



## **Invitation to apply to join a collaborative development project on 'Improving design and delivery of study programmes for learners with SEND'.**

### **What is the collaborative development project?**

ACER, in partnership with Natspec, is leading an ETF project to support the improvement of study programmes for learners with SEND. Central to this project is the formation and provision of support to regional or area clusters of providers who are working together to tackle particular aspects of study programme design and delivery.

The purpose of the project is to enable the providers directly involved to achieve improvements in study programmes for SEND learners and to cascade the learning from their experiences to other providers to help drive forward improvements across the sector.

### **Who can apply?**

Post-16 providers in England in receipt of ESFA funding for delivery of 16-19 (25) study programmes. One lead provider needs to make the application on behalf of all cluster members.

### **What is a cluster?**

A cluster is a group of organisations working together on a shared project. Clusters must include participants from between four and six different organisations. Where relevant, clusters may include one organisation which is not a learning provider, e.g. an employer, a local authority, a supported employment agency. All other cluster members must be learning providers in receipt of ESFA funding for study programmes. Clusters should normally have a regional focus but could be cross-regional if that is important to achieving their aims and objectives. Applications which include providers of different types are particularly welcome.

### **What sort of projects can a cluster work on?**

Projects should be focused on improving design and/or delivery of study programmes for learners with SEND. The specific focus should be one which has been identified as a shared area for development across cluster members. Projects might relate to learners with and/or without Education, Health and Care plans, on mainstream or discrete programmes. The provision in focus could be at any level and of any type (from non-accredited pre-Entry independent living programmes to A levels, BTECs or apprenticeships).

A cluster might take a shared theme (e.g. meaningful work experience) and each focus their work on meeting the needs of a different type of learner group or of learners in different curriculum areas. Alternatively, they might work collaboratively



on a single output (e.g. a personal and social skills curriculum for SEND learners preparing to progress to H.E.).

### **What support will clusters be offered?**

There is funding of £2,500 for each cluster to support their project work. This money will be paid in two instalments; one on receipt of an agreed action plan and evidence of senior management support, the second on successful completion of the agreed outputs from each cluster.

They will also have 3 days of support from a SEND consultant. This will be provided as a blend of face-to-face and remote support, as negotiated with the consultant, to help them plan, deliver and report on their project. The SEND consultants will themselves be part of a network of experts who will be able to draw on the range of expertise within that network and make links between clusters, where helpful.

### **What is expected of cluster participants in return?**

Each cluster lead is expected to:

- Develop an agreed action plan with their cluster members
- Produce a brief interim progress report to a given template (November 2017)
- Co-ordinate production of a final output, either a case study or a resource or tool with explanatory information. Templates will be provided. (February 2018)
- Manage any payments to other cluster member organisations
- Share the work of the cluster at a regional dissemination event in March 2018, either in person or by appointing another cluster member to attend.

Each cluster member is expected to:

- Work collaboratively as part of a cluster to undertake the necessary actions to achieve the aims and objectives of the plan, meeting face-to-face as a full group at least once
- Engage with their supporting consultant
- Support the cluster lead to prepare for the dissemination event in March 2018.

### **What are the criteria against which applications will be considered?**

We will be looking to achieve a spread of clusters across the nine English regions, involving a range of provider types, with a range of different focuses, and involving learners with different types of need engaged in different types of study programme.

Successful applicants will clearly indicate:

- Why their project is needed
- How they will tackle the issue collaboratively to achieve planned outcomes and outputs
- That they have senior management support from all providers represented.



Successful projects will:

- Address issues that are relevant both to and beyond the cluster organisations themselves
- Take creative approaches to finding and implementing solutions
- Have a strong element of learner voice, wherever relevant.

### **What are the key dates?**

31 July	Deadline for submitting cluster applications
4 September	Notification of successful applicants
6 October	Submission of agreed action plan
30 November	Submission of interim report
28 February	Submission of final output (case study or resource)
March 2018	Dissemination events

### **How do I apply?**

Use the following link to access the online application form:

<https://goo.gl/forms/6eqq4pvlJQuF6TA02>

Contact [rob.shaw@acer.ac.uk](mailto:rob.shaw@acer.ac.uk) if you have questions about the application process.