

Education Services

Education Business Links Service Specification

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STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This specification reflects the needs of the Council with respect to the re-commissioning of the Connexions Service in Manchester from April 2009 onwards. This service will be delivered under the governance of the 14-19+ Strategy, within the Children's Trust arrangements to provide Integrated Youth Support Services and will contribute directly to the economic regeneration of the city. The specification below outlines the requirements of the service that will meet the various needs of these agendas.

STATUTORY SERVICE SPECIFICATION

Schools should make provision for all students at Key Stage 4 to:

- Learn through work, by providing opportunities for students to learn direct
- Gain experience of the working environment
- Learn about work, by providing opportunities for students to develop knowledge and understanding of work and enterprise
- Learn for work by developing skills for enterprise and employability

In delivering the work-related learning priority the EBL provider should be aware of the Quality and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) guidance entitled:

"Work related learning for all at Key Stage 4: Guidance for implementing the Statutory Requirement from 2004"

This guidance emphasises that it is not skills and knowledge that are unique to work-related learning, but the context in which they are developed. Direct experience of the world of work (through a variety of activities) should be at the heart of work-related provision.

CONTINUITY OF SERVICE

The new provider will be expected to deliver the provision that has been committed to during the summer of 2010 by the existing supplier, to ensure continuity in the supply of EBL provision. This will be agreed during the contractual negotiations.

LOCAL SERVICE SPECIFICATION

- 1.0 In addition to meeting the statutory requirements for work experience, funding for Education Business Links provision in the City of Manchester is intended to enable a menu of high quality work-related learning and enterprise education activities to be offered in response to demand from schools and colleges, primarily but not exclusively within the 14-19 age group. It is expected that the provider will develop a transparent charging model to augment this funding so that services remain flexible, responsive and accessible to the full customer cohort.

Overview of services

2.0 Service provision should cover the following 5 core areas:

- 2.1. **Work related learning in the curriculum:** In relation to the statutory requirements outlined above, the provider should support work based learning using the context of business and work to develop young people's knowledge, skills and understanding of the workplace. This provision should include experiencing work and learning about general working practices.
- 2.2. **Work experience**, with a view to: increasing the number and range of employers offering work experience placements, particularly through social enterprises; increasing the contribution of employers to the curriculum of young learners in schools and colleges; and, reducing any perceived barriers/ bureaucracy to employer involvement (health and safety legislation, insurance liability) by improving knowledge and understanding.
- 2.3. **Employer liaison** and employer involvement in Education Business Links (EBL) activity. The provider should seek to maximise the impact of employer's time and exploit this finite resource.
- 2.4. **Professional development of staff and capacity building:** supporting teacher development in work related learning and vocational learning, including the option process for the choice of, and the study of, applied GCSEs and Diplomas. This may include mentoring and coaching or the professional placement of teachers involved in the delivery of work-related learning, or skills transfer between employers and school/college staff. Such placements should be linked to the school/college development plan and considered part of staff continual professional development.
- 2.5. **Enterprise education:** supporting learning for work and entrepreneurship by aiming to encourage young people to be more enterprising – consisting of enterprise capability, supported by financial capability and economic and business understanding. Other enterprise activities such as summer schools and competitions should also be offered.

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- 3.0 The provider should facilitate high quality placements which ensure that young peoples' experiences support learning and, preferably, a course of study in further and/or higher education.
 - 3.1. The provider should ensure that placements offer young people experiences that add value to both the employer and the development of the young person's skill base.
 - 3.2. Placements should reflect individuals' needs and may involve an extended period or a one or two-week placement. The provider should work collaboratively with the Connexions service and consider any apparent risk that the individual poses to

themselves or others and should ensure that resulting placements are appropriate to the individual.

- 3.3. Work experience provision must include suitable preparation of employers and young people before they take part in placements. It should also include appropriate support during the placement and debriefing afterwards.
- 3.4. The provider should ensure that a sufficient volume of placements is offered to accommodate the numbers of young people requiring placements within each participating learning institution. Placements should be planned efficiently with learning providers to avoid bottlenecks and excess demand for placements at particular points within the academic year.
- 3.5. Where the provider is facilitating schools and colleges setting up placements for their students through the supply of contact data for employers offering work placements, the data should be of high quality and fit for purpose.
- 3.6. The provider should address the demand for workplace internships as part of the Academies programme, ensuring that suitable placements are available across the full 14-19 range.
- 3.7. The provider should ensure that health and safety and safeguarding requirements for work experience are met.

