

Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) 2009/10

Bradford and District Commissioning Document from Bradford College



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Learning and Skills Council has allocated funding under the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) Programme to Bradford College for the benefit of the Bradford District. The period covered is 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010. This document invites proposals from appropriate organisations across the District to contribute to the regeneration of disadvantaged communities through locally delivered learning provision.

1.2 NLDC will continue to contribute towards the Government's *worklessness agenda* by providing opportunities for community-based learning targeting people who are hardest to reach and face exclusion from mainstream provision. The emphasis of activities is placed on acquiring skills that ultimately lead to employability, and as such NLDC forms part of the LSC's Skills for Jobs agenda.

Further information about Skills for Jobs is provided in Section 3.

1.3 The key purpose of NLDC is as described by the (then) Department for Employment and Skills in 2002, ie to:

'Support local voluntary and community sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.'

(NLDC Guidance – LSC 2009/10)

1.4 For the LSC, the NLDC Programme objectives are -

- enabling LSC areas to make a full contribution to the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and Civil Renewal through community-based, often informal, learning and to build the capacity of communities to respond to these agendas either through local VCS Learning and Skills Consortia or other mechanisms that can be maintained;
- improving the quality of the learning provider base, including the development of small and community and voluntary community organisations;
- through the provision of learning contributing to neighbourhood civil renewal and active citizenship skills and knowledge.

1.5 **Please note: the 2009/10 allocation of funding is for recurrent (revenue) projects only. NLDC capital grant is no longer available.**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This will be the 8th year that the Bradford District has benefited from investment through the NLDC Programme, with the total amount now standing at nearly £2.2 million. NLDC is one of 4 programmes comprising the LSC's Adult Safeguard funding which includes Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL), Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes and Wider Family Learning.
- 2.2 NLDC investment is intended to target learners according to levels of prior achievement in order to widen participation and encourage progression, especially to level 2. It is linked to other strategies including Skills for Life, Working Together, Change for Children, Regeneration and Community Cohesion, Citizenship and Skills for Jobs (NLDC Guidance, 2009/10).
- 2.3 Nationally, a number of strategies have impact on the NLDC Programme. The target for level 2 and level 3 skills attainment as advocated by the Leitch Review (2006) oversees public training investment and the importance of basic skills is still retained through the PSA Target of 95% of adults achieving functional literacy and numeracy by 2020. Complementing the drive for skills achievement is the Freud Report (2006), which considers labour market policies and in particular the issue of worklessness linked to the benefits system and the Government's target to achieve an 80% employment rate. However, the recent rapid rise in levels of unemployment has significantly affected this aspiration with the result that those people who have barriers accessing and remaining in work now face even greater challenges.
- 2.4 The Bradford District has seen a higher than average rate of unemployment when compared with the United Kingdom and even the Region. As at September 2009, unemployment rates were running at 5.2% of the working population against 4.2% nationally and 4.9% regionally, which represents an over 60% increase on unemployment levels of last year, 2008. In response, JobCentre Plus has developed a raft of products designed to support job seekers, which are supplemented by Co-financing and Working Neighbourhood projects. The main aim of this prospectus is to commission provision that takes into account that which already exists by creating a pathway of engagement activities that can lead to pre- and first level achievement. As competition for jobs increases, NLDC's role in supporting the hard to reach target group has never been so important.
- 2.5 **The prospectus now invites applications from eligible organisations within the Bradford District for the delivery of NLDC support for the period 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010. Application for retrospective funding is permitted.**

3. THE COMMISSIONING APPROACH

3.1 The aim of Skills for Jobs is to have a greater impact on individuals' chances of gaining both sustained employment and raising skill levels through pre and post employment training and support. The intention is to engage with low-skilled individuals and encourage training and employment progression, working closely with JobCentre Plus products in this respect. NLDC funding can be aligned with the Skills for Jobs initiative and therefore targets the same group of people described as -

“Low skilled adults aged 19+, not currently in employment, but who want to work. Within this broad category meeting the needs of local disadvantaged communities and individuals facing specific barriers and significant disadvantages are a priority. Those barriers include being disabled, being from an ethnic minority, being over 50, being a lone parent.”

