

Specification: Apprenticeship Training Provision

Introduction and Background:

Bristol Apprenticeship Service is responsible for the timely and effective identification, commissioning and delivery of apprenticeship training activities on behalf of Bristol City Council and other employers in the local area. The newly formed service combines expertise from 3 teams:

1. HR Talent and Resourcing Team who have been managing the corporate apprenticeship programme since its launch in 2009 recruiting over 300 apprentices in a variety of roles throughout the City Council.
2. Employment, Skills and Learning Team (ESL) who have been managing Government-funded apprenticeships since 2003 in support of the local construction industry under the operational name On Site Bristol (OSB). To date over 1,000 apprentices have qualified with OSB support. The scheme achieved OFSTED grade 2 in 2016 and each year leverages significant resource into the local economy, maintaining industry-leading achievement rates.
3. Learning and Development Team support a range of staff personal and professional development interventions. In addition the team offers internal and external training solutions across a broad range of disciplines.

Bristol City Council has been approved to continue its work as a Lead Provider and joined the Register of Approved Training Providers. This enables the City Council to significantly increase the breadth of its offer and continue its shared investment in local education, training and employment support.

Apprenticeships offer the City Council an opportunity to succession plan and develop the future workforce to achieve sustainability whilst maintaining services for citizens. Bristol City Council also prioritises activities which support the development of key local industries, builds capacity and fills gaps in provision.

A key partner within Bristol Learning City Partnership, Bristol City Council aims for our managed apprenticeships to focus on building career pathways through experience of work and high quality training. Bristol City Council's longstanding approach has been to blend training delivery with the support of in-house teams and external 'expert' provision; we are looking for partners who share our goals and are willing to work with us to provide highly effective skills development.

From April 2017, Government funding of apprenticeships is changing, Bristol City Council will be required to contribute to a new apprenticeship levy. These funds will be held to cover the eligible costs of training and assessment provision. Apprenticeship levy funds will be managed directly by the City Council who will have overall responsibility for a new online Apprenticeship Service.

It is estimated that Bristol City Council's Apprenticeship levy fund will be **£1.1m** per annum. In addition, Bristol City Council, will continue to deliver its apprenticeship offer on behalf of other Levy-paying employers and Small, Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the area. This contract is currently worth **£800,000** per annum.

The Enterprise Act 2016 contains the provision for the Secretary of State “to set apprenticeship targets for prescribed public bodies relating to the number of persons (“apprentices”) who work for the body under an apprenticeship agreement” and for public bodies to report progress against such a target. For the Bristol City Council, a target of 2.3% (based upon a workforce of 6,000 employees, 12,000 including schools) would equate to 138/276 persons employed on an apprenticeship agreement at any one time by March 2020. This is an ambitious target and Bristol City Council needs partners willing to participate in assisting the development of new pathways to employment and workforce development; including new apprenticeship standards where the need exists.

In addition, public sector bodies will need to comply with Public Contracts Regulation 2015 when selecting a training provider and an assessment organisation from the approved registers.

This tender exercise is intended to support Bristol City Council in delivering its new Apprenticeship Service and an Apprenticeship Strategy will be developed alongside it and shared with appointed Suppliers.

As a Lead Provider and Levy-paying employer Bristol City Council’s approach is supported by Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Employer-Provider guidance and will change from time to time in accordance with that.

Management of the Apprenticeship Programme:

To ensure we meet targets and fully utilise levy contributions, Bristol City Council propose to identify apprenticeship opportunities through a variety of ways, including;

- Recruiting new employees as Apprentices
- Up-skilling existing staff
- Developing ongoing progression pathways within the organisation
- Community and Business engagement
- Support of initiatives such as Learning City Partnership and Bristol Works

The Bristol Apprenticeship Service (BAS), overseen by an internal steering group, will comprise of a delivery and operational management team. This team will take responsibility for all quality assurance of the apprenticeship programme in line with OFSTED/QAA and ESFA or Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) requirements. BAS will offer the City Council’s core service areas, schools and other employers clear advice and guidance in relation to suitable apprenticeship standards or frameworks when recruiting an apprentice or up-skilling an existing member of staff. To encourage young people to apply for these opportunities, especially those from groups under-represented in the City Council or industry as a whole, we will undertake extensive engagement work building upon On Site Bristol’s success.

