



Invitation to Tender

Oxfordshire Social Contract Programme

**Work Area 1:
'NO LIMITS' Programme**

1. Introduction

OxLEP is looking to procure external provision to deliver interventions and bursaries/incentives to support those furthest from the labour market and/or impacted most by the pandemic, to relieve barriers to employment, education, and training. The programme will commence in August 2022 and operational delivery will end in December 2023. The maximum budget available for this service is £400,000 and the deadline for responses is **12 noon on 1st July 2022**.

2. Background

Oxfordshire has traditionally experienced high levels of economic prosperity and a 'tight labour market', with low levels of unemployment. The economy is underpinned by 99% Small Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs: less than 249 employees) of which 89% are micro businesses (less than 9 employees). Oxfordshire's economy has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but has remained more resilient than most other regions of the UK, due to underlying economic strengths and broad sectoral mix.

Oxfordshire has 16 wards ranked in the most deprived 20% in England and 1 in the most deprived 10% (MHCLG IMD,2019). These wards tend to be especially deprived in terms of education, skills, and training, and this is where Oxfordshire's ethnic minority groups and Black ethnic groups are more likely to be living. The pandemic has reinforced that those communities already impacted by multiple indices of deprivation are more prone to poor health and wellbeing challenges as we move into economic recovery.

At the height of the pandemic Oxfordshire saw a near three-fold increase in Universal Credit claimant count - 17,495 Aug 2020, which has now decreased to just under 10,500 (March 2022) – still a near doubling of pre-pandemic levels. Young people (aged 16-24) and the over 50's have been hardest hit - more so than in previous economic recessions.

Young people have been impacted by the pandemic in terms of mental health and missed learning. Many of the over 50's workers were put on furlough and may have left long term employment. As a result, they could be facing significant challenges to get back in the labour market, because they lack many of the skills and competencies employers' demand. Through the Office for National Statistics (ONS), we know that there is a strong link between poverty (free school meals) and GCSE progress and attainment in Oxfordshire's ethnic minority communities.

The COVID-19 Social Contract Programme (SCP)

The SCP links directly to the Oxfordshire [Economic Recovery Plan](#) (ERP), which is the comprehensive and co-ordinated whole system economic route map response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The interventions in this proposal take forward key priorities set out in the ERP and longer-term strategic ambitions identified in the [Local Industrial Strategy](#) (LIS).

There are some key sectors including Health and Social Care, Construction, Visitor Economy and Logistics and Transport which are experiencing significant labour and/or skills shortages. Much of these challenges have been amplified by the pandemic. The ambition is to bring together some of the needs of these sectors (but not exclusively) to increase access to good quality employment, training opportunities, increase social mobility and to have a more confident disability and inclusive employer network.

In order to reach maximum impact for communities, it is important that we collaborate with existing county, local and national programmes to maximise resources, avoid delivery, and programme duplication.

Impact: The programme will help address various impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic related to unemployment or barriers to employment, education, and training and the impact these factors can have on **health and wellbeing – for individuals, for communities and for businesses**. It is based on strong partner and community-based engagement, grounded in clear evidence from both the ERP and our monthly Labour Market Intelligence and will support:

- Young people who have experienced education disturbance and/or unemployment, or at risk of NEET
- Improved social mobility for minority ethnic communities
- Those furthest from the labour market including employment support for those identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) and/or affected by the digital divide, food poverty or other socio-economic deprivation
- The Over 50s – aligned to the OxLIFE priority of the LIS, to support people to continue to contribute to the economy into later life through longer and flexible careers

3. ‘No Limits’ Scope of Work/Requirements:

We want to procure external provision to deliver interventions and bursaries/incentives to support those furthest from the labour market and/or impacted most by the pandemic, particularly in areas of disadvantage, to relieve barriers to employment, education, and training. These include but are not limited to:

