



National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities

Invitation to Tender:

External evaluation of transitional residential learning for young people with disabilities.

Deadline for receipt of tender proposals: 6th April 2020

Estimated Contract Value: circa. £15,000

Contract Start Date: April 2020

Contract End Date: September 2020

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1. Overview

National Star wishes to commission an appropriate consultant(s) to conduct an evaluation of the transitional residential accommodation aspect of National Star's provision, areas of interest are:

- what are the experiences and outcomes learners gain from a residential placement? How do these relate to the long term living opportunities available to young people with disabilities?
- does the residential experience improve transition into long term living options away from the family home? Are there key indicators for a successful transition?
- does the personal development young people experience as part of a transitional residential experience influence their ability to direct / comment on the care services they receive in their long term living option?
- do learners experience a change in their ability to manage their own health? What impact does this have for their long term use of health services?
- do learners experience a change in their support requirements? What impact does this change have for the long term use of social care services?

2. Background

National Star

National Star College is recognised as a national centre of excellence and rated by both Ofsted and CQC in 2018 as an outstanding specialist provider of residential education and personal development opportunities. The wider charity, National Star, provides long term residential living, therapeutic, health and day services, and Adult and Community Learning. There are main college sites in Cheltenham, Hereford and Pontypool, and partnerships with colleges and Local Authorities across England providing work related programmes into employment and travel training for people with disabilities. Continuing Professional Development Programmes specialising in teaching, learning, and care for people with additional needs are delivered by National Star throughout the UK to staff working in the education, health and social care sectors.

National Star provides education for young people and adults with disabilities from across the United Kingdom both as residential and day learners. The College provides a range of person centred programmes and services for learners with profound and complex needs to promote inclusion and enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations. Learners have physical disabilities and/or acquired brain injuries, alongside associated learning, behavioural, sensory and medical difficulties. Most have complex learning difficulties and disabilities. The number of students with these very complex needs who are given the opportunity to access education is increasing year on year through the education, health, and therapeutic services the college is able to provide.

The activity we are asking you to evaluate.

Transitional residential programmes as part of learners wider post -16 learning programme:

National Star College provides a range of person centred programmes and services for students with profound and complex needs to enable them to achieve their goals regardless of their disability. We provide meaningful learning experiences which enable people to develop skills that are important to them and their future lives, including communication, self-advocacy, and skills for independence. All learners' long term goals and medium term targets are individualised to focus on the priority areas for learning to meet their aspirations and expectations for long term activity and living situations. The goals and targets are also aligned to a learner's agreed Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan).

For many young people, coming to National Star as a residential learner is their first major step towards adulthood and independence. Moving away from home can be difficult for a young person but it is even more challenging if that young person has complex health and care needs, or if a regular routine is crucial in managing behaviour and anxiety. Residential staff provide support in life skills sessions to ensure high quality, integrated learning. With residential, educational, and therapy teams working together, vital independence skills, including numeracy, literacy and life skills, are part of the learner's experience, from the time they wake in the morning through to bedtime.

Inspectors from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) rated our residential accommodation at Ullenwood (November 2017) and at Elizabeth House in Gloucester (April 2018) as 'outstanding'. The reports highlighted that the personalised care plans result in improvements to learners' health, wellbeing and abilities, leading them to achieve greater independence. Learners have a voice in their own care. Care and health staff work with each young person to develop their independence skills. Residential staff are an integral part of learner reviews where their strong relationships and knowledge of the learner allows them to give valuable feedback in both academic and personal progress. These staff then work closely with external professionals to ensure that transition in and out of National Star is smooth, and that learners' wellbeing is maintained at a high level throughout their time with us.

Progress for learners includes moving on to independent living either in a residential setting or supported living, usually with an associated care package. Learners work towards this goal over the individual period of time they are with National Star with each programme being designed to enable the learner to achieve their aspirations regarding where they want to live and what they want to do. National Star gives them the skills and knowledge to engage in, and increase the influence, choice, and control they have over their lives and the activities in which they take part.

3. Purpose of Evaluation

The aim of procuring an independent evaluation is to provide a framework for cost benefit evaluation, external validation of data collection, and analysis in gathering qualitative data as an impartial third party. National Star believes that an independent evaluation of transitional accommodation, as part of learners' programmes, would provide an opportunity to reflect upon the achievements of the provision to date and inform our thinking and enable us to further develop our highly specialised residential offers to increase the impact of National Star's provision. It would also provide evidence and allow us to challenge the current prevalent discourse around the cost / benefit of specialist residential provision.