The Bristol Apprenticeship Service will manage each apprenticeship programme ensuring that delivery and support are of the highest standard; the actual approach for this activity will depend upon the given programme and actual sub-contracting arrangements agreed within the contract.

BAS will:

- Plan the apprenticeship programme
- Identify suitable apprenticeships and the correct level of study for new hire apprentices and existing staff as part of professional development and workforce planning.

- Select suitable training partners through this process
- Agree clear pricing structure and responsibilities with training partners
- Drawdown eligible costs from BCC Levy or ESFA/HEFCE/other employers' Levy
- Advertise vacancies for apprentice opportunities
- Provide recruitment and selection support for employers and recruiting managers.
- Issue apprenticeship agreement
- Provide an apprenticeship induction in conjunction with employers and training partners
- Undertake regular reviews to assess progress and milestones with learners, line managers and employers.
- Provide support for managers with any work place issues including access to HR or other specialist advice/support.
- Liaise with training providers to identify development plans for apprentices, schedule training and end point assessment.
- Liaise with training providers to discuss any issues and identify resolution.
- Monitor contracts in line with agreed schedules
- Review and report on quality, overall performance and income/spend under the Apprenticeship Levy and ESFA/HEFCE contract

The Delivery Models:

To develop the optimum programme for apprentices and employers Bristol City Council recognises the need to develop a blended delivery. This means BCC expects to have scope to offer Providers the option to act as either BCC sub-contractor (where ESFA/HEFCE funding rules allow) under the Employer-Provider model or as Lead Provider (where ESFA/HEFCE funding rules allow).

Model A – Employer Provider – BCC will take overall responsibility for day-to-day support of an apprentice, monitor progress, setting learning goals and objectives. BCC will maintain the evidence pack and drawdown funding from Levy and/or ESFA/HEFCE as appropriate. Our sub-contractors will supply specific teaching, learning and assessment through accredited learning as defined in a standard or framework and the learner agreement. This is our preferred model as it enables BCC to utilise its considerable experience and resource to ensure an holistic package meeting the high standards of support and achievement rates offered through the On Site Bristol programme.

In this Model we anticipate funding (based upon Maximum Funding Band) to be allocated in the following proportions:

BCC Eligible Costs (Delivery) 35% Overhead (Delivery) 5%

Provider Delivery Fees up to 40%

End Point Assessment 20%

Functional Skills will be funded through ESFA funding at current rate and paid to Providers delivering at 100% upon completion

Model B – Lead Provider – Provider will access agreed funding for delivery direct from BCC Levy and/or ESFA/HEFCE and provide a comprehensive support and learning package. This will be administered in line with ESFA/HEFCE Funding Rules. We will use this approach where our needs are limited in some way for example the number of roles being offered in a particular specialism.

In this Model funding will be agreed in line with ESFA requirements

The Requirement:

Bristol City Council is looking for Training Providers and End Point Assessment Organisations (EPA) to work in close collaboration with the Bristol Apprenticeship Service to ensure a continued and sustained positive learner experience.

Training Providers will be required to fully meet ESFA/HEFCE rules and requirements and will be responsible for the following activities:

- To resource and deliver that portion of the apprenticeship training and on-programme assessments defined by a given framework or standard and agreed in the contract. For apprenticeship standards this provision will have to ensure required skills, knowledge and behaviours have been learnt for apprentices to successfully enter the gateway to end point assessment.
- For apprenticeship standards end-point assessment arrangements may also be managed by Training Providers, including payment of any costs thereof. NB: Any end-point assessments must be independent and meet requirements set out in the assessment plan for the standard. Training Providers who have delivered all or part of the training **MUST NOT** undertake end-point assessment for that same group of apprentices.
- Providing a clear scheme of work and regular, up-to-date and accurate information on the progress of learners against agreed scheme together with objective assessments of likely individual outcomes.
- Providing evidence of effective, approved Teaching and Learning by provision of proof of eligibility to deliver apprenticeships (meeting ESFA, HEFCE, Awarding Organisation and other Advisory/Regulatory Body standards as defined by BCC), full participation in shared Observations and active involvement in BCC Quality Assurance and Improvement processes.
- Ensuring subcontractors satisfy the criteria in clause 70 in the document “Apprenticeship Funding: rules and guidance for levy-paying employers.” Subcontractors must be on the published Register of Apprenticeship Training unless employed to deliver less than £100,000 of apprenticeship training and on-programme assessment under contract between 1st May 2017 and 31st March 2018.
- Providing Management Information fully in line with ESFA ILR or HEFCE reporting requirements and as required by BCC for monthly and other reporting purposes.
- For direct delivery arrangements providing Bristol City Council with an apprenticeship agreement containing a commitment statement between Training Provider and apprentice at the start of, and throughout, their apprenticeship as defined in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.

