**Libraries Connected East of England – Tender for** **Review of Adult Skill Provision**

**Invitation to tender**

**Title**: Libraries Connected East of England – Tender for Adult Skills Provision Review

**Return to:** regional@librariesconnected.org.uk with EE Adult Skills ITT in the subject header

 **Deadline for receipt of tender proposals**: **Friday 25 April 2025**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) specifies the requirements of a Review of the East of England Libraries Connected Region’s Public Library services offers in relation to online Adult Skills products and services and recommendation for improving their impact and cost effectiveness.

The following details are outlined in this document:

* Background information
* Objectives of this project
* Workplan and milestones
* Budget
* The terms of business relating to the award of any contract
* Process for submitting proposals
* Further information
* Compliance
1. **BACKGROUND**

**2.1 About Us - Libraries Connected** [www.librariesconnected.org.uk](http://www.librariesconnected.org.uk)

Libraries Connected is an independent charity that supports, promotes and represents all public library services in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Crown Dependencies. We are an Arts Council England Investment Principle Support Organisation (IPSO), offering advice, advocacy and expertise in the delivery of public library services. We believe in the power of libraries to change lives. Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community. We work to promote the value of libraries, broker national partnerships, share best practice and drive innovation in the sector.

Our [annual reports](https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5114389/charity-overview) summarise our achievements since we became a charity in 2018.

**2.2 About Us – Libraries Connected East of England Region**

Libraries Connected East of England (LCEE) is the regional grouping of the following library 11 services:

* Bedford Borough
* Cambridgeshire
* Central Bedfordshire
* Essex
* Hertfordshire
* Luton
* Norfolk
* Peterborough
* Southend-on-Sea
* Suffolk
* Thurrock

The LCEE network enables members to give users the best experience possible across the region by pooling resources, skills and expertise. Services are delivered by a mix of Local Authorities and Mutual and Limited Companies with a mix of larger county councils, smaller unitary authorities and a combined authority. Together they serve a regional population of more than 6 million people.

For the purposes of this tender, the group is working together to commission the work, contribute to the project and assess the outputs.

1. **OBJECTIVES OF THIS PROJECT**

We are seeking a consultant or organisation to work with LCEE to undertake research into all of the EE region’s library services online adult skills products to identify;

* Reach and effectiveness of the current online adult skills resources with regard to target audiences in the 11 LCEE public library services.
* Relative costs of each service’s provision to produce comparator data re effectiveness
* Good practice regarding promotion and partnership working re adult skills
* Regional needs regarding adult skills especially around work readiness
* Potential partner organisations who could be approached to work with libraries for mutual benefit in the area of adult skills development and work readiness.
* Future funding streams that libraries could consider either bidding for regionally or working developing a bid with a partner organisation.

**The work**

* To develop a survey/questionnaire to distribute to relevant service leads in each EE Library service to establish their (if any) current provision for hard and soft skills development for library patrons, and its effectiveness with target groups.
* To analyse and compare the data to establish any best practice examples re costs, impact and any partnership arrangements which aid deployment and reach.
* To do sample fieldwork based on these examples provided by the LCEE members to test and check impact of their provision with end users.
* To do a national best practice examples and solutions that may not be currently present in the region.
* To research the region’s strategic needs and horizon scan emerging opportunities either with national or regional initiatives where libraries can provide access pathway for individuals seeking to enhance their skills.

**Outputs**

* **Produce a report,** backed up with case studies and examples of regional good practice and learning to help each service to follow a path to improve their own provision
* **Provide an annex to the report** of a summary of the 11 LCEE members current provision, and any immediate observations that may help improve their effectiveness.
* **Provide a list of potential opportunities** that libraries may consider adapting their services to take advantage of which may include alternative products and or partners.
* **Make recommendation(s)** for an area of future development that the LCEE members could consider as a phase 2 project which they could seek funding for to enhance their regional presence and impact in the adult skills area.

**Requirements**

* Track record, relevant experience, preferably sectoral experience etc.
* Ability to support people and services at different stages of development and experience
* Desk and field research capability
* Excellent interpersonal skills to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders
* Able to commit to and deliver to time and within budget
* Understanding of the public sector policy landscape pertinent to the region and adult skills sector especially regarding work readiness.