4. Key Requirements

The overall aim of the evaluation is to consider the difference transitional residential programmes make to young people with disabilities when planning for, and moving into, adult life.

We require the consultants to assess the:

- **cost/benefit of transitional residential provision including the outcomes achieved for young people. Bidders should include which methodology they intend to use to evidence cost/benefit.**

Consultants should capture and evidence as a minimum:

- the experiences and outcomes learners gain from a residential placement and how these relate to the long term living opportunities available to young people with disabilities
- whether the residential experience improves transition into long term living options away from the family home. Are there key indicators for a successful transition?
- whether the personal development young people experience as part of a transitional residential experience influences their ability to direct / comment on the care services they receive in their long term living option
- whether learners experience a change in their ability to manage their own health, and what impact this has for their long term use of health services

- whether learners experience a change in their support requirements, and what impact this change has for their long term use of social care services

Approach

Bidders are asked to outline the research methodology they consider will be robust and most effective in meeting the specification set out above. However it is anticipated that the successful tenderer will undertake the following activities as a minimum:

- proposals that include the use of a peer researcher
- desk based analysis including review of extensive existing datasets
- interviews with residential management teams and senior managers responsible for the delivery of provision
- interviews / consultation with staff who are delivering the programmes in residence, this could be workshops, focus groups, telephone interviews, surveying etc.
- interviews, consultation with young people with disabilities who currently reside with us, or recent leavers. Please note suitability of data collection method to be directed/supported by college staff teams.
- Interviews, consultations with families and carers, this could be workshops, focus groups, telephone interviews, surveying etc.
- develop assumptions and models to assess the attribution of impacts and produce value equivalents, for example Costs/ Benefits Analysis, SROI
- develop a range of case studies illustrating young people's journeys, to capture specific examples of impacts and to recognise the diversity of young people taking part in programmes.

Elements to be included in the Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will need to:

- demonstrate qualitative and quantitative evidence of the journey for young people with disabilities whose programmes include a transitional residential experience
- evidence of changes in young people with complex disabilities as they move through residential education into adult life.
- impact evaluation including Cost / Benefit Analysis or alternative proposed methods

- strengths and weaknesses of data collection, robustness of evidence and recommendations for improvements.

Outputs

It is anticipated that the successful tenderer will produce the following outputs as a minimum:

- an Evaluation Project Plan or a Project Inception Document.
- regular findings and updated reports to identify progress and support process improvements
- a draft final report and a final report with case studies and a **short standalone executive summary which could be presented as infographics (or other) format.**
- present key evaluation findings to the Project Team and operational delivery teams.
- a set of research data, to be stored in a readily accessible electronic format such as Excel, following agreed GDPR Guidelines.

Respondents are asked to consider other outputs they feel would be useful to support the evaluation or dissemination activity. Outputs will be agreed and itemised within the contract for the services and may be varied by agreement over the course of the programme.

The audiences for the research are likely to include young people with disabilities, their parents, Department for Education, Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and Local Authorities.

5. Research Management

We expect the research to begin on the 1st May 2020 and to be completed by the end of September 2020. The draft final report shall be submitted by the 18th September 2020 to allow for any revisions before the end of September 2020.

The indicative budget for this piece of work is circa £15,000 not inclusive of VAT. The payment schedule will be 20% at the start of the evaluation. Other payments will be agreed against completion of agreed key milestones.

National Star are seeking tenders from external evaluators and research agencies with experience of working with people with disabilities, and programme evaluation, to undertake this work. Tenders may bid individually or in partnership with other organisations, we ask that one organisation takes the lead role and is clearly identifiable in the tender response. The research will be managed on a day to day basis by a named

contact in National Star. An agreed schedule of face to face and telephone meetings will be agreed and outlined in the contract.

The successful bidder will be provided with:

- introduction to National Star and a brief overview of the organisation
- all background information about the residential provision
- internal self-assessment reports and evaluations
- information datasets for young people taking part in programmes that include transitional residential accommodation (GDPR regulations to apply)
- information datasets for young people who have recently left programmes that include transitional residential accommodation (GDPR regulations to apply)
- Contact details of all relevant stakeholders
- a single point of contact at National Star

Reports produced will belong to National Star and will not be used for any purpose other than with written consent of National Star.