Bidders will need to demonstrate a proven track record of industry involvement, apprenticeship training (including where appropriate on-programme assessment) and be able to demonstrate the following:

- Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) approval.

- Clear understanding of Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and/or Higher Education Funding Council for England requirements and the apprenticeship levy.
- Quality of delivery supported by procedures that will be judged at least 'good' by OFSTED or QAA for overall effectiveness and apprenticeships. This includes any relevant Awarding Organisation External Quality Assurance reports and other similar information relevant to a particular apprenticeship. Should this change throughout the length of the contract to below the required level the City Council reserves the right to terminate the contract.

[Providers who have previously sub-contracted and have no current OFSTED or satisfactory QAA Confidence grading can still apply. Providers who have been approved to join RoATP with a current OFSTED grading of 'requires improvement' or QAA 'limited confidence' grading for overall effectiveness and apprenticeships can still apply. In these circumstances BCC will require sight of full supporting evidence of readiness for future OFSTED/QAA and ongoing Post-Inspection Action Plan. In these circumstances BCC may wish to undertake further quality assurance activity and agree a targeted improvement plan]

- Training Providers must notify Bristol City Council immediately if they or any subcontractors receive an OFSTED Grade 3 (requires improvement) or Grade 4 (inadequate) or QAA Limited Confidence grading throughout the duration of the contract for overall effectiveness or apprenticeships.
- Training Providers must notify Bristol City Council immediately if they or any subcontractors incur any form of Awarding Organisation or other sanction affecting their ability to register learners, deliver units or confer accredited outcomes for learners – including, but not limited to, the withdrawal of direct claims status.
- Training Providers must notify Bristol City Council in advance (and immediately upon notification) of any form of audit or regulatory check including but not limited to OFSTED, QAA, Awarding Organisation External Quality Assurance visit or Provider Financial Assurance audit
- Ability to deliver approved Apprenticeship frameworks and standards with the delivery being undertaken by appropriately qualified members of staff.
- Effective system for the monitoring of learners and timely sharing of that information.
- Achieve a high level of learner outcomes, both in terms of success rates and positive progressions from their programmes for learners.
- If the Training Provider is inspected by OFSTED/QAA and receives a Grade 3 (requires improvement) or Grade 4 (inadequate) or QAA Limited Confidence then either Grade shall be classed as a material, irremediable, breach giving the Council the right to terminate the contract if it so chooses, on written notice with immediate effect. This shall also apply to any sub-contractors who receive a Grade 3 or 4 following an OFSTED inspection. In such circumstances the Council reserves the right to direct the Training Provider to terminate his contract with the sub-contractor with immediate effect and undertake a full review of the monitoring arrangements in place.

- The bidder shall comply and shall ensure that sub-contractors comply with the Apprenticeship funding rules and guidance issued by the Education Skills Funding Agency and applicable legislation.

Training Providers will be required post contract award to submit the following information per criteria E107 (107.1 – 107.8) in the document “Apprenticeship Funding: rules and guidance for employers.” This includes:

You must agree with a provider where delivery subcontractors are used and you must have a written agreement in place with the provider setting out the following for the delivery of your apprenticeship programme.

- The apprenticeship training and/or on-programme assessment that they will directly deliver.
- The amount of funding they will retain for their direct delivery.
- The apprenticeship training and/or on-programme assessment that each delivery subcontractor will contribute to the employer’s apprenticeship programme.
- The amount of funding they will pay each delivery subcontractor for their contribution.
- The amount of funding they will retain to manage and monitor each delivery subcontractor.
- The support they will provide each delivery subcontractor in exchange for the amount of funding they will retain.
- The monitoring they will undertake to ensure the quality of the apprentice training and/or on-programme assessment they have contracted their delivery subcontractors to carry out.
- Any actual or perceived conflict of interest between them and any delivery subcontractors.

Due to the nature of the business and variety of services the City Council, schools and local employers provide, we are looking for providers who can deliver across a range of occupations at level 2 to 7.