- A. **Delivery Mapping:** Avoiding duplication of delivery by creating a strategic response to those furthest from the labour market by mapping current interventions and provisions and filling identified gaps with appropriate interventions/provision.
- B. **‘No Limits’ Travel Bursaries¹:** To help those experiencing barriers to work due to travel limitations. Oxfordshire is a rural county and that brings challenges for those wanting flexible out of hours public transport to access employment and training. The incentive should include a travel bursary for trains/buses to help support the cost of travel to their place of employment or training and/or subsidising the ‘Wheels to Work’ scheme, that provides people with the ability to hire scooters (ideally electric), associated clothing items and insurance at low-cost weekly rental. Funding to cover bursaries will be transferred as per the Funding Milestones agreed with the successful supplier.
- C. **‘No Limits’ Digital/IT Bursaries²:** Many of those impacted most by the pandemic have digital accessibility and digital learning challenges. This fund will help those who are experiencing digital exclusion with a laptop and/or internet access. Creation of a digital bursary be provided to community members who can evidence need for digital devices and money for broadband. Funding to cover bursaries will be transferred as per the Funding Milestones agreed with the successful supplier.
- D. **Scaling-up Oxfordshire’s food larder digital skills pilot project:** Provide additional funding to support scale-up ambitions. This should enable coordination, development, and expansion. This activity should be developed in partnership with SOFEA, Oxfordshire Learning Network and Activate Learning in providing informal and entry level accredited IT/Digital training courses and provision of equipment for food larder members. The Getting Oxfordshire Online (GOO) programme and the providers have supported the pilot with temporary use of IT equipment or provision of refurbished equipment.
- E. **‘No Limits’ Targeted Interventions** to support those impacted by the pandemic to move towards work readiness, training, and employment for young people from hard-to-reach communities and identified wards of deprivation, over 50s, those furthest from the workforce, ethnic minority communities, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV):
E.g., Over 50s: Relevant interventions for the over 50s to support them into training, employment, or to enable longer and more flexible working lives, such as:
 - i. Raising awareness and engagement with employers of mid-life MOTs ([The mid-life](#)

¹ NB OxLEP Skills will be offering a separate grant scheme which includes travel bursaries for new apprentices. This scheme should support those focus groups identified within this document.

² NB OxLEP Skills will be offering a separate grant scheme which includes Digital/IT bursaries for new apprentices. This scheme should support those focus groups identified within this document.

[MOT: take control of your future now - Your Pension \(dwp.gov.uk\)](#)

- ii. Upskilling and reskilling - digital skills, Sector based work academies (SWAPs), work with local FE providers at entry level and accredited courses
- iii. Mentoring/coaching support

F. Support for key sectors identified as priorities in the Economic Recovery Plan including:

- a. Sectors with skills and labour shortages:
 - i. Health and Social Care
 - ii. Hospitality and the Visitor Economy including Retail, Tourism and Accommodation/Food
 - iii. Logistics
 - iv. Construction
- b. Support for key area economic strength sectors/breakthrough businesses such as:
 - i. Transformative Technologies
 - ii. Space
 - iii. Life Sciences
 - iv. Education
 - v. High Performance Technology
 - vi. Motorsport and Advanced Engineering
 - vii. Digital and Creative
 - viii. Cryogenics
 - ix. Construction
 - x. The Carbon Neutral Economy

4. Further details of requirements

The tender has been left broadly open in terms of detail on requirements, to enable delivery partners to provide suggestions based on their areas of expertise.

OxLEP is looking for a single supplier or consortium to deliver the entirety of the services.