Customer cohort

- 4.0 The provider will be responsible for identifying the target cohort of both employers and learners, primarily within the 14-19 age group, including those in alternative education settings such as Pupil Referral Units and learners in the independent sector.
- 4.1. All young people within the target cohort should have access to the EBL entitlement.
- 4.2. The provider should identify young people who are at risk and liaise with partner organisations to ensure integrated targeted support is provided, based on individuals' holistic need across a wide range of issues that may affect them continuing to participate in learning or employment. The provider will be expected to contribute to tackling truancy and exclusion, low attainment, youth offending and drug abuse. They will contribute to raising participation and achievement for black and minority ethnic groups and young people at risk such as those looked after, those leaving care, refugees and asylum seekers, young people with family problems, abused young people, travellers, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, teenage parents, young carers, young people involved with substance misuse, those in risk of bullying and those from neighbourhoods with significantly lower participation than typical.

- 4.3. The provider should ensure that schools and colleges, parents, carers, young people and key stakeholders are regularly consulted on whether service delivery meets local need. The results of this consultation should be taken into account as part of continuous service improvement and development. Consultation methods used to engage with young people should align with local engagement standards as they are developed.
- 4.4. Young people should play a key role in service development and decision making within the organisation.

Delivery agreements & strategy

- 5.0 Under the governance of Manchester City Council, the provider will be required to take the strategic lead on the development of effective Education Business Links (EBL) in the City of Manchester with a view to enhancing young peoples' learning through effective involvement with the labour market. This will include the coordination of EBL activity across multiple agencies and organisations and the involvement with national initiatives as they arise.
- 5.1. Localised strategy will need to take account of the agreements of the Multi Area Agreement with respect to EBL at a sub-regional level.
- 5.2. The provider's focus will be on improving the standard of Education Business Links across Manchester. This will include taking the lead on the development of EBL within existing structures and partnerships, including EBL networks at a sub-regional and national level.
- 5.3. The development of EBL should align with national standards and best practice and the provider will be expected to take the lead on the local implementation of these standards as appropriate. These should include adhering to the 'National Standards for Education Business Partnership Organisations' and the 'Quality Standards for Work Experience'. Furthermore the provider should strive for achievement of relevant industry awards such as the 'National Work Experience Award', the 'Brokers Work Experience Award' and the 'Education Business Excellence Award'.
- 5.4. The provider will hold the responsibility for ensuring that all EBL provision adheres to agreed standards. This will include ensuring that all staff are trained to deliver to the standards as appropriate.
- 5.5. The provider will be responsible for raising stakeholders' awareness of the standards and will strive to build the capacity of the system to continually deliver quality EBL activity. The provider will support schools and colleges in building their own capacity to improve the effectiveness of in-house employer engagement and work-related learning along with activities to encourage enterprise and entrepreneurship.

- 5.6. The EBL provider should seek to form agreements with all schools (including Academies), colleges, work based learning providers and alternative education settings (such as PRU), regardless of the funding source, with a view to ensuring that the service is accessible to the target cohort regardless of the institution. The service should strive to form a partnership agreement based on individual institutions' specific need. Service level agreements (SLA) should have a focus on quality and the quality assurance of delivery.
- 5.7. The provider should seek to influence employers' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and engender a mature, sustainable relationship between employers and educational institutions.
- 5.8. There should be a focus on developing cross-border relationships at a sub-regional level with a view to widening the reach of employer engagement activities.
- 5.9. There should be a focus on developing EBL specific to the Diploma and Apprenticeship routes. This includes promotion of parity of esteem between work-based learning and apprenticeship pathways and the more conventional academic routes.
- 5.10. EBL provision should contribute to enabling young people to make informed decisions about future opportunities
- 5.11. A focus should remain on assuring the suitability of the placement once made.
- 5.12. The provider should work closely with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), training providers, Connexions, employers and employer bodies to identify provision which meets local needs.
- 5.13. The provider will be expected to support continuous improvement within educational settings in line with the 14-19 agenda at both a local and sub-regional level.
- 5.14. Ensuring a co-ordinated approach to planning which is consistent and aligned to the strategic direction of Children's Services in Manchester is a key requirement in ensuring that young people's needs are addressed in the city. As outlined above, the provider will take the strategic lead on the development of EBL in Manchester but will also be required to play a key role in developing local strategy in line with the 2013 vision of a full 14-19 entitlement, the disestablishment of the LSC and the resulting development of the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA), the Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Corporate Plan.
- 5.15. The service will be expected to carry out relevant research activities to ensure that best practice is embedded into service delivery at every opportunity.
- 5.16. In addition, the service will carry out rigorous and regular self-assessment in order to promote continuous improvement.
- 5.17. The provider should supply a well-trained staff team with a focus on continued staff development, supervision and appraisal. Training should include the role of the