The City Council are looking to appoint a range of Training Providers for each occupational LOT. Appointment to a LOT does not necessarily guarantee BCC agreement to procure training during the lifetime of the initial agreement. BCC will

The new funding system comes into effect on **1st May 2017** and the City Council will begin working with successful providers from the date of contract award to ensure all requirements have been met.

Lots:

Bidders are able to tender for **one or more** of the following LOTs.

LOT	Title
1	Business and Administration, Customer Service and Marketing and Events
2	Project Management
3	Leadership and Management
4	Housing
5	Property and Facilities Management and Operations
6	Construction, Building Services and Civil Engineering
7	Accounting and Finance
8	Cleaning and Environmental Support Services
9	Energy Management and Sustainable Resource Management
10	Digital Industries
11	Sports and Leisure
12	Learning and Development, Training, Schools
13	Catering and Hospitality
14	Social Work
15	Health and Social Care
16	Law and Legal Services
17	Higher and Degree Level Apprenticeships
18	Planning
19	Public Services
20	Museums and Libraries
21	Developing New Apprenticeship Standards
22	End Point Assessment
23	Apprenticeship Service MI system

Lots are not intended to be exhaustive, they may grow in scope over the duration of the contract as new apprenticeship standards continue to be developed and approved for delivery. The options listed have been identified for evaluation purposes.

Lots will be scored independently of each other and providers will not be disadvantaged by tendering for individual or multiple lots.

All applicants for LOTS 1 to 20 will automatically be considered for LOT 21 as this will allow BCC to institute the development of bespoke standards in collaboration with others.

End Point Assessment organisations should apply through LOT 22 clearly stating the LOTS and apprenticeship standards they are authorised to assess.

MIS SPECIFICATION

**FOR THE PROVISION OF AN
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM
FOR
BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL'S
BRISTOL APPRENTICESHIP SERVICE
and
EMPLOYMENT SKILLS AND LEARNING TEAM**

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

SERVICE SPECIFICATION

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Bristol City Council (BCC) wishes to commission a comprehensive externally hosted web based MIS and enrolment system which is compatible with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) financial reporting tools

1.2 BCC, receives payments from learners and secures funding from ESFA and employers to support its apprenticeship delivery and the provision of adult learning opportunities for local residents. The provision is managed and delivered through its own Employment, Skills and Learning Team (ESL) in partnership with 2 neighbouring local authorities and other specialist providers. During 2015/2016 there were approximately 9,000 enrolments from 5,600 learners. Learning programmes are delivered in multiple locations and with a wide range of partners.

Subcontracted provision managed by partners is also reported to ESFA through the ESL MIS system.

1.3 Within ESL there are 25 users of MIS system and 15 users from neighbouring authorities also access the system.

2. SERVICE REQUIREMENTS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1 An externally hosted and web-based system that is compatible with latest versions of most current browsers and is accessible from anywhere with internet connectivity. This enables partner Local Authorities to directly input information and saves duplication.

2.2 During implementation and transitional period, to work with outgoing provider to ensure a smooth migration of existing data.

2.3 Provider to be proactive in keeping abreast of ESFA updates and changes and implementing these as and when required.

Able to provide upgrades to systems, interfaces, screens and reports, as required by statutory, regulatory and legislative changes within a reasonable period, without impacting the current system and at no cost to Bristol City Council.

2.4 A database structure to allow the setup of locations and venues, course types, course instances, enrolments, learner accounts and all related financial activity.

- 2.5 Database tables to include fields as required by current external funding regulations and most up to date Levy and ESFA Individualised Learning Record (ILR) specifications
- 2.6 Data ownership remains with the Council and should be easily accessible upon request, including data that is archived
- 2.7 Must be compatible with all external funding agency requirements, using Funding Information System (FIS) to meet most up to date data validation rules
- 2.8 Must be compatible with and be able to integrate with other external databases such as the Learner Record Service and BCC website as well as the most up to date ESFA tools such as PDSAT and LARS.
- 2.9 Ability to have multiple providers with separate UKPRNs to deal appropriately with subcontracting arrangements
- 2.10 Customisable to ensure level of service meets BCC's delivery profile at any given time along with the ability to add or take away modules as dictated by service requirements. Current profile includes Adult Education Budget learners on ASF, CL, and Apprenticeships, with a small amount of EFA funded learners.
- 2.11 Provider to give BCC the option to purchase new modules for business efficiency as and when they are developed.
- 2.12 Must be able to have a daily feed of information in a format compatible with ESFA systems including Course Provider Directory and SQL database
- 2.13 Must issue advanced notice (minimum of 3 days) of service interruptions and outages, and these must not be carried out during BCCs business hours.
- 2.14 Able to adhere to ITIL best practice with regards to Disaster Recovery.
- 2.15 Capable of providing a secure online payment and processing system which is compatible with BCC financial systems with a clear fully auditable accounting process.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF CONTRACT