5. ‘No Limits’ Outputs and Outcomes and Funding Milestones

To be defined by the bidder in response to this process, but should include as a minimum:

Outcomes:

Outcomes	Number	Deadline
Support individuals into education employment, training destinations from the four identified groups in Section 2	A minimum of 100	By close of ‘No Limits’ programme – 31 st December 2022
Beneficiaries of travel bursaries/IT/Digital Bursaries from the four identified groups in Section 2	A minimum of 100 (see Milestones below)	By close of ‘No Limits’ programme – 31 st December 2022
Skills shortage sectors supported	Supplier to suggest possible reach based on their proposal - No of individuals supported into education, employment, and training with a focus of sectors with skills and labour shortages	By close of ‘No Limits’ programme – 31 st December 2022
Food larder members who take-up digital/IT learning	Supplier to suggest possible reach after discussion with	By close of ‘No Limits’ programme – 31 st December

opportunities in non-accredited courses	SOFEA (leading on food larder digital pilot)	2022
Food larder members to be encouraged to take-up digital/IT learning opportunities in accredited courses	Supplier to suggest possible reach after discussion with SOFEA (leading on food larder digital pilot)	By close of 'No Limits' programme – 31 st December 2022

Outputs:

Output	Details	Deadline
Map of current Oxfordshire provision to be provided to OxLEP Skills Hub Deputy Manager	Provision which supports the groups in Section 2 into education, employment, and training to include organisations/interventions/bursaries in Oxfordshire including key contact details where possible. Visual representation of map and associated spreadsheet/database.	31 st October 2022
Provide regular quarterly report of progress to OxLEP Skills Hub Deputy Manager	Via a virtual or face to face meeting and including digital reports to support wider programme reporting. Outcomes will be measured in terms of community group reached, details of any sectors supported, postcodes of beneficiaries (must be Oxfordshire). Other reporting should include grants and interventions and beneficiaries, subcontracted work, delivery plans and timeline/progress. Any project changes or concerns/issues/risks to delivery and outcome achievement to be reported within reasonable time for changes to be agreed/interventions to be agreed.	Throughout programme
Present progress to Oxfordshire Skills Board (OSB)/Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) on a quarterly basis if required.	A written summary report and a 20-minute presentation to include 5 mins Q&A – inc all details as above reporting.	Invitations will be forward by OxLEP
A draft Summary report to be provided to Skills Hub Deputy Manager	Including all outcomes, detailed spend statement and defrayment evidence, details of due diligence and quality assurance. Development of case studies and lessons learned. The Deputy Skills Hub Manager will liaise to agree any amendments/additional information required	By 31 st January 2024
Report/Handover final outcomes and reports of	A written report detailing all outcomes, detailed spend	by 29 th February 2024

progress/achievements to the to OxLEP Skills Hub Deputy Manager	statement and defrayment evidence, details of due diligence and quality assurance	
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Suggested Funding Milestones/Payment Profile (Suppliers are invited to suggest a payment profile with payment based on defrayment evidence):

Milestone	Details	Date	Payment
1. Programme Initiation	Programme set up to include staffing resource/recruitment	Invoice following award and signed contract	20% of total
2. Provision Delivery Mapping completed	Submission of mapped providers of interventions and grants available across Oxfordshire which evidences non-duplication.	31 st October 2022	30% of total
3. Bursaries schemes developed to pre-launch	A plan to be submitted and agreed by OxLEP by deadline		
Interventions developed to pre-launch	A plan to be submitted and agreed by OxLEP by deadline		
Delivery of Social Mobility Travel Bursaries	Supplier to state within proposal Minimum 75 beneficiaries*	31 st October 2022	25% of total on receipt of defrayment evidence by OxLEP
Provision of Social Mobility IT/Digital Bursaries	Supplier to state within proposal* Minimum 25 beneficiaries*		
Final reports received by Skills Hub Deputy Manager and approved by OxLEP Social Contract Programme Steering Group.	As output above	by 31 st December 2023	25% of total

*example beneficiaries' criteria - universal credit claimant, those formerly from the Kickstart programme, residents of the 17 Oxfordshire wards identified as the most 10% - 20% most deprived in the country or disadvantaged, those impacted most by the pandemic. Those looking to develop skills/re-skill to work in Oxfordshire's skills/labour shortage sectors or specialist sectors.

