



Title: Invitation to Tender – Power Up Agency Evaluation

Date: January 2023

Flexi Job Apprenticeship Agencies

Flexi Job Apprenticeship Agencies make it possible for organisations that are not able to, or do not wish to, to host apprentices without the liability of directly employing them. In such instances, formal employment is provided by a Flexi-Job Apprenticeship Agency, which issues the contract of employment to the apprentice, managing all associated HR and payroll administration. Such providers were previously referred to as Apprenticeship Training Agencies (ATAs).

Through the flexi-job apprenticeship offer, registered agency providers might also seek to provide broader support to employers and apprentices to aid the successful creation and completion of apprenticeships.

The Northern Flexi Job Apprenticeship Agency (Power Up Agency)

The Department for Education (DfE) launched the flexi-job apprenticeship scheme in August 2021 following a consultation with employers, sector bodies, apprentices, and wider stakeholders. Flexi-job apprenticeships have been designed to ensure those sectors and occupations that are dominated by short-term contracts or other non-standard employment models are able to access the benefits of apprenticeships.

Non-standard and short-term contracts are typical within parts of the creative industries, a sector that's identified as being key to the UK's economic growth as set out in the Government's [Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth](#) paper.

The Creative Industries are also experiencing skills gaps and shortages, compounded by a workforce that is failing to be representative of the wider working population, meaning entry into the sector must be diversified to enable the broadest pool of talent to progress into it.

With the support of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS), Arts Council England (ACE), and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, a new Northern Flexi Job Apprenticeship Agency (NFJAA) is being piloted across the North of England (the North West, Yorkshire and Humber, and the North East) for the creative industries. Led by the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Power Up Agency will train 50 apprentices to work on creative projects with partner organisations to develop skills in project management, budgeting and finance, stakeholder management, and planning with a view to kickstarting their careers in the creative industries.

The NFJAA is cited in the NP11 Place Strategy for the North as a mechanism for developing and feeding new talent into the creative industries across the North of England.

About the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

The Greater Manchester Chamber is the largest Chamber of Commerce in the UK. An independent, not-for-profit private company, working to create a better business environment for its members through first-class tailored business services and networking opportunities. The Chamber uses its influence with local and central government to lobby on behalf of its members, acting as the voice of the Greater Manchester business community.

The Chamber covers Manchester, Salford, Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Trafford, Tameside and Stockport, is an accredited member of the British Chambers of Commerce (one of only 53 chambers across the UK) and was founded in 2004 (but has roots going back to 1794).

Evaluation Aims and Objectives

Power Up Agency seeks an independent evaluator to aid the objective collection and collation of both quantitative and qualitative information throughout the life of the initial flexi-job pilot, running between October 2022 – September 2023. The aim is to capture learning and insights to inform the future of the NFJAA and its offer, to support the development of new talent for the creative industries across the North of England, and to understand the perceived impact of the NFJAA pilot programme on training providers, employers, and apprentices. We want the evaluation to explore:

- Participants' views and experiences of the NFJAA programme and working with Power Up Agency
- The extent to which Power Up Agency successfully aids the creation and delivery of apprenticeships in the Creative





industries across the North of England

- Whether Power Up Agency has supported, or has the potential to support, a positive shift in the sector's attitude towards apprenticeships as a viable route for training future entrants to the sector, and any other behaviour change the programme has brought about
- Whether Power Up Agency has the potential to effect greater diversity across the Creative Industries workforce in the North of England
- Wider challenges and barriers to the sustainability and rollout of Power Up Agency and the mechanisms needed to overcome them

It is expected that the independent evaluator will inform the most appropriate methodologies to be used to collect, collate, and report against the above but expects that some, or all, of the following methods will be adopted:

- Baseline and follow up surveys (to measure before and after movement)
- Depth interviews, to capture qualitative information including experiential data, and before/after movement
- Focus groups for different participants/stakeholders including apprentices, training providers, and employers

It is also expected that the following approach will be explored:

Stage 1: Inception, scoping and surveying

At the outset of the evaluation, Power Up Agency will hold a scoping meeting with the appointed evaluator. The purpose of this will be to develop a fuller understanding of the aims and objectives of the NFJAS. It is expected that a detailed project plan will be developed following the meeting which will be used to monitor progress throughout the contract.