- 3.1 Full financial in house enrolment system
- 3.2 Secure online enrolment facility with HTTPS access for secure payment with a customised interface linking to BCC website
- 3.3 Updating of student accounts to include card refunds which are externally processed by the bank

- 3.4 Must have ability to add individual comments to student accounts and courses
- 3.5 Must have signage/timetabling facility to allocate classrooms
- 3.6 Must have messaging (SMS)/email system – to easily contact staff and students
- 3.7 Full attendance register input facility online and ability to print paper registers.
- 3.8 Financial and data analysis management tools to meet OFSTED and ESFA guidelines and requirements
- 3.9 Financial reporting on income generated by differing funding streams

REPORTING/ANALYSIS

- 3.10 Performance module to include QAR and SAR (pdf/csv) reporting features to meet OFSTED and ESFA requirements.
- 3.11 Ability to create bespoke data analysis reports with csv download facility
- 3.12 Ability to use project codes to differentiate between types of courses for example in same Subject Sector Category

HR

- 3.13 Must have ability to create HR reports including but not limited to: tutor offers of work, schedules of work, pay claim reports
- 3.14 Database table of staff details and pay rates to be included.
- 3.15 Reporting and analysis by tutor timetable

USERS

- 3.16 Must have different levels of access for different users, including Super User Level
- 3.17 No limit to number of users with simultaneous access.

SUPPORT

- 3.18 A separate test site to be available at all times to enable in-house training
- 3.19 Staff from provider to provide comprehensive onsite training on complete system at the start of contract for up to 40 users and there on in to provide ongoing training for new modules
- 3.20 Support – inclusive online help system
- 3.21 Named persons from BCC to be able to access Support Desk at any time during BCC's operating hours (see 1.3)

- 3.22 Hosting of user group meetings for BCC staff to attend
- Able to provide details of regular user group with access to any minutes, presentations and necessary information. BCC should have equal input to the user group in relation to larger customers. The Provider should attend these user groups also.
- 3.23 Target time set for correction of any system failures and errors depending on the severity and the impact the error has on the service for example cessation or interruption of the service should be dealt with within 8 hours of reporting the error to the provider.
- Able to conform to EU Cookie directive.
- Able to meet current and future standards in relation to usability and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- 3.24 Able to work with all mainstream browsers e.g. Firefox, Edge, Chrome, Internet Explorer. Able to work with the most recent versions through to older versions of these browsers whilst still maintaining the highest levels of security. The system should not require any additional plug-ins or 3rd party tools.

DATA PROTECTION & CONFIDENTIALITY

- 3.25 Must respect and adhere to data protection laws/regulations and host College database on servers in locations that comply with EU data protection directives.
- 3.26 Able to comply with the Data Protection Act 1988 and any future changes.
- 3.27 Able to secure data, in transit and at rest, using 128 or 256 bit encryption.
- 3.28 Able to securely store, any information of a personal nature, via encryption.
- 3.29 Able to securely transfer data in bulk (e.g. during migration processes, using encrypted storage device, etc.)
- 3.30 Must have secure ongoing back up and storage of all data at all times
- 3.31 Must undertake to keep all data confidential and and not disclose any information relating to BCC business to any third party without prior written consent.

4. CONTRACT PERIOD AND PAYMENT TERMS

- 4.1 Length of Contract – the contract will be for 3 years with the option to extend annually for up to a further 2 years.

- 4.2 Payment terms and any Payment Incentives – the provider should invoice bi-annually.

5. RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS OR ISSUES

- 5.1 If any dispute arises during the period of the Contract (other than in relation to any matter in which the Council has a discretion which is exercised in accordance with the terms and conditions and which shall be final and conclusive) the Parties will use all of their respective reasonable endeavours to resolve it by negotiation. You will also need to identify who will be responsible for addressing these issues if they arise.