



REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSAL OFFERS

Libraries Connected Invitation to Tender

Title: Review of the Universal Offers

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 19 September 2018 (22.00)

Return to: sarah.mears@librariesconnected.org.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

This Invitation to Tender (ITT) specifies the requirements for the delivery of a strategic review of the Universal Offers

The following further details are outlined in this document:

- The service to be provided
- The information to be provided by tenderers
- The terms of business relating to the award of any contract
- Anticipated timetable for the programme

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 About Us – Libraries Connected www.librariesconnected.org.uk

Libraries Connected is a new charity founded in 2018. It builds on 20 years' experience as The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL). We are now partly funded by Arts Council England as the Sector Support Organisation for public libraries. We have a small team of staff and trustees. But we are proud to remain as a membership organisation comprised of every library service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Libraries Connected takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service.

Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK. We work to promote the value of libraries, broker national partnerships, share best practice and drive innovation in the sector.

2.2 The Universal Offers

The Universal Offers are an articulation of the power of libraries to enrich the lives of individuals and their communities. The offers cover the six key areas of service which our customers and our stakeholders see as essential to a 21st century library service.

They are:

- [Reading Offer \(Shared Offer with The Reading Agency\)](#)
- [Information Offer](#)



- [Digital Offer](#)
- [Health Offer \(Shared Offer with The Reading Agency\)](#)
- [Learning Offer](#)
- [Culture Offer](#)

The Universal Offers provide a positive vision for the future of public libraries. They are a promise to our customers and a commitment to quality provision across these six core areas of our service. The Universal Offers aim to ensure that all aspects of public library provision are accessible and therefore each offer is underpinned by the [Six Steps Promise](#) to ensure access for people with visual impairments developed by Share the Vision and [The Children's Promise](#) developed by The Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL).ⁱ

The Universal Offers have been informed by customer research, tested with stakeholders and customers and developed in partnership with The Reading Agency and Arts Council England. The aim of each offer is to develop a core package of partnerships, resources and advocacy messages at a national level which can then be delivered locally and shaped to meet differing local needs.

They enable us to share costs and resources – they provide value for money ensuring that we are not duplicating energy and funds on developing individual offers/schemes across 177 individual library authorities. They are also a powerful strategic tool for Heads of Service to use within their own local authority when making the case for libraries and evidencing the difference that they can make to communities.

More detail about each of the Universal Offers, Six Steps and the Children's Promise is available on the Libraries Connected website.

3. OBJECTIVES AND DELIVERABLES

3.1 Why do we need a review?

The Universal Offers were developed as a strategic programme by SCL. However, at the same time, they have grown organically. As we develop our Sector Support role, this is a good time for Libraries Connected to review current impact and use and make recommendations about the future development, structure and role of the offers. We now have an employed executive team, so we also want to ensure that the processes and systems for managing the Universal Offers are fit for purpose and reduce the burden on our members.

Furthermore, the landscape in which we work continues to evolve, most significantly with the transition of the work of the Libraries Taskforce; our new relationship with Arts Council England and transforming models of local library service delivery.

3.2 Areas for the review to investigate

The outcome of the review is:



To take a comprehensive look at the Universal Offers and make recommendations for a dynamic, coherent and sustainable future strategy which can be clearly understood by library staff, stakeholders and partners, simply articulated and driving innovation and development.

Broadly we want the review to provide:

A: An understanding of the current impact of the Universal Offers on library staff and policy makers and partners:

- An understanding of the value the Universal Offers to public libraries locally and nationally (and the value libraries have been able to provide because of the offers)
- What has worked well
- What the challenges are

B: What the sustainable future of the offers should be:

- How the offers should be implemented in the future, whether they should be changed, merged or redesigned
- What should be stopped or scaled back
- What's missing
- Is the current offer structure appropriate or should the offers be articulated differently in terms of audience?
- How Libraries Connected should ensure that the interests of Wales and Northern Ireland are represented through the Universal Offers. In addition to explore how the offers relate to library service initiatives in Scotland
- How they should relate to the strategies of our partners, funders and stakeholders

The final report should be a practical internal document for the Libraries Connected and the sector

In detail, the review should consider the following aspects:

Impacts

What has been the impact of the Universal Offers on:

- Library customers and communities
- Library staff and volunteers and their capacities and capabilities
- Library services and the targeted offers they can present
- Library partners and library policy makers

Articulation and understanding

How well have we articulated the UOs and their benefits to:

- Libraries Connected members and library staff
- Customers and communities



- Local authority senior managers, commissioners and elected members
- Central Government departments
- Funders and partners
- Potential funders and partners
- The review should also examine the way in which the Universal Offers relate to and support each other.

