two trusted external representatives to join the evaluation panel and we would be required to share your personal information with them for the evaluation process.

We will share your personal information with others if we are required to do so by law and as set out in the terms and conditions of the collaboration agreement.

For further information about how Selnet Ltd uses your personal information please see our website: **http://selnet-uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SELP-024-Privacy-Policy.pdf**

**Additional Information**

Selnet Ltd reserves the right to issue supplementary documentation and information at any time during the tender process to clarify any issue. All such further information issued during the tender process shall be deemed to form part of this process and, where applicable, shall supersede any information provided to the extent indicated in the supplementary documentation.

Selnet Ltd may at its absolute discretion reject any Tender submission which does not provide **all** the information required and requested by Selnet Ltd, in the form requested. If a bidder fails to complete all of the requested pricing information in the format specified such that it is not possible to evaluate the submitted price, then the bid will be deemed to be non-compliant and will not be evaluated.

Selnet Ltd does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender and reserves the right to accept the whole or part of any tender. Each party shall be responsible for its own costs in submitting this tender.

If at award stage the Preferred Tenderer chooses not to accept the offer to enter in to an agreement, Selnet Ltd reserves the right to award to the next highest scoring tenderer and so on.

If your Tender is successful, you will be expected to provide the services in accordance with Selnet Ltd's terms and conditions and specific requirements detailed in this Invitation to Tender.

Neither party will disclose to any third party, except where there is a reasonable requirement to make such a disclosure for legal purposes, any information acquired during the tender process nor whilst performing the work / service during the contract period, without the other parties written consent.