

**Cheshire and Warrington
Local Enterprise Partnership**

Invitation to Quote

**Research & Communications Development/Delivery for
Skills Bootcamp Programme**

10/11/22

Deadline: 30/11/22

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Enterprise Partnership leads the growth of the Cheshire and Warrington economy through a powerful partnership between the private, public, and voluntary sectors. Our ambition is to be the UK's healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy.

Working in collaboration with local government, businesses, educational institutes and other public, private and community sector organisations, we keep Cheshire and Warrington firmly on the map.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE COMMISSION

Skills Bootcamps is a programme run by the Department for Education (DfE), as part of their wider Skills for Life campaign¹. In February 2022 Cheshire & Warrington were invited to work up a grant proposal to enter the third wave of Skills Bootcamps. Cheshire & Warrington were confirmed an allocation of approximately £1m in May of this year, to deliver Skills Bootcamps for 264 learners by the end of March 2023.

Skills Bootcamps are free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks (and minimum of 60 guided learning hours) for adults aged 19 or over. Skills Bootcamps can be face to face, online or hybrid. They give people the opportunity to build up valuable sector-specific skills based on local employer demand² and provide a direct path to a job on completion. They are primarily aimed at delivering flexible training at levels 3-5 (medium to higher level technical skills), and level 2 in some sectors. Learners can include young people aged 19+ who have just left or are about to leave education, employees and people who are out of work or economically inactive.

As the unique nature of a Skills Bootcamp is that it is responding to local employer demand, and with a target of 100% of the learners who complete the course to receive an interview, there is a fundamental requirement that the Skills Bootcamps are co-designed or shaped with employers and are directly responding to their skills shortages.

It is expected that the Skills Bootcamp programme will run until at least March 2025, with the Wave 4 opportunity believed to be imminently announced, and since its initial launch Government have added new skills areas, geographies and additional funding has been made available to exponentially grow the programme.

3. REQUIREMENT

While Cheshire & Warrington are still in the early stages of the Skills Bootcamp programme there is a growing need to continue to make and grow the market for Cheshire & Warrington, and develop and deliver targeted communications to our four audiences (learners, employers (large and small), training providers and referral partners).

¹ [Skills Bootcamps \(education.gov.uk\)](https://education.gov.uk/skills-bootcamps)

² <https://cheshireandwarrington.com/what-we-do/skills-and-education/data-and-labour-market-information/>

While the Department for Education have developed a communications guide³ we want to better understand our audiences and ensure the programme is established and setup for success in Cheshire & Warrington. The piece of work will need to focus across all the DfE approved categories for Skills Bootcamps (See **12. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES**)

We therefore require support across three areas: drawing on good practice; awareness and understanding of the offer; and getting the right crafted message out.

- **Drawing on good practice** - understanding from other LEP, Mayoral Combined Authority areas and the National Programme, who are also running Skills Bootcamps, of their:
 - o Marketing, promotion & engagement approach, with a view as to what can be considered best practice and lessons that have been learnt to date;
 - o Approaches to grow & make the market, as well as raising awareness/penetration.
- **Awareness and understanding of the offer** - by our 4 main audiences (learners, employers (large and small), training providers and referral partners) within our sub-region.
 - o What areas particularly resonate with them, and how to further capitalise on that, including whether a particular design or structure of a bootcamp is more attractive (i.e. short/long, full-time/part-time, mixed learners/all unemployed/all employed, face to face/online/blended, particular time in the year focused on recruitment), thereby determining and crafting the unique selling point?
 - o With a particular focus on employers, what would it take for them to engage on re-training or up-skilling their own staff?
 - o What are the barriers of entry/engagement, and what areas particularly concern them, and how to reassure them against those concerns?

We believe that the activities described above may constitute a mixture of desk-based research, interviews or focus group-based activities.

