

ITT Core Commercial Skills Development Programme

Clarification questions and responses – 22 September 2020

This is a list of all the questions posed and answers provided by prospective bidders. Any clarifications and queries are responded to anonymously and openly here.

Please note a further set of clarifications will be issued on Friday 25th September should any additional queries reach us by the end of Thursday 24th September.

- Q *We have a number of thoughts on how we can provide the greatest value to the overall programme in the timeframes that are available by varying our offer slightly. Are we able to submit a "variant" bid alongside our compliant bid? This would describe some proposed changes for discussion.*
- A We're more than happy to look at different ways of delivering it and we would be really pleased to see a flexible approach to maximise the value and benefit from the programme - and particularly one that would evolve as the programme is delivered. So please do include a 'variant' bid if you feel that would be a good way to deliver the programme.
- Q *I can see that you are looking to the supplier to:*
- Create a course programme and deliver it to 4 cohorts
 - Back this up with action learning and online networking in the cohort
- I am not clear if you're looking to the supplier to create and issue the handbooks, run the mentoring programme, and deliver the additional webinars and workshops – could you please clarify?*
- A At this point we are seeking providers of the course programme for 4 cohorts along with action learning and online networking. The remaining elements of the programme (handbook / mentoring / additional webinars) will be either delivered internally or by other commissions so we would not need these costing up within this procurement.
- Q *Are you open to streaming the cohorts by commercial aptitude / experience?*
- A Absolutely - our expectation is streaming based on commercial knowledge and experience – however we would be open to other options too if providers felt there was a benefit in that.
- Q *Has the list of proposed topics been drawn up with the involvement of potential users?*
- A Yes - this has been with a standing group of library heads of service and commercial leads informing the project, as well as our own direct experience of providing a national commercial service through the libraries. We would be happy to put a refined list back to the reference group however following discussion with an appointed provider.
- Q *Has the programme already been promoted to members? How will cohorts be identified? For example is this an opt in, by invitation or something else?*
- A We have promoted this through our networks which reach all library services across England. We have 14 library services already engaged through the co-production group and will be opening applications by the 28th



September, with a launch webinar open to the whole sector following appointment of a provider. We will make targeted invitations too should there be spaces remaining.

Q *Are there a specific reasons why the programme is designed to be delivered in 4 cohorts delivered sequentially or if there was a more cost-effective way to manage this would you want to consider it, albeit still working in the same timeframe?*

A Our experience is that having groups working together supported learning, and around 10 per group seems to be the optimal size. We would see these groups as running in parallel, with cohorts 1 and 2 beginning this year and cohorts 3 and 4 beginning next year. Our aim is to reach as many library services as possible so we are open to alternative suggestions.

Q *Can you clarify whether learners in the first cohort have already been identified and will be in place by the time of the appointment?*

A They haven't been identified yet, but we have a plan in place to identify them through September / October.

Q *When you speak of mentors can you confirm whether these will come from within the libraries network? Will they require any training, coordination by the supplier as part of this programme?*

A The mentoring programme will be a separate workstream and not part of this procurement. We will be developing the mentoring programme over the current quarter and recruiting from both within the sector and outside it. We would want to have discussion with the provider of this course as part of this to ensure synergy and shared learning between the two workstreams.

Q *By having 4 cohorts are you implying that the length of the programme is 3 months for each cohort? Would you be amenable to alternative suggestions that might increase the level of participation, engagement and personalisation of the programme and potentially stretch the budget further?*

A We are hoping for 2 cohorts to begin within this calendar year and to run concurrently for 9 to 12 months. We are then hoping cohorts 3 and 4 to run for 9 to 12 months too, beginning next calendar year with a finish in March 2022. This would mean a small amount of overlap while 1 and 2 are finishing and 3 and 4 are starting up. We would be amenable to alternative suggestions.

Q *Are participant costs/expenses excluded from the budget for the programme? e.g. will they pay for their own travel and attendance; have access to their own devices*

A Yes – local provision of equipment and network access would be a requirement for participation. Travel and attendance at any face to face events would also be covered outside this area of the programme or by the participants employers directly.

Q *Do you intend the supplier to identify and organise the webinar/workshop series you mention or is this something that Libraries Connected will do? Will Libraries Connected be able to help identify potential practitioners within the sector with expertise?*

A The webinar series detailed in section 3.4 is a separate programme. Libraries Connected has planned out the content of this series already, but we have not yet identified practitioners. We can do this ourselves but again we would seek to do this in discussion with the provider as there may be expertise they can bring it to support. We have additional funds to support this.

- Q *Do you have a notional number of learning hours or expectations and how these break down. For example, the 10 webinars and workshops in addition to the modules identified?*
- A We have not set an expectation around the learning hours – our view was that this would benefit from the input of provider organisations so please do identify how many hours you would be able to provide and what proportion is with a facilitator / trainer and how much is self directed. The webinars in section 3.4 are a separate programme and we expect will have a different audience within the library services.
- Q *Will participants be learning during working hours or is there an expectation that they will be learning in their own time?*
- A The participants would be learning as part of their working hours. This programme aims to support the library service through the development of its staff and so we would require a commitment to release the staff member for an appropriate amount of time.

[End of clarifications 22/09/2020]