**Background**

* Providers, including LinkedIn Learning, have made targeted offers to members through their specific library services.
* There are current partnerships or contracted adult skills providers who may not be able to provide information which is commercially or performance/contractually confidential.
* Current local government financial position means some members are very restricted in both ability to respond or take on new work and commit to future budgetary demands.
1. **CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The contract will be managed by the Libraries Connected Regional Development Team who will work with a working group of LCEE members. The work will be reviewed and signed off by the LCEE Executive Team.

1. **WORKPLAN AND MILESTONES**

We envisage the project will follow this workplan, but proposals can set out an alternative timetable to meet the brief.

Overall time period: May to July 2025

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appointment of successful contractor | 2 May 2025 |
| Planning, including an initiation meeting with the LCEE Working Group, agreeing scope of commission, project plan, milestone moments and data management through the project | Mid May 2025 |
| Desk research, analysis and engagement with LCEE members and wider sector for national examples. | May-June 2025 |
| Interim Draft Report presented to LCEE Working Group. This will include:* Initial analysis of survey results
* Identification of a few examples of good practice to visit and test the effectiveness of.
 | end June 2025 |
| Example fieldwork to test out best examples for highlighting as exemplars in final report. | Early July 2025 |
| Final report presented to the LCEE Working Group to include:* Summary of analysis of responses to questionnaire
* A set of good practices examples
* Future opportunities available to LCEE
* List of potential partners/organisations
* An outline of a potential regional, or sub regional bid to develop and promote the region’s libraries online provision for adult learners and job seekers.
 | End July 2025 |

1. **BUDGET**

£10,000 has been set aside for this project inclusive of VAT and all expenses. Any travel, accommodation, sustenance, and any other reasonable costs incurred by the tenderers as part of project should be costed in the overall budget.

1. **THE TERMS OF BUSINESS RELATING TO THE AWARD OF ANY CONTRACT**

Payment at key milestones in three instalments subject to satisfactory delivery of objectives.

1. **PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS**
	1. **Procurement timetable**
	* Submission by 09:00 on Friday 25th April 2025
	* Award selection process completed by 2nd May 2025
	1. **Proposal submission**

Please submit proposals by email to regional@librariesconnected.org.uk

Proposals must be submitted by 09:00 hours on **Friday 25th April 2025**

Proposals should be no more than 2500 words and should include

Understanding of the brief

An outline methodology for achieving the brief

A statement of your skills and experience in context of this brief including names and experience of each person assigned to the project. Examples and links to relevant reports you have written or contributed to should be included

An outline work plan and timetable for this work

A clear breakdown of costs which includes all rates, fees, and expenses you are anticipating for the project. If you are VAT registered this must be included in your costings

Two contactable referees who could provide a relevant reference of your suitability to work on this project

* 1. **Evaluation of proposals**

We will evaluate proposals using these criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CRITERIA | Weighting |
| Extent to which proposal demonstrates an understanding of the brief | 25 |
| Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including experience of running research and analysis processes  | 25 |
| Quality of methodology  | 25 |
| Proposed team composition and management | 15 |
| Cost (Value for money) | 10 |

1. **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Juliet Pirez, LCEE Chair and Head of Libraries and Customer Services

Essex County Council
Email: juliet.pirez@essex.gov.uk

OR

Clancy Mason and Nick Partridge, Regional Development Managers, Libraries Connected

regional@librariesconnected.org.uk

**COMPLIANCE**

Libraries Connected reserves the right to disqualify any provider’s response to this ITT if it does not fully comply with the requirements contained therein. This is particularly relevant in relation to the stated closing date and time of applications.

Libraries Connected is not responsible for and will not pay for any expenses or losses you incur during, but not limited to, the application preparation, visits, negotiations, or interviews in relation to this procurement process. It is your responsibility to ensure that any consortium member, sub-contractor, and adviser abide by the conditions set out by Libraries Connected.

In submitting a response to this ITT, it will be implied that you accept all the provisions of this ITT including these conditions.

If Libraries Connected needs to change any information contained within this ITT before the closing date, you will be written to advise you of these changes, which includes the extension of any submission deadlines. Libraries Connected reserves the right to cancel or suspend this ITT process at any time but will notify you in writing as soon as possible if this occurs.

It is expected that the contractor will work within the values and behaviours of Libraries Connected and this will be part of the contract of engagement.