For the learner audience we expect a balance between all the potential learner entry points for a Skills Bootcamp, i.e.:

- o *self-employed;*
- o *employed but looking to move sector and employer;*
- o *employed looking to upskill within their current sector and employer;*
- o *unemployed.*

- **Getting the right crafted message out (Wave 3 & Wave 4)**
 - o Suitable channels and approach to reach all our eligible beneficiaries to maximise engagement & reach.
 - development of a comms plan

³ This can be made available at any time on request

- ⊖ Development of communication assets and a communication campaign (for only relevant audiences), including relevant language and approaches to take.
 - development of a comms pack per audience, including Cheshire & Warrington bespoke Skills Bootcamp assets
 - development of a communication campaign for learners and employers, to either be deployed by Cheshire & Warrington LEP, or to share with our contracted training providers.

4. TIMESCALES

Activity	Date
Issue brief for procurement	10/11/22
Deadline for queries	18/11/22
Deadline for submissions	30/11/22
Appointment of successful provider	02/12/22
Inception meeting	w/c 05/12/22
Completion of work	17/02/23

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Bidders are required to submit tenders in an electronic format (i.e. MS Word/PDF) setting out the following:

- Introduction
- Project Appreciation & Understanding
- Approach and methodology of the commission
- Demonstration of experience of providing similar services
- CVs of key personnel to be attached to the account
(one A4 page summary per person)
- Financial proposal

All prices must be fixed and firm, quoted in pounds sterling and exclusive of VAT. Tenders should detail any ancillary costs and expenses included in the price.

6. EVALUATION OF TENDERS

Each proposal will be scored against the following evaluation questions, weighted as follows:

Evaluation question	Score
Proposed approach to the specification	35%
Experience of delivering similar projects	25%
Knowledge and expertise of staff	15%
Value for Money	25%
Total	100

Each evaluation question will be scored using the following scoring criteria:

Scoring criteria	Score
Failure to respond or irrelevant information which fails to meet the requirement	0
Response is inadequate, significantly failing to meet the requirements	1
Response is unsatisfactory partially meets the requirement	2
Response is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement	3
Response is good - better than merely acceptable	4
Response is excellent, exceeds the requirement and gives added value	5

7. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Payments for services covered by this invitation to quote will be on submission of appropriate invoices, subject to CWLEP standard payment terms. Invoicing arrangements will be agreed with the successful provider following the award of the contract.

8. CONTRACT

A contract will be awarded to the tenderer whose proposal is deemed to be the most economically advantageous subject to agreement on conditions of that contract. Please note that the LEP reserves the right to cancel the tender process at any time prior to a contract being entered into. CWLEP is not bound to accept the lowest price or any tender submitted.

The estimated contract start date is the week commencing the **5th December**.

9. FURTHER INFORMATION, QUERIES AND SUBMISSIONS

If you require any clarifications relating to the information contained within this invitation to quote please contact Rebecca Luck (contact details below) before **12:00 noon on 18th November**. Responses to requests for clarification may not materially change any of the elements of the tenders submitted. Any additional information provided by the LEP as a result of requests for clarification will be made available to all potential bidders.

TENDER CONTACT

Rebecca Luck

Programme Manager

Rebecca.luck@cheshireandwarrington.com; tenders@cheshireandwarrington.com

Submissions should be sent via email, stating in the email subject which tender the submission relates to. Completed submissions should be sent to the tender contact stated above only and must be submitted by the deadline for submissions. Submissions sent by other means may not be accepted at the discretion of CWLEP. Submission deadline is **17:00 on 30th November**.