(NLDC Guidance, 2008)

Unlike other funds, NLDC seeks to work directly with VCS organisations as the main learning providers.

3.2 The primary purpose of NLDC is to target the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and/or client groups, addressing issues of *worklessness*. Secondly, NLDC is there to develop the capacity of the Voluntary and Community sector to deliver locally accessed learning.

3.3 For those hardest to reach, NLDC has an important part to play in the “pathway to employment” model as it seeks to provide local community access to engagement and pre-first level non-accredited activities or short course accredited provision to build up personal confidence. For the community learner, NLDC can provide -

- Information, advice and guidance
- Individual assessment and personal learning planning
- Pre-entry level employability and vocational training tailored to individual needs
- Softer skills development, eg confidence building and personal motivation
- Mentoring and support services
- Signposting and progression support to other employment and training services available within community networks and other organisations/agencies such as Colleges and JobCentre Plus with referral to specialist provision if required

For VCS organisations, NLDC can provide –

- Support for VCS organisation management and volunteers to assist in the provision of community learning and other community services

3.4 NLDC activities should try to add value to the other funded activities. For people wanting to enjoy the fun of learning, Personal Community Development Learning

already supports recreational courses such as art, creative writing etc, and has clear criteria relating to fee paying for certain courses. Similarly, the LSC provides funding for literacy and numeracy under Skills for Life with free entitlement for level 1 literacy and level 3 numeracy. Additional investment is available through a recent Skills for Jobs contract managed by Bradford College. ESOL support is currently under review through a Pathfinder exercise which will identify priorities for investment utilising Skills for Life funding, and extra projects are currently funded via the Home Office and Working Neighbourhoods. NLDC is not expected to duplicate these types of provision.

- 3.5 The LSC does not prescribe the qualifications, vocational areas or job outcomes to be delivered through NLDC. However, the LSC quality standards, including Ofsted inspection and the Safe Learner Blueprint, apply. As the contract holder, Bradford College has responsibility for ensuring that all learning delivery provided through community venues meets these standards. Further information relating to the NLDC Guidelines, Quality Assurance and the contracting process is to be found in section 6. **Please read these guidelines carefully as they will form the basis of contract and management of learning programmes.**

4 NLDC PRIORITIES AND TARGETS FOR 2009 – 2010

- 4.1 NLDC funding this year will be recurrent (revenue) funding only. Activities must deliver the objectives of the Bradford & District NLDC Programme 2009/10, and these are provided below. All applications to deliver NLDC funding must demonstrate how the activities supported will contribute to one or more of the following objectives -
- Increasing community access to initial engagement/pre-first level provision within targeted communities as part of planned progression opportunities along a planned employability pathway(*NLDC recurrent funded*)
 - Developing the capacity of VCS organisations to support and deliver community-based learning and learning provision (*NLDC recurrent funded*)
- 4.2 The LSC contract requires a number of Performance Indicators (Targets) to be achieved through delivery of the sub-contracted provision, and these are included in the Specifications described in Section 5. VCS organisations securing contracts from this commissioning process will be required to achieve the targets outlined in the respective Specification.

