**Swindon Borough Council Soft Market Testing (SMT)**

Swindon Borough Council (SBC) is seeking input from the market for the supply of alternative provision to small groups of our most vulnerable young people aged pre-16 and post-16 years old with the aim of:

* Reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), with particular focus on young people in or on the fringes of the criminal justice system.

This market assessment is not part of the procurement process, but is purely investigative in nature, to potentially assist the Council in defining a specification and contract for the services. Organisations with an interest in delivering any future services have an opportunity to inform and shape future options.

This advert relates to a proposed ‘soft market testing’ exercise only and is NOT a call for competition. Any contracts for services or supplies relating to this exercise may be subject to separate procurement processes in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended). All participants in this ‘soft market testing’ exercise shall be responsible for their own costs (including third party costs) and the Contracting Authority shall have no liability to any participant.

The purpose of this Soft Market Test is to gain intelligence on the supply market for Swindon Borough Council’s requirements, including information that will help define the most appropriate structure and plan for any potential competitive procurement exercise.

The Soft Market testing will be in the form of a questionnaire which will help inform our Specification and procurement process. Closing date for the soft market testing questionnaire is 17.00 25th August 2020

Responses should be emailed back to: [Lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk)

Queries to: [Lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk)

**Rationale for the Service**

The rationale for the Alternative Provision is to intervene and support these vulnerable young people early to prevent the escalation of needs so as to increase life chances and deliver sustainable outcomes.

The interventions aim to improve the outcomes for young people, for example, reducing the risk of youth offending, addiction, exploitation, poor mental health, exclusion from school and unmet education needs.

The market testing is undertaken in the context of Swindon Borough Council considering shorter term solutions and reviewing longer term changes to alternative provision in Swindon. A reduction in school exclusion continues to be a strategic priority for the council. Recent improvements include the production and publication during autumn 2019 of a revised Swindon Fair Access Protocol taking into account the changes in practice and new developments that have been/are being implemented in Swindon during 2019/20. The outcomes of the Timpson Report and implications for schools are being monitored.

Each young person has unique needs and will require provision and support that is agile, creative and flexible enough to respond positively to their individual personal, social and emotional needs. Their academic outcomes tend to be lower and they are at higher risk of becoming NEET or becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Their behaviour may have masked Learning Difficulties leading to a delay in an assessment of need and the provision of the appropriate learning support.

There is a substantial amount of research into interventions that work best for this diverse cohort of young people. However, it seems that there is no conclusive one size fits all solution. Interventions could be focused on the young person and / or their family, include face to face and online interventions and support, be short or longer provisions and be either intensive over short or longer periods, or less intensive over a longer period, eg. Mentoring. Content could include for example, work skills and work experience, literacy, numeracy, digital, healthy living, relationships, life styles, citizenship.

Outcomes will depend upon the provision but could include: attendance, retention, improved communication skills (speaking and listening), understanding of available options, increased realistic aspirations and longer term thinking and planning, having a support network and knowing where to find support, more able to use local services (GP, benefits), understanding healthy personal relationships and improved peer relationships, improved conflict resolution, decreased levels of anxiety and/or depression, personal resilience, improved literacy and numeracy, work experience, employment.

**Scope of Service**

Primarily the focus of the market testing will be the 10-19 year old vulnerable, at risk and often hard to reach and engage cohort of young people:

* **Pre-16 years between the ages of 10 and 16 years**. The young people are likely to be known to criminal justice system and/ or at risk of not attending core education provision.

This will be a commercial offer to Swindon Secondary Schools and/or SBC.

Referrals will be from schools and local teams such as Youth Offending Team. Numbers per annum are in the range of 10 to 40.

* **Post 16 between ages 16-19 years**. The young people are likely to be known to the criminal justice service and/or not in education, employment or training (NEET).

It is preferred but not essential that you already have an ESFA prime contract for the delivery of 16-19 years Study Programme. We are considering if any additional funding would be needed to recognise the complexities of providing for this cohort of young people. Numbers per annum are in the range of 300 plus with 50 plus known to criminal justice.

**Key information on Pre-16’s**

In 2018/19 academic year there were 54 permanent exclusions in the secondary school sector in Swindon and the year before 52. The majority of these pupils will have been/are being supported within Swindon Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) provision. If the offer of a quality, cost effective pre 16 alternative education provision had been in place it is possible that a number of these permanent exclusions may have been avoided.

In addition to the group of permanently excluded pupils each year there are a cohort of pupils who would benefit greatly from the offer of quality alternative provision. For example, in 18-19, 41 pupils had 155 Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) – a welcomed 17% reduction. Typically the profile of these pupils can be one of low level disruption and significant absence from school with additional factors of vulnerability to exploitation within the community and possible involvement of the Youth Offending Team or substance misuse support services. Some of these pupils may also have special educational needs (SEN) or have other vulnerability factors such as being in the care of the local authority (CLA) or being involved in the child protection system.

**Key Information on Post-16**

In May 2020 Swindon's ‘In Learning’ figure was 89.7%, which was 3.4% lower than May 2019 and 2.6% below the national average. We rank 132nd out of 149 LAs, which is 77 positions lower than that from the equivalent time last year.

In the same time period Swindon had 131 young people identified as NEET, 2 fewer than May 2019. Our Unknown cohort was 295. Overall, our NEET and Unknown figure is 8.5%, 3.0% higher than the national average and 1.7% higher than the South West. We rank 141 out of 149 LAs.

Our September Guarantees are circa 70-80% at the end of year 11 but only 50% at the end of year 12. Many young people leaving at the end of one year study become NEET or unknown at 17 years old.

More 16 and 17 year olds could have remained engaged with flexible provision based upon young people’s interests and aspirations with responsive engagement and enrolment throughout the year.