6. Bid Process and next steps

This tender will consider and weight a consortium bid, likely with one key delivery partner, who then works with other significant partners to avoid duplication for the benefit of the Oxfordshire economy. Such a collaborative approach across Oxfordshire will show confidence to the sector that we are all working towards the same goals and enable us to achieve more.

Please note the deadline for full submission is no later than **Friday 1st July 2022 12 noon**. Submissions are to be emailed to skills@oxfordshirelep.com following the format provided in Appendix One and detailing how Section 2: Scope of work/Requirements, Section 4 Outputs and Outcomes, Section 5: Timeline and Section 8: Budget will be carried out and achieved.

Please state 'Social Contract Programme- Work Area 1 Proposal' in your email correspondence.

The tender response will be assessed against the criteria set out in section 11 (below), with an aim to award the work by **Friday 22nd July 2022**.

7. Tender Indicative Timetable:

Date	Tender schedule
Monday 13th June 2022 10:00am -11.00am	Supplier Briefing Session to be held via GoTo Webinar Please register up to 2 representatives from your organisation here: Registration (gotowebinar.com)
Thursday 16 th June 2022, 12 noon	Deadline for any queries in relation to this tender.
Friday 1 st July 2022 12 noon	'No Limits' proposal to be submitted to skills@oxfordshirelep.com For the attention of Skills Hub Deputy Manager. We recommend that you set a delivery receipt to your email.
Dates between 4 th July 2022 and 7 th July 2022	Proposals received will be reviewed, and if required further meetings with bidders will be arranged.
Friday 22 nd July 2022	Contract for work awarded.

'No Limits' Timeline:

We anticipate that the programme will be contracted by **1st August 2022** and activity will commence from **August/September 2022** with operational delivery completed by **31 December 2023**. Programme close down and draft reporting to OxLEP by 31 January 2024, Final reporting to OxLEP by 29th February 2024.

8. Budget available

The maximum budget for this work is £400,000 including/excluding VAT where applicable, broken down as follows:

- Two bursary pots:
 - B. Travel Bursaries fixed at £120,000
 - C. Digital/IT Bursaries are fixed at £120,000.
- D. Scaling-up Oxfordshire's food larder digital skills pilot project should have a minimum of £30,000 allocated to support management and administration needed to scale-up.
- The remainder should be allocated, and costs explained in the pricing schedule. This should include details for:
 - A. Delivery Mapping
 - E. Targeted Interventions
 - F. Support for key sectors.

NB. OxLEP Finance Team will be available to the winning supplier to support invoicing requirements, VAT requirements and 'pass-through costs' associated with B, C and D which will be expected to be out of the scope of VAT.

9. Pricing

Please detail prices to deliver each element of work (A-F), broken into staffing and other elements.

Tender Evaluation Weighting and Evaluation Criteria

Bids will be evaluated against the following criteria which together make up 70% of the total evaluation of the bids (as against 30% for cost). Bidders must be able to:

Criteria	Weighting (%)	Evaluation Criteria
Approach	25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements outlined in scope of works and a clear and compelling methodology for delivery (15%) Commit to leading monthly reporting to the OxLEP Social Contract Programme Manager and demonstrate the ability to communicate complex information in a manner which engages senior level decision makers, such as LEP boards (10%)
Price	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate detailed pricing research and evidence Allocate budget for the two fixed bursaries at £120,000 each Allocate a minimum of £30,000 to the Oxfordshire food larder digital skills pilot project to support management and administration to scale up. Demonstrate discussions with charity SOFEA, who will be leading the scaling-up of the programme. Detail how the remainder of the budget will be allocated to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Delivery Mapping E. Targeted Interventions F. Support for key sectors.
Quality	45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate experience in delivering successful programmes and due diligence and discretion for bursary fund administration, eligibility, and compliance. Detail how quality will be upheld and monitored throughout the programme (15%). Demonstrate previous experience of working with a broad range of partners (10%) Demonstrate delivery of previous, relevant programmes, to time and on budget (10%) Demonstrate good project planning and management skills (10%)

We expect your Invitation to Tender response to achieve high scores in each of the evaluation criteria.