Bidders must declare any known or potential conflicts of interest, for example links to or relationships with volunteers, students, employees or partners. Where a conflict is declared National Star will consider how it may be managed.

Bidders will, as a minimum:

- comply with agreed policies and procedures whilst carrying out this work, including Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity.
- ensure that all information provided will be treated with the strictest confidence, taking into account data protection (GDPR) and security principles where appropriate.
- ensure that all member of the evaluation team have up to date DBS disclosures.

Timescales

Key Activity	Dates
Invitation to Tender published	9 th March 2020
Open to clarification questions	9 th March – 27 th March 2020
Tender Submission Deadline	5pm 6 th April 2020
Interviews (if required)	13 th April 2020
Announcement of successful bidder	20 th April 2020

Commencement of work	27 th April 2020
Draft Final Report and presentation to Senior Team and operational programme team	21 st August 2020
Submission of final report	18 th September 2020

6. Submission of proposals

Please submit a proposal containing the following sections:

- contact details and introduction
- technical section including:
 - understanding the brief / requirement
 - a detailed methodology for undertaking the evaluation
 - project management including approach to quality management and risk assessment
 - timescales and flexibility
- expertise section including:
 - evaluation team and CVs including experience, area of expertise and role within the evaluation
 - demonstrable experience undertaking similar evaluations on the same scale for a similar budget and timescale
 - conducting evaluations with harder to reach groups and young people with disabilities, understanding the challenges of engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders
 - ability to write clear and impactful reports and case studies for a variety of audiences
 - working in close partnership with a commissioning organisation
 - 2 Referees that may be contacted prior to commissioning
- pricing and Added Value Section.
- insurance confirmation of Public Liability Insurance (£2m), Employers Liability (£2m) and Professional Indemnity (£2m).

Please submit your proposal in Microsoft Word (.doc or . docx) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. Please submit in font size 12.

The closing date for submission of proposals is 5pm on 6th April 2020. Proposals must be sent electronically via email to:

Davina Jones
National Lead Policy and Research
National Star
Ullenwood

Cheltenham
GL53 9QU
d.jones@nationalstar.org

Proposals submitted after this time will not be considered.

Any clarification questions should be sent to Davina Jones d.jones@nationalstar.org by 10am on the 27th March 2020. All responses will be made available at <https://www.nationalstar.org/residentialimpactganda>

7. Evaluation of Proposals

A maximum score of 100 points will be available. For the:

- technical section evaluation a maximum score of 50 points will be available
- expertise section a maximum score of 40 points will be available
- pricing section evaluation a maximum score of 10 points will be available

The rating based on the detail provided and evidence of competency to deliver will then be multiplied to a weighting to provide points scored out of the maximum points available.

Technical Section Evaluation

For the technical Section a maximum score of 50 points will be available.

Category	Maximum points available
Understanding the requirement	15
Approach and methodology	25
Risk Assessment including deadline management	5
Timescales and flexibility	5

The following scoring criteria will be used for each category in the technical section.

Rating		Detail	Competency to Deliver
0	Rejected	No relevant detail	Unable to assess due to lack of evidence
1	Poor	Little relevant detail	Little evidence of competency
2	Partial	Contains some relevant detail, but incomplete	Some evidence of competency

3	Satisfactory	Complete but basic	Sufficient evidence of competency
4	Good	A good level of detail, which evidences that the organisation can meet the needs of the programme	Good evidence of competency
5	Excellent	An impressive level of detail, which clearly evidences that the applicant can fulfil the needs of the programme and add value	Excellent evidence of competency.

Expertise Section Evaluation

This section should, as a minimum, include CVs for all team member(s) and set out responsibilities and management roles within the team. The scoring will principally consider those team members with key responsibilities or who are shown to have a key role in delivery. The team members will also be considered against previous evaluation experience.

For the expertise section a maximum score of 40 points will be available.

Price and Added Value section evaluation

For the pricing section evaluation a maximum score of 10 points will be available.

The pricing section must show separately the number of days and a day rate for each team member, as well as the total number of days offered in your tender. Proposals should also consider added value in relation to this evaluation.