During this stage, we would expect coded baseline and follow up surveys to be created and signed off for use throughout the pilot for both apprentices and employer hosts (who will provide the on-the-job learning for apprentices).

Stage 2: Primary qualitative research

We would expect up to 10 telephone/video depth interviews to be conducted to help flexibly capture the views and experiences of training providers, employers and/or apprentices. We'd expect a recall question to be included in the employer and apprentice baseline survey which seeks permission to participate - those who consent to being contacted will form the basis of the sample frame at this stage.

Stage 3: Analysis and reporting

The evaluator will collate survey responses and depth interview responses. Insights from the quantitative and qualitative data will be summarised in a short report (no more than 6 pages) which will include evidence-informed recommendations to advise on next steps for Power Up Agency.

Project Outputs

The outputs for this evaluation project are:

- a final standalone report, the format of which will be agreed once the contract is awarded, but is expected to include a clear set of recommendations for the progression of Power Up Agency
- Presentation of research findings in a clear and concise method (such as an infographic)
- an annex of data and information tables from any surveys and interviews undertaken

Intellectual Property

All Intellectual Property Rights in pre-existing works used by the evaluators in delivering this project will remain with the





researchers.

We would expect the researchers to grant The Chamber, DCMS, ACE and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority a perpetual, non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to use, reproduce, copy, modify, adapt, and make available the pre-existing works in connection with the NFJAA.

Project Management

Power Up Agency will Project Manage this evaluation.

The NFJAS evaluation steering group, to be made up of Project Director, Policy Associate, Project Manager, funding (DCMS) representative and employer representative will collectively offer guidance throughout the pilot and will meet with nominated representatives from the selected evaluator on a regular basis (frequency to be agreed) to monitor progress, understand findings and flex approaches where needed. The evaluation steering group will ensure the objectives set out in this invitation to tender are being met.

Required skills and experience of the evaluator

Tenderers should be able to demonstrate skills and experience in:

- quantitative and qualitative research for place specific skills programmes designed to reach multiple stakeholders
- using appropriate software packages for quantitative statistical analysis, qualitative analysis and innovative approaches to addressing complex research questions
- ability to present research findings coherently to a range of audiences
- ability to co-ordinate and consult with a range of stakeholders
- understanding of the creative industries and the policy landscape around skills, apprenticeships, and economic growth across the North of England
- track record of undertaking research or evaluation that directly impacts on policy change and/or decision makers

Project Timetable

The proposed overall timetable is:

Brief to tender: w/c 16th January 2023

Proposals received: 5pm 3rd February 2023

Panel Interviews: w/c 13th February 2023

Evaluator appointed: w/c 27th February 2023

Inception meeting: w/c 6th March 2023

Final Report Submitted: September 2023

Regular communication between the evaluator and a Power Up Agency representative is expected throughout the life of the evaluation contract.

Tender Response Requirements

All tender proposals must clearly identify how you meet the requirements of this brief. Your proposal should include:

- Understanding of the brief
- Research methodology and rationale
- Outputs
- Timetable





Greater Manchester
Chamber of Commerce

- Named personnel and responsibilities including abridged CVs of the proposed evaluation team and relevant experience
- Budget breakdown and invoice profile

We expect tender responses to be no more than 6 pages long. Abridged CVs can be appended to this if preferred.

Pricing/Budget and billing

The budget available for this project is up to £10,000 inclusive of VAT and all travel and other expenses. Value for money is part of our assessment criteria.

A contract will be awarded for the length of the project, from initiation to September 2023.

Contact Details

Please email your tender response to Jocelyne Underwood at jocelyne.underwood@gmchamber.co.uk with the subject title of 'Power Up Agency Evaluation Proposal' by **5pm on Friday 3rd February 2023**.

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