Scores for each of the criteria will be allocated as follows:

Up to 2 additional points can be awarded for responses which are part of a consortium approach and demonstrate the added value this will bring to the proposal.

8. The Tenderer has provided a thorough response, addressing ALL requirements in extensive detail, providing confidence that the requirements can be met in full, with added value solutions.
7. The Tenderer has provided a thorough response, addressing ALL requirements in extensive detail, providing confidence that the requirements can be met in full, with added value solutions. There are some concerns about whether the requirements can be met, which requires further clarification.
6. The Tenderer has provided a strong response addressing most of the requirements in detail, providing confidence that the requirements can be met in full.
5. The Tenderer has provided a strong response addressing most of the requirements in detail, providing confidence that the requirements can be met in full. There are some concerns about whether the requirements can be met, which requires further clarification.
4. The Tenderer has provided a satisfactory response addressing most of the requirements in sufficient detail, providing confidence that most requirements can be met.
3. The Tenderer has provided a satisfactory response addressing most of the requirements in sufficient detail, providing confidence that most requirements can be met. There are some concerns about whether the requirements can be met, which requires further clarification.
2. The Tenderer has provided an acceptable response addressing some of the requirement with partial detail. There are a few concerns about whether or not the requirements can be met,

which requires further clarification.

1. The Tenderer has provided a minimal response addressing some of the requirement with very little detail. The response provided does not provide full confidence that the requirements can be met.

10. Additional Information

Freedom of Information

All information provided by you in your response to this Invitation to Tender (ITT) will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to any other party except where required for official audit purposes or to the extent that OxLEP Ltd considers that disclosure is required pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other applicable legislation, legal requirement, or code of practice.

Confidentiality

By receiving this ITT, you agree to keep confidential the information contained in the ITT or made available in connection with further enquiries and questions. Such information may be made available to your employees and professional advisers for the purpose only of responding to this ITT.

Material Changes

At any time before the award of the contract, OxLEP Ltd reserves the right to disqualify any organisation whose circumstances change to the extent that it ceases to meet the selection criteria or makes a material change in respect of its proposal unless substantial justification can be provided to the satisfaction of OxLEP Ltd. Where a Bidder becomes aware after having submitted a Bid of a change in circumstances or information supplied, it should notify OxLEP of this as soon as possible.

Right to withdraw the ITT

OxLEP reserves the right to withdraw this ITT at any time during the process. We would only expect to exercise this right should there be a material change to the funding environment. OxLEP reserves the right to not select any of the supplier submissions received, should none of them be of sufficient quality.

11. Response to Tender

Thank you for your interest in providing a response to our tender invitation.

Please use the information provided in Section 3: Scope, Section 4 Outputs and Outcomes, the headings in Appendix One, and below, as the basis of your response to meet the requirements outlined.

You must:

- Submit a robust and costed programme plan up until 31st December 2024 showing indicative timelines.
- Ensure your programme plan details scope and desired outcomes, particularly in terms of target communities to be supported.
- Provide evidence that you have relevant knowledge, experience, and skills in delivering successful bursary/incentive and/or intervention programmes.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of impacts on vulnerable groups with regards to Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits and payments.
- Provide a detailed guide as to how bursaries/incentives will be administered.
- Describe key partners that will be engaged in delivery and their responsibilities/engagement.
- Details of how you intend to map current incentive/intervention provision in Oxfordshire and demonstrate that your programme plan fills gaps or enhances, rather than duplicates, other provision.
- Demonstrate your approach to meeting requirements for delivery of this workstream, including measurable outputs that will be used.
- Provide evidence that demonstrates your initial understanding about Oxfordshire's

economy, and the need for a whole system approach and the Social Contract Programme.