Lead Professional, as appropriate, and the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

- 5.18. As part of the formal agreement on how the service will operate in individual educational settings, the service should agree how staff can support the institution through staff training (including induction training and training based in the institution), curriculum review and delivery, information, and ICT provision and expertise.
- 5.19. In allocating work amongst its workforce, the service provider is expected to ensure maximum continuity for service users, including providing cover for leave/sickness or other emergencies.
- 5.20. The provider will be expected to have stringent internal quality assurance processes to ensure continual service improvement and quality delivery.

Recording and reporting

- 6.0 The provider will be required to record and report the participation and achievement of all young people within the customer cohort who access the provider's service
- 6.1. In addition, the provider would be expected to work with 3rd party providers on local initiatives as appropriate.

Equality

- 7.0 The provider should comply with local authority policies on equal opportunities and diversity.
- 7.1. The provider should support the reduction of social exclusion, including identifying and providing a service appropriate to the needs of particular at risk groups as outlined in 4.2.

Links with the labour market and the economy

- 8.0 The service should contribute to the distribution and utilisation of up-to-date labour market information (LMI) and employment opportunities and should establish strong links with the labour market through local employers and Job Centre Plus to facilitate work with employers, generate opportunities for young people to participate in skills development and contribute to economic development.
- 8.1. There should be a focus on facilitating joint working between employers, Academy sponsors and schools/colleges, with a view to developing Diplomas in the City.

- 8.2. The service should seek to facilitate a dialogue with employers to ensure a common understanding of the Children's Services and 14-19 Partnership's strategic agenda.
- 8.3. Strong processes should be embedded to ensure that services are adaptable to an ever changing labour and economic situation. The service should deploy economic forecasting techniques and form effective relationships with organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Academy sponsors and Connexions to harness sub-regional economic intelligence information as it becomes available.

Partnership working

- 9.0 The Education Business Links provider will be expected to align with the 14-19 Collegiate model as it develops. This will include the need to work under joint governance and to contribute to joint strategic planning.
- 9.1. In addition to working effectively within existing structures (such as the 14-19 Partnership, Collegiate structures and the Manchester Safeguarding Children's board) the provider should form relationships with a wide range of partners, including those from the voluntary and community sectors, the private sector and statutory agencies.
- 9.2. The provider should strive to facilitate joined up and coordinated employer engagement in schools and colleges and should help build their capacity to engage with employers and strengthen the links between liaison activity and school and college improvement targets.
- 9.3. The provider should proactively exchange data and information at a local and sub-regional level and should sign-up to data sharing protocols as appropriate, with a view to strengthening communication routes and improving joint planning. Data that is routinely provided to the local authority should be in a standard format agreed at the commencement of the contract.
- 9.4. The provider will act as a commissioner of services where appropriate to ensure that EBL provision is enhanced and that services are accessible to all young people within the target cohort. The provider will be required to adhere to Manchester City Council's commissioning policies and procedures when acting in this capacity.

Targets and target setting

- 10.0 The service will be required, in collaboration with the local authority, to set a stretching target under each of the headline areas (as outlined in section 2.0) for the delivery of Education Business Links activity and monitor progress accordingly.
- 10.1. The service will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate data is readily available and accessible to Manchester City Council in order to report and meet National Performance Indicators and will support the authority's CAA and APA assessment

as appropriate.

- 10.2. The provider should seek to develop a methodology in collaboration with the local authority, schools and colleges to evaluate the impact of employer liaison and engagement on core targets and outcomes for young people in general. Evaluation should cover short, medium and long-term impact and gap-analysis to identify how groups receiving a service have benefited in contrast to those excluded.
- 10.3. Targets and measures to assess and continually evaluate value for money and effectiveness should be developed by the provider and approved by the local authority.

Safeguarding

- 11.0 The provider will be expected to engage proactively with, and abide by, the standards and policies of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and be compliant with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) and any subsequent guidance issued by the government.
- 11.1. The provider should ensure that all staff receive training on safeguarding which is appropriate to the degree of unsupervised contact they have with young people. All staff that have access to sensitive data, vulnerable adults and unsupervised access to pupils or groups of pupils should be subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance.
- 11.2. In addition, the provider must comply with relevant data-sharing protocols across multiple agencies to enable a focus on early intervention and prevention across the 0-25 age range.