10. TENDER PROPRIETY

Confidentiality and Disclaimer

- 10.1. This invitation to quote is not an offer capable of acceptance but represents a definition of specific requirements and an invitation to submit a response addressing such requirements.
- 10.2. Neither the issue of the invitation to quote to you, your preparation and submission of a tender, or the subsequent receipt and evaluation of your tender by Cheshire and Warrington LEP commits Cheshire and Warrington LEP to award a contract to you or any other bidder, even if all requirements stated in the invitation to quote are met. Cheshire and Warrington LEP is not responsible directly or indirectly for any costs incurred by your firm in responding to this invitation to quote and participating in Cheshire and Warrington LEP's procurement process.
- 10.3. All firms shall keep strictly confidential all information contained in this invitation to quote, and other information or documents made available to it by or on behalf of Cheshire and Warrington LEP in connection with this invitation to quote. The firms shall not disclose, nor allow any such information to be disclosed. Submission of a formal response to this invitation to quote will confirm your agreement to observe these confidentiality requirements.
- 10.4. Contact by the firms with Cheshire and Warrington LEP during the bidding process should only be with the individuals named as the Cheshire and Warrington LEP tender contact. Respondents shall not offer or give any consideration of any kind to any employee or representative of Cheshire and Warrington LEP as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, any act in relation to the obtaining or execution of this or any other contract with Cheshire and Warrington LEP.

Material Misrepresentation

- 10.5. Cheshire and Warrington LEP shall rely on the information provided by the bidder in relation to its offer. In providing the services as specified in the invitation to quote documents the successful bidder/tenderer shall comply with the contents of its offer as failure in this respect may constitute a material breach of contract.

Collusive Bidding

- 10.6. Collusive bidding is unacceptable to Cheshire and Warrington LEP. Any tenderer that is caught by Cheshire and Warrington LEP to be circumventing rules or the law during this tender process will automatically be disqualified from the tender process. This applies to any bidder who:
- a). Fixes or adjusts the amount of his bid by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, or
 - b). Communicates to any person other than Cheshire and Warrington LEP the amount or approximate amount of his proposal (except where such disclosure is made in confidence to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the tender for instance) or,
 - c). Enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other person* that he shall refrain from bidding or as to the amount of any bid to be submitted, or

d). Offers or agrees to pay or give, or does pay or gives any sum of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done, or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any Offer or proposed Offer for the Services or any act or omission will be disqualified (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to Cheshire and Warrington LEP and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a bidder may attract).

*NB Sub-contracting is permissible where the bidder believes that this will enhance their proposal, however this must be clearly stated.

Bribery

- 10.7. Bribery means any offence under the Bribery Act 2010 or related Laws creating offences in relation to offering, promising or giving a bribe or requesting, agreeing to receive or receiving a bribe
- 10.8. The Contractor agrees with the Client that this Contract will operate on the basis of zero tolerance being shown towards any Fraud and/or Bribery. The Contractor shall take all reasonable steps, in accordance with Good Industry Practice, to prevent Fraud and Bribery by Staff and the Contractor (including its shareholders, members, directors) in connection with the receipt of monies from the Client and with the operation of this Contract.

11. CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF OUR TARGET AUDIENCES

Employers

DfE state the following are benefits of Skills Bootcamps for employers:

- Develop a loyal and talented workforce with the skills you need quickly;
- Futureproof your business in a rapidly changing labour market;
- Improve your productivity; learners are motivated to learn new skills, provide new ideas and a fresh perspective;
- Recruit staff with the right training and skills from the outset;
- Get access to a pipeline of skilled adults by working with existing Skills Bootcamp providers.

However, the benefit and ask for an employer can greatly vary, and our opinion is that the messages are getting muddled and is not getting the cut through that we believe this programme has the potential for.

For example, an employer could highlight a notable skills shortage in their business and highlight that to a training provider. That same employer could then support the design and delivery of a Skills Bootcamp, specifically designed to recruit new employees and address their skills gap. The employer could then have up to 16 weeks to get to know all the learners, task them with developing the exact skills and experience they would be looking for in a new hire. That employer could then recruit the right candidate(s) from the Skills Bootcamp, with an understanding of that future hire beyond that of a typical interview (of just a single hour). This approach would have zero cost to the employer and could have a potentially massive impact in addressing their skills needs.

In comparison, our opinion is that employers are instead focusing on the route where a Skills Bootcamp could be designed to re-train their current staff, which itself would require some funding from the employer (10% SME, or 30% for other employers). The intention of this route would allow an employer to develop their own workforce, appreciating that they will have already invested in those individuals, and ensure that they have the ability to succession plan, avoid potential for redundancies or expand their business. The risks that are being highlighted to us is that: staff training is not a current priority considering the other economic challenges; there are notable challenges in being able to release staff for training, as it would require cover for their current role and activities; the additional funding required for employers still presents a financial challenge to be able to participate; and, that employers are reluctant to upskill their staff for them to be more employable elsewhere.