- Evidence how and when you will feedback progress, evaluate, and highlight any KPIs to be used.

If you have any queries, please raise them at the Supplier Briefing or email them to skills@oxfordshirelep.com for the attention of Skills Hub Deputy Manager.

The final deadline for queries is Thursday 16th June 2022 12 noon

Please register up to 2 representatives from your organisation for the virtual 'GoTo Webinar' Supplier Briefing session by Thursday 9th June. Registration: [Registration \(gotowebinar.com\)](https://www.gotowebinar.com)

The completed response must be returned, along with the required commercial information in Appendix Two, together with any supporting documents no later than **Friday 1st July at 12 noon**. 'No Limits' proposal to be submitted to skills@oxfordshirelep.com For the attention of Skills Hub Deputy Manager. We recommend that you set a delivery receipt to your email.

Please note the successful bidder/consortium will be required to accept OxLEPs standard contract terms and conditions. – see Appendix Four

Appendix One

Response to Tender Format

Required: Maximum number of pages 10; including diagrams but excluding CVs. CVs should be a maximum of two pages long.

As well as the response requirements set out elsewhere in this tender invitation, please ensure your tender response captures the following:

1. Understanding of and alignment to the requirements of this tender specification
2. Your Approach, including nominated prime contractor where relevant
3. Pricing
4. Commercial Information (see Appendix two)
5. Quality Assurance
6. Collaborative team working and wider partnerships

Please set out clearly in your proposal document any relevant assumptions that you have made in determining your response under each of the above sections.

Under the Approach section of your response please make clear which partner organisation(s) will be deployed to deliver individual elements of your service approach.

Appendix Two

COMMERCIAL INFORMATION – TO BE COMPLETED

A1.1 Bidder details	Answer	
Full name of the Bidder completing the Tender		
Registered company address		
Registered company number		
Registered charity number		
Registered VAT number		
Name of immediate parent company		
Name of ultimate parent company		
Please mark 'X' in the relevant box to indicate your trading status	i) a public limited company	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	ii) a limited company	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	iii) a limited liability partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	iv) other partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	v) sole trader	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	vi) other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Please mark 'X' in the relevant boxes to indicate whether any of the following classifications apply to you	i) Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE – defined as a non-governmental organisation that is value-driven and which principally reinvests its surpluses to further social, environmental, or cultural objectives.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

ii) Small or Medium Enterprise (SME) ³	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
iii) Sheltered workshop	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
iv) Public service mutual	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

A1.2 Contact details

Bidder contact details for enquiries about this Tender

Name	
Postal Address	
Country	
Phone	
Mobile	
Email	

Appendix Three – Useful supporting/underpinning data

Deprivation: most deprived areas

- The most deprived (IMD decile 1 and 2) areas of Oxfordshire tend to be especially deprived in terms of education, skills, and training.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

2019 deciles (1 = 10% most deprived LSOAs¹ in England, 10 = 10% least deprived)

Explore deprivation data using our interactive dashboard on Oxfordshire Insight

MHCLG English indices of deprivation 2019 [1] LSOA = Lower Super Output Area (Census geography)

IDACI = Income deprivation affecting children index IDAOP = Income deprivation affecting older people index

Download the [OxLEP 2022 Local Skills Report and Plan, March 2022](#)

[Download the OxLEP 2022 Local Skills Report and Plan Annex A and B](#)

Download the [Oxfordshire's Economic Recovery Plan \(action plan\)](#)

Download the [Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy](#)

Download OxLEP [Skills, employment and enterprise of Oxfordshire's ethnic minority communities](#), November 2021 Key Findings report

Download OxLEP Skills, employment [and enterprise of Oxfordshire's ethnic minority communities](#), November 2021 full report

Appendix Four – OxLEP Standard Contract

A draft copy of the Standard Contract is available as a separate attachment.

NB. The copy attached is a draft pdf version which will be agreed with the winning supplier once awarded.