Future development potential

How should the Universal Offers be developed in the future, including:

- Where do the Universal Offers (as a whole and individually) have most value for supporting public library services in the future?
- What should the role and structure and content of the offers be?
- Are these the right offers, do they meet stakeholders' priorities?
- How should the Universal Offers be articulated and how should they relate to each other
- What are the communications priorities for the Universal Offers and to which audiences – what impacts are this kind of communications expected to have?
- Which are the priority areas for development and what kind of development is required (e.g. new partnerships, new areas of work, new training etc.)?
- What areas have the most potential for the Universal Offers (as a whole and individually) to drive funding and business development opportunities to Libraries Connected and the sector as a whole?
- What new research needs to be undertaken to support the development of the Universal Offers?
- What potential are we missing?
- Are these the right offers
- What new quality assurance and evaluation should be put in place to measure the impact of the Universal Offers in the future?

Management

How can we streamline the management and coordination processes, to reduce the burden on our members, provide centralised control whilst still allowing regional and local flexibility and ownership?

This section should explore:

- Internal Libraries Connected coordination mechanisms and the reporting relationships to the Advisory Committee and the Board
- The relationship and overlaps between the regional Libraries Connected groups and the regional representatives on the Universal Offer groups and how these should be addressed
- Management systems with partners
- Reporting to and involving funders



3.3 Methodology

Libraries Connected is a membership organisation with a philosophy of “test and learn”. All our work is rooted in the involvement and expertise of our members, and in growing our reach and impact through collaborative partnerships. We therefore require that the review will deploy a consultative methodology and engage with our members, partners, funders and stakeholders.

We suggest the key stages of work will comprise:

- Desk research to include:
 - ❖ Mapping the current content of the Universal Offers and how they relate to each other, including any overlap or obvious gaps
 - ❖ review of existing reports and evaluation of the Universal Offers;
 - ❖ review of the policy context for the Universal Offers, including but not restricted to:
 - ◆ emerging government priorities,
 - ◆ Arts Council England and other funder priorities and strategies,
 - ◆ local authority priorities,
 - ◆ health and social care priorities
 - ◆ education, higher and further education priorities,
 - ◆ National Industrial Strategy,
 - ◆ Integrated Communities Strategy
 - ◆ early years policy
 - ◆ Loneliness Commission,
 - ◆ impact of Brexit etc
 - ◆ International review for any comparable initiatives
- Consultation workshops with Libraries Connected members and library staff including people drawn from the Universal Offer and regional groups
- Targeted strategic interviews with key stakeholders
- Quantitative survey of Libraries Connected members and other key stakeholder groups (We will provide lists with email addresses of key stakeholders to support the delivery of the survey)

However, we are open to suggestions for alternative approaches to meet the project objectives, if the rationale for these approaches is clearly explained.

3.4 Deliverables

The contractors will deliver a report setting out:

- A review of the Universal Offer activity and operation to date
- Recommendations for future delivery and development

The report should include a short executive summary, setting out the key findings and recommendations in no more than two pages.

In addition, the contractors will be required to deliver a presentation of the findings to the Advisory Committee or Steering Group in March 2019.

4. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

The contract will be managed by Sarah Mears, Programme Manager at Libraries Connected.

This project will report into a steering group which will comprise members of Libraries Connected's Advisory Committee. We would welcome suggestions for an external reference group which can provide additional oversight for the review process.

5. WORKPLAN/WORK PACKAGES AND MILESTONES

We envisage the project will follow this workplan, but proposals can set out an alternative timetable to meet the deliverables in section 3.4.

| Activity | Time Period |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1: Project initiation | October 2018 |
| 2: Desk Research | October-November 2018 |
| 3: Consultation with sector and potential partners | November -end February 2019 |
| 4: Draft review and recommendations report presented for review | March 2019 |
| 5: Research report and strategy signed off | April 2019 |

6. BUDGET

£25,000 in total (including VAT and all travel and expenses).

SCL will provide or pay for venues for meetings integral to the work. It will also provide some administrative support for consultation events, including communications with the sector and partners.

7. PROCESS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

7.1 Procurement timetable

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Invitation to tender sent out | 20 th August 2018 |
| Deadline for proposals | 18 th September 2018 |
| Possible interviews | W/c 1 st October 2018 |
| Appointment and initiation | W/c 8 th October 2018 |



7.2 Proposal submission

Please submit proposals by email to Robert.Davies@librariesconnected.org.uk
Proposals must be submitted by 22:00 on 18th September 2018.

Proposals should be no more than 1000 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

7.3 Evaluation of proposals

We will evaluate proposals using these criteria:

| CRITERIA | WEIGHTING |
|--|-----------|
| Extent to which proposal demonstrates an understanding of the brief | 20 |
| Knowledge and experience relevant to the project, including understanding of workforce development programmes, policy and strategy | 25 |
| Quality of methodology and experience in relation to development of strategy and programmes through a process of consultation | 25 |
| Proposed team composition and management | 20 |
| Cost | 10 |

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

For an informal discussion about the work, please contact:

Libraries Connected Programme Manager sarah.mears@librariesconnected.org.uk;
Libraries Connected Chief Executive Isobel.hunter@librariesconnected.org.uk
Libraries Connected President Mark.Freeman@stockton.gov.uk

9. 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.

ⁱ it should be noted that ASCEL is also currently undertaking a review of its structure and role