

Andrew Gadd
Whatdotheyknow
By email
request-46079-1cb1db69@whatdotheyknow.com

29 September 2010

Dear Andrew Gadd

Re: Request for Information ref 01-09-2010

The Skills Funding Agency has undertaken a search and has identified holding the following information which provides an explanation of the procurement procedures followed for the award of Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) funding to providers including The Manchester College.

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS FOR OLASS

The procurement for OLASS 3 was commenced on 31 January 2008 with the publication of contract notice for the provision of education and training for Adults and Young People in Custody. The contract notice for the Careers Information and Advice Service was published on 9 October 2009 and the invitation to Tender (ITT) was issued on 17 November 2008. The provision of education and training for adults and young people in custody is a part B service under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (the Regulations) and the Careers Information and Advice Service is a part A service under the Regulations. The LSC is the contracting authority for all the OLASS services.

Following a pre-qualification questionnaire the LSC issued ITTs for Adults and Young People in Custody in October 2008 and the Careers Information and Advice Service on 17 November 2008 to all those who had qualified for each of the three elements of the OLASS service. All those invited to tender were provided with the following:

- Read me First Document which set out the instructions for tender. Paragraph 33 of this document set out the 5 criteria against which the tenders would be evaluated and informed organisations that all criteria had equal weighting for evaluation purposes. (attached to email)

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- A document providing policy background and context for tendering organisations. (attached to email)
- An invitation to tender (ITT) for each of the three elements of the service. The Adults in Custody ITT contained the same specification but the units of procurement differed between the regions. They ranged from one unit of procurement to three based on the number and types of custodial establishments in each region. The Young Offenders in Custody ITT had no regional differences neither did the Careers Information and Advice ITT. (Adult spec and Young Peoples spec are attached to email. NB The wording was the same across the regions but the copy of the Young Peoples spec is the one issued in the North West).
- Offender Skills Curriculum Area Reviews and Regional Profiles for each region where they had been invited to tender

Further information was provided to those who had been invited to tender at 6 Tender Roadshows held across England and all those organisations which had been invited to tender were allowed to send two delegates. Responses to questions raised at the roadshows, and throughout the tendering process, were collated and provided to all those who had been invited to tender.

Tenderers were also given the opportunity to make visits to prison establishments during the period allowed for preparation of the tender.

In addition, the LSC produced a Prospectus on Developing the Offender Learning and Skills Service in September 2007 on which it consulted all stakeholders and a response to that consultation which were available to all prospective tenderers. The OLASS website holds information on the service including the Prospectus see link below:

<http://olass.skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/prospectus>

The closing date for receipt of tenders for Adults and Young People in Custody was 12 December 2008 and for the Careers Information and Advice Service was 9 January 2009. All questions were marked out of 12. Following evaluation of tenderers responses to the questions those who had scored the highest were invited to make a presentation which was scored separately. The two scores were added together to determine which of the tenderers was the preferred bidder.

TRANSPARENCY

As set out above the LSC set out in the ITT the five criteria against which the tenders would be evaluated. These were:

- Delivery of the service
- Partnership working
- Employability agenda
- Value for money
- Added value to the learner and the Service

All these criteria were equally weighted. The questions set out in the ITT were intended to enable bidders to demonstrate how their bid met these criteria. All the questions were equally weighted.

Evaluation panels comprised of members of the Learning and Skills Council and the National Offender Management Service.

Based on the above process the contracts were awarded to the bids with the highest scores.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you have not been satisfied with the handling of your request, we maintain a complaint-handling procedure in accordance with section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Details of the complaints procedure are available on our website at:

<http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/foi.htm>

If you complain to us and remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you can write to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). Full details of the Complaints Procedure are held on the ICO website at:

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints.aspx>

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Manager

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