Learners

The key benefit for learners who are unemployed or economically inactive in participating in a Skills Bootcamp, relate to it being a free course that will lead to a guaranteed interview, and within an area that has local employer demand, therefore leading to a job.

However, we are conscious that while the course itself is free we are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and therefore many unemployed people may not be able to afford to wait up to 16 weeks for an interview; equally many employed people who are looking for a new role may not easily be able to commit to the additional time of the course, as they are not able to reduce their working hours. It is therefore critical to land the benefits to learners, and for them to easily understand the benefit. Equally we are aware that there is potential for the areas of high employer demand to not necessarily have high level of learner interest, as this may have instigated the skills gap in the first place. There is therefore likely more work to be done to ensure that the potential learners are fully sold on the future role and the sector, as well as the Bootcamp style programme as well. For example, our Skills Bootcamp in Logistics (HGV) is currently the highest subscribed course, because of the tangible output for learners (a licence), and their perception of being able to get a job at the end of the course; meanwhile, many of our digital courses are having to work harder in recruitment and promotion, as the learners are not stepping forward so readily in these areas, despite this being repeatedly reported as a key skills gap for Cheshire & Warrington.

Training Providers

A key benefit for training providers is that the Skills Bootcamp programme is an exponentially growing programme from the Department for Education, where success is rewarded with an increase in funding allocation.

However, we are aware that the relative size of the award in Cheshire & Warrington is fairly modest, and when broken up between multiple training providers is even more modest. Our approach in Cheshire & Warrington is to award as many different grants as possible, to ensure that we are able to run multiple pilots, increase our chance of success (reaching 264 learners) and build confidence in our providers for this type of employer-led short course. We are therefore consciously not awarding high value single grant offers at this time, until at least we have an awareness of the provider's performance and the employer demand in the skills areas. Our belief therefore is that the

quality of the programme will grow over time, at which point providers will be able to get more reward for their effort.

Referral Partners

While referral partners are not a direct audience, we do believe that this could be a powerful forth audience that we are not yet fully capitalising on. There is potential for referral partners to support both our learner engagement/recruitment (i.e. Job Centre Plus, Housing Associations, Local Authorities etc.) and our employer engagement/recruitment (Chambers, FSB etc.).

We believe if harnessed correctly these referral partners could act as the most powerful promotional tool for the Skills Bootcamp programme, as their already established relationships and networks can be tapped into, and the Bootcamp offer easily disseminated appropriately. However, we know that both the message will need to be targeted to these audiences, and that the referral partners will need to fully understand “what’s in it for their contacts,” and how it compares with other provision in the market, in order to successfully sell and advocate for the programme.

12. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES (AVAILABLE ON REQUEST)

- Data & Labour Market Information
- Network engaged in C&W throughout Skills Bootcamp programme to date (who, issue, action, outcome)
- Details of live Skills Bootcamps
- Links to other LEP/Combined Authority Area Skills Bootcamp Programmes (contacts and websites)
- DfE communication guide, including their Autumn Skills for Life campaign
- DfE Skills Bootcamp Policy, including approved category areas
- DfE Wave 1 Skills Bootcamp Evaluation

Category	Core Subject Areas	Category	Core Subject Areas	Category	Core Subject Areas
Digital Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloud • Computer Aided Design • Cyber • Data • DevOps • Digital Marketing • Games • Network • Software Development • Software Engineering • Support • Web 	Technical Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Manufacturing • Design • Electronics & Electrotechnical • Engineering • Welding 	Green Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Power • Green Construction & Buildings • Green Transport • Green Protection of Natural Resources • Green Business & Industry
		Technical Bespoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital bootcamps not falling within the above nominated core areas 		
Digital Bespoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Bootcamps not falling within the above nominated core areas. 	Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Management • Construction Trades 		
		Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HGV driving 		