Typically the profile of these young people can be one of low level disruption and significant absence from school with additional factors of vulnerability to exploitation within the community and possible involvement of the Youth Offending Team or substance misuse support services. Some of these young people may also have special educational needs (SEN) or have other vulnerability factors such as being in the care of the local authority (CLA) or being involved in the child protection system.

**Questionnaire**

We invite and welcome your comments, ideas and contributions.

This questionnaire has been split into Pre-16 years and Post -16 years as the solutions you are suggesting may or not be different. If your response is the same to both age groups please make this clear. Otherwise complete one or both of the following sections:

Section One: Pre-16 and

Section Two: Post-16.

# **Pre-16 years Provision**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organisation** |  |
| **Completed by** |  |
| **Role within organisation** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| **Question One**  How will you achieve a coherent and meaningful curriculum for the young person?  *In your replies please consider how you will: engage, conduct an initial assessment including the identification of any unidentified learning need, record the individuals plan and progress against that plan, measure outcomes and impact.* | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Two**  How has the market evolved over the last two years, what are the current trends and drivers and what areas of innovation are emerging for these services? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Three**  How will you work in partnership with the core education provider, the family, other professionals and employers to ensure a meaningful and coherent curriculum for the young person? *Give examples here of how you shape your curriculum so that it meets learner needs and integrates with the school curriculum and reflects needs identified by other professional involved with the young person. Would you involve service users in shaping the provision?* | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Four**  A common challenge in pre-16 alternative provision is affordability for the school or council and sustainability for the provider. How have you achieved this elsewhere? *Mention specifically examples of costings and if additional sources to ESFA funding has been sought and utilised.* | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Five**  Are there minimum or maximum numbers and/or income that would be required? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Six**  Which funding model would be most attractive to your organisation? Please tick and comment.  A. Block funding  B. Payment by Results / Graded funding for different aspects of the service  D. Mixture of A and B  E. Other arrangement (please specify) | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Seven**  How intensive is your service, for example, indicate hours per week, weeks duration etc. Add here any evidence of frequency and type of contact making a difference to the outcomes the young person achieves? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Eight**  What outcomes would your provision typically achieve? *Please provide specific examples of your outcome evidence from programmes you have delivered.* | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Nine**  In summing up, what would be your top 10 ‘must haves’ to make a successful alternative provision for our pre-16 years most vulnerable young people? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Ten**  What have we missed and should be considering when commissioning this type of provision? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Eleven**  In what ways can the provision of this service help to reduce future demand on other Council services? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Twelve**  The service is likely to be based in or close to Swindon. Would this effect your decision to tender? | | |
| **YES**     **NO**  **Comments** | | |
| **Question Thirteen**  What contract term would be attractive to you and encourage you to bid, and what are the reasons for this? | | |
| **Comments** | | |
| **Question Fourteen**  Are there any other key contract provisions that may affect your decision to tender? | | |
| **YES**     **NO**  **Comments** | | |

**The contact for enquiries on the questionnaire is** [**lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk**](mailto:lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk)

**Please email completed questionnaire to Lyn Gardner.**

**Email:** [**lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk**](mailto:lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk) **by 17.00 25th August 2020**

**Thank you.**

# **Post-16 years Provision**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Organisation** |  |
| **Completed by** |  |
| **Role within organisation** |  |
| **Email** |  |
| **Telephone** |  |
| *Are you currently a prime contract holder of 16-18 year old ESFA funding?*  YES     NO | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question One**  How will you achieve a coherent and meaningful curriculum for the young person?  *In your replies please consider how you will: engage, conduct an initial assessment including the identification of any unidentified learning need, record the individuals plan and progress against that plan, measure outcomes and impact.* | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Two**  How has the market evolved over the last two years, what are the current trends and drivers and what areas of innovation are emerging for these services? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Three**  How will you work in partnership with employers and others to ensure a meaningful and coherent curriculum for the young person? *Give examples here of how you shape your curriculum so that it meets learner needs.* | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Four**  A common challenge in post-16 alternative provision is sustainability and affordability for both council and provider. How have you achieved this elsewhere? *Mention specifically examples of costings and if additional sources to ESFA funding has been sought and utilised.* | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Five**  Are there minimum or maximum numbers and/or income that would be required for sustainability? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Six**  Which funding model would be most attractive to your organisation? Please tick and comment.  A. Block funding  B. Payment by Results / Graded funding for different aspects of the service  D. Mixture of A and B  E. Other arrangement (please specify) | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Seven**  How intensive is your service, for example, indicate hours per week, weeks duration etc. Add here any evidence of frequency and type of contact making a difference to the outcomes the young person achieves? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Eight**  What outcomes would your provision typically achieve? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Nine**  In summing up, what would be your top 10 ‘must haves’ to make a successful alternative provision for our post-16 years most vulnerable young people? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Ten**  What have we missed and should be considering when commissioning this type of provision? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Eleven**  In what ways can the provision of this service help to reduce future demand on other Council services? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Twelve**  The service is likely to be based in or close to Swindon. Would this effect your decision to tender? | |
| **YES**     **NO**  **Comments** | |
| **Question Thirteen**  What contract term would be attractive to you and encourage you to bid, and what are the reasons for this? | |
| **Comments** | |
| **Question Fourteen**  Are there any other key contract provisions that may affect your decision to tender? | |
| **YES**     **NO**  **Comments** | |

**The contact for enquiries on the questionnaire is** [**lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk**](mailto:lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk)

**Please email completed questionnaire to Lyn Gardner.**

**Email:** [**lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk**](mailto:lgardner3@swindon.gov.uk) **by 17.00 25th August 2020.**

**Thank you.**