5 NLDC COMMISSIONING SPECIFICATIONS

<p>Tender Specification Reference: NLDC/B1</p>	<p>Project: Consortia delivery of community-based learning for employability – Recurrent Funded</p>
<p>Activity to be supported</p>	
<p>This specification is seeking to secure a range of community-based, flexible, customised activities targeting “hardest to reach” residents with the aim of encouraging individual retention in the learning process and supporting incremental progression along the employability pathway. The provision of information, advice and guidance from an accredited provider will be an integral part of support for the individuals concerned as will the use of RARPA through which personal progress can be measured and recorded. Activities can include “soft” skill development for confidence building, motivation, working with others, vocational skills at pre first level and short course tasters which may be non-accredited or accredited and community-based job search support.</p> <p>Delivery of this provision will be through consortia of VCS organisations led by at least one member who has capacity to manage learning within the Ofsted framework and maintain quality through the use of the Self Assessment Report and Staff Development Plan. The VCS organisations should be based within the communities they serve and in facilities that meet health and safety standards and the LSC’s Safe Learner Blueprint.</p> <p>Priority for investment will be in the deprived wards located in the Bradford, Keighley and Shipley districts. Communities outside the recognised deprived wards where need is evident and communities of interest exist, for example working with ex-offenders, drug and alcohol abusers and others with barriers to employment, are also eligible for support from NLDC.</p> <p>During 2009, a number of new projects/contracts have been supported across the Bradford District through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Skills for Jobs co-financing in addition to the range of JobCentre Plus products, all of which address low skill/employment issues, many targeting people from the disadvantaged communities. Activities supported under this specification should complement and not duplicate provision already available, with consortia demonstrating effective linkages with other providers such that community learners have planned opportunities for progression.</p> <p>The expected outcomes of consortia activities will be –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engagement of hard to reach learners from within the target communities through relevant initial engagement/pre-first level provision that can lead to progression on an employment pathway • The development of planned progression pathways to learning and employment from community settings to wider networks <p>It is expected that around 4 consortia groups will be supported through this specification.</p>	
<p>NLDC Target individuals/groups</p>	
<p>The main beneficiaries of investment will be the residents of the deprived wards or individuals from a specified community of need or interest and the VCS organisations providing the assistance.</p>	

NLDC Target locations	
Deprived communities of Bradford, Shipley and Keighley and communities of interest where need is demonstrated.	
Targets and Outcomes	
Targets:	Across the consortia supported, the following outcomes will be required. Actual targets will be agreed through pre-contract discussion. 550 learners engaged on NLDC programmes of which 450 can be identified as undertaking a Skills for Jobs employability activity
Outcome:	Increased community provision of initial engagement/pre-first level provision within targeted communities that forms part of a planned progression route along the employability pathway
Funding	
£220,000 recurrent funding	

<p>Tender Specification Reference: NLDC/B2</p>	<p>Project: Developing Leadership and Management skills for Community Learning – Recurrent Funded</p>
<p>Activity to be supported</p>	
<p>The transition from a community venue to one that provides community learning is often demanding not just in physical resources but also in the additional skills and knowledge required by centre management. The Working Together project funded through the Learning and Skills Council laid the foundations for quality learning management but as Centres secure publicly funded contracts, the extent of leadership and management competences to fulfil Ofsted expectations begins to be fully understood.</p> <p>This specification is informed through feedback from VCS organisations that have previously received NLDC funding. It is seeking to secure a mentoring and development service for VCS staff currently involved in the management of community- based learning such that they can improve their practices to meet those expected by Ofsted under its Leadership and Management standard. The specification is seeking a course of support customised to meet the needs of VCS groups and their staff. Content should cover -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the strategic leadership of learning, including work with local partnerships, and the clarity with which aims and objectives are communicated to all relevant parties ▪ the processes used to measure the effectiveness of the management and delivery of the provision, and the effect of policies and practices including equal opportunities ▪ the development of systems that can lead to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning <p>This specification will not provide for training of individual staff for qualifications required by the Institute for Learning as other funding sources are potentially available for this purpose, such as Train to Gain.</p> <p>The specification is looking to secure ONE provider for this service who will then be responsible for the recruitment of eligible VCS organisations and the delivery of training, which itself will be within the scope of Ofsted inspection.</p>	
<p>NLDC Target individuals/groups</p>	
<p>Support provided through this specification is aimed at the VCS organisations' paid staff and volunteers who work within them.</p>	
<p>Target locations</p>	
<p>Cross-District, targeting the VCS organisations delivering in community settings, particularly the deprived wards.</p>	

Targets and Outcomes	
Targets:	15 VCS organisations supported through capacity building activities 30 learners from VCS organisations accessing training
Outcomes:	Increased number of VCS organisations across the District with greater capacity to manage community-based teaching and learning provision
Funding	
£14,675 recurrent funding	

6. GUIDELINES FOR NLDC INVESTMENT

Please read Sections 6 and 7 of this document and the NLDC application guidance carefully as this covers the conditions of the NLDC contract.

6.1 Eligible Applicants and Target Groups

- 6.1.1 All applicant organisations must be able *'to demonstrate an ability to understand and meet the needs of the priority regeneration communities / communities of interest across the Bradford, Shipley and Keighley Districts'*.
- 6.1.2 NLDC is intended to support VCS organisations delivering community-based learning. Applications from public sector organisations can be accepted as long as the ultimate recipients are VCS organisations, eg a college may work with a consortium of community learning centres providing the Ofsted support. NLDC must not be used to replace funding no longer available to the public sector organisation, and all provision funded through NLDC should be additional to any previously planned.
- 6.1.3 NLDC is intended to support learners over the age of 19 years. There is no upper age limit but learners receiving support under the employability activities should still be considering working. NLDC does not fund learning for learning's sake nor does it fund anything for which there is a statutory responsibility, such as UK citizenship training or driving theory testing. There is no upper age limit for VCS staff and volunteers receiving support under capacity building actions.
- 6.1.4 All lead applicants must be legal entities with consortia partner relationships covered through partnership agreements.
- 6.1.5 NLDC funds cannot be used to support activities that are directly associated with frontline service delivery, eg LSC/JCP core contracts **or** any activity of a political or religious nature or activities that may bring the College or LSC into disrepute.
- 6.1.6 Organisations funded through NLDC should not rely on NLDC grant for their long term survival as funding is allocated on a discretionary, annual basis with no guarantees of future support. Exit strategies and organisation sustainability will form part of the process for approving projects.
- 6.1.7 As NLDC is a fund managed by the LSC, all learning delivered must be managed within the framework of Ofsted standards. Bradford College's Ofsted quality assurance procedures will extend to delivery through the VCS groups contracted and be subject to observations of teaching and learning. Additionally, the regulations affecting qualifications, licensing and professional development for adult education teachers apply to tutors delivering LSC contracts; therefore VCS providers under NLDC will need to comply with the conditions of the Institute for Lifelong Learning (IfL) in terms of teaching qualifications.

6.2 What can NLDC pay for?

NLDC recurrent funding can be used to cover the recurrent (revenue) costs of learning delivery. These costs can include:

- Tutors/trainers costs and fees where casual staff are engaged
- Management time incurred through the delivery of learning and contract monitoring
- Administration
- Mentors/coachers/learning champions, including reimbursement of volunteer costs
- Staff training (limited – prior permission required)
- Provision of information, advice and guidance where this is not funded through existing LSC or WNF sources
- Learner expenses – eg travel, childcare/care of dependants
- Learning materials – hard copy and online materials
- Organisational costs incurred through delivery of learning, eg a proportion of utilities and other running costs including information technology. **Note** NLDC does not operate on the basis of full cost recovery; organisational costs must be in proportion to the resources used in delivering NLDC provision only
- Marketing and publicity

See 6.3.3 for further guidance on NLDC expenditure

6.3 Contracts and Payments

6.3.1 Successful applicants will work under contract with Bradford College, with the College's Partnerships Team providing contract management. The NLDC Programme operates under the College's Quality Improvement and Performance unit for Ofsted purposes and manages its own Self Assessment Report. The LSC expects that learners' progress be captured within the RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement in Non-Accredited Learning) process and that each learner receives impartial IAG with learning objectives agreed through an Individual Learning Plan.

6.3.2 Where learning is supported through NLDC activities, the LSC has a legitimate interest in health and safety and child protection. For all learners, providers must ensure that provision complies with the law as it relates to young people and vulnerable learners, and use of the Criminal Records Bureau checks will be required. In addition, all provision must meet the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive and the LSC's requirements under the Safe Learner Blueprint.

6.3.3 All successful applicants will be required to provide monthly management reports reporting against contract profiles. NLDC will be contracted on an "actual cost" basis, which means that full reconciliation of expenditure of costs against evidence (ie staff time, invoices) will be required. Similarly, all contracted outcomes will need to be reconciled against documentation provided by the Partnerships Team. The LSC has requested that for 2009/10 contract year Individual or Short Learner Records be completed to assist reporting.

- 6.3.4 NLDC grant will be paid in 4 instalments: 50% at commencement of contract followed by one instalment of 30% and one instalment of 10%. The last payment will be on completion of the project and receipt of all reports and reconciliations required by the Partnerships Team. As grant is made on an actual cost basis, the last payment will be the balance of costs made, which may result in clawback of funding. In all cases payment of grant instalments is on the basis of successful performance against contract profiles as monitored through monthly reports submitted to the Partnerships Team.
- 6.3.5 The LSC, Bradford College and Partnerships Team contract management have right of access to records held by applicants. On site monitoring visits will be carried out by one or all of these representatives during the course of contract delivery.
- 6.3.6 The LSC requires that all records associated with the delivery of contracts are retained, in original copy, for 7 years post the conclusion of the contract. Contract management will arrange collection of activity records (outcomes and financial) post completion of the contract for archiving within Bradford College.

7. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 7.1 Full details of the NLDC Commissioning 2009-10 are placed on the Partnerships Team web site, www.bradfordlearningpartnership.org.uk. Application to the NLDC Programme is through a fair and transparent bidding process.
- 7.2 Applications should be made to **ONE** commissioning specification only. Organisations wishing to tender for more than one specification activity must submit separate applications.
- 7.3 Completed tenders must be received by the Bradford Partnership's Team no later than **Wednesday, 18 November 2009 1200 hours (noon)** of that day. Any tenders received after this date and time will not be accepted.
- 7.4 The tender application forms should be forwarded in unmarked envelopes (ie not containing any external references to the submitting organisation) for the attention of:

NLDC 2009-10
Christine Longbottom Partnerships Team
c/o Bradford College
Room 40E Westbrook Building
Great Horton Road
Bradford BD7 1AY

- 7.5 Please complete the application form as a Microsoft Office Word document. If your organisation does not have computer access, we will accept applications completed by hand *on condition* that answers are clear and easily readable by the appraisal panel. Please note that electronic applications will not be accepted.

Before you send in your application, please check that -

- You have submitted **2** copies of the application - **ONE** original and **ONE** copy. **Single applications will not be accepted.**
- Your organisation is a legal entity with compatible Constitution.
- The application form is no more than 12 pages in length (plus staff details) when completed as a Word document. Applications exceeding this length will not be accepted.
- It has been completed in Arial font size 12. Applications completed in smaller font size will not be accepted.
- It is signed by an authorised signatory of your organisation.
- It is stapled only at the top left hand corner – bound copies will not be accepted.
- It is **NOT** accompanied by any other documents, reports, etc.

7.6 Timetable

Activity	By
Deadline for submission of application	12.00 noon Wednesday, 18 November 2009
Project Appraisal meets	w/c 23 November 2009
Approval Panel meets	w/c 30 November 2009
Successful applicants informed	W/c 30 November 2009
Contracting with all successful applicants commences	All approvals will be subject to contract pending receipt of the LSC contract to Bradford College
Contracting workshops for successful applicants	To be advised