

# Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership

## Invitation to Tender Peer Network Programme

March 2021

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## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. Peer Networks is a national initiative that has been delivered extremely successfully on a local level through Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and its growth hub, Dorset Gateway. The Peer Networks Programme is funded by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in response to a commitment made in the 2019 Business Productivity Review.
- 1.2. The success of Dorset LEP in managing the Peer Networks programme, has led to additional funding and we are now looking for delivery partners for this.
- 1.3. The programme will see the creation of a series of peer networks (cohorts) through the Growth Hub network, with each group consisting of 8-11 owners or managers from the **SME business community** participating in each network. Led by a qualified and/or suitably experienced facilitator using the Action Learning Set methodology, these peer networks will typically meet fortnightly as part of delivering 18 hours of action learning through 2-3-hour sessions.
- 1.4. Individual **one-to-one support** (coaching, mentoring, or advice) will also be provided either directly by the programme, or from other existing schemes to help to implement and manage change. Active involvement in the peer network will enhance the leadership capabilities, knowledge and confidence of business owners and entrepreneurs within a local region. It will help build regional connectivity and strength within the SME business community.
- 1.5. The programme's longer-term aims are focused on reducing the UK productivity gap by helping business leaders find practical solutions to strategic and operational challenges.
- 1.6. It also forms part of the UK Government response to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in international trading conditions, seeking to improve the resilience of SMEs, their capability to adapt their business models to the "new normal" and position themselves for future success, driving longer-term productivity gains.

## 2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. The UK has a longstanding productivity challenge; even before the financial crisis labour productivity was on average 13% higher in the rest of the G7 countries compared to the UK. This 'Productivity Gap' has since been exacerbated by the UK's unusually weak productivity growth since the financial crisis in 2007-2008.
- 2.2. The UK's overall future productivity growth will, in large part, be determined by the performance of individual businesses. Whilst the UK has some of the most productive businesses in the world, we also have many low productivity businesses.

- 2.3. The 2019 Business Productivity Review found that those businesses that adopt formal management practices are more likely to achieve higher turnover, employment levels and productivity growth. There is a broad base of evidence that suggests that businesses that seek external advice or undertake formal training are more likely to improve their overall business performance.
- 2.4. Whilst there is a large private sector market for advice and training, SMEs report issues with a lack of awareness of the help available and a lack of trust in the quality of provision. Affordability is also a challenge.
- 2.5. The Business Productivity Review reported that businesses are most likely to look to trusted peers and professional networks for advice first, often leveraging their networks and existing relationships with intermediaries to signpost and help them to navigate the business support market.
- 2.6. Evidence supplied to the review by the OECD supports this previous finding that businesses often prefer to take advice from trusted sources, and they look to their existing networks – such as their peers or their accountants – when taking advice. Businesses also usually take advice at trigger points, such as when faced with challenges requiring change, including both competitive pressures and opportunities.
- 2.7. In addition, there is robust evidence that demonstrates the importance of business managers learning from peers, particularly in their local area. Peer networks are integral for trusted advice. They help businesses navigate multiple stages in the business change cycle, can be called on by businesses time and again, and through structured conversations they can be focused to support the specific issues faced by businesses.

### **3. COMMISSION**

- 3.1. Dorset LEP is seeking to appoint providers to deliver key elements of the Peer Network Programme. This is expected to support the growth of at least a specified number of participants and SMEs, through the provisions of cohort groups, across the Dorset LEP area.
- 3.2. The provider(s) will need to clearly demonstrate in their tender response how they will meet the required deliverables within the available budget and timescales.
- 3.3. Dorset LEP will commission up to 20 (twenty) individual cohorts/peer networks (as defined in paragraph 1.3 above). Applications will be invited by those who are seeking to deliver between two and ten cohorts.
- 3.4. Dorset LEP is keen to ensure that these networks are aligned with Dorset's Local Industrial Strategy and capitalises on existing and emerging growth

sectors and capabilities. As a result, we are particularly interested to receive proposals that seek to work in/with areas such as the following:

Potential delivery areas		
Sectors	Themes	Geography
Engineering and manufacturing	Leadership and management	Weymouth and Portland
Food and drink	Young enterprise	North Dorset
Agritech and aquaculture	Rural enterprise	Town centres and high streets
Defence and security	Women Leaders	Business Improvement Districts
Tourism and culture	One Health	
Digital and creative	Exporters	
Financial and professional services	Clean growth	
Health and care	High growth SMEs and scale-ups	
Retail		
Marine and aerospace		
<p><b>Please note</b>, this is an indicative list – not an exhaustive list – and we will welcome proposals in addition to these suggested areas.</p>		

- 3.5. The programme will be supported by a playbook (see paragraph 4.4) – a user handbook to aid the successful roll-out and implementation of the programme. It aims to provide a common resource to support local delivery partners and will help ensure there is a suitable level of national consistency in how the programme is delivered, whilst allowing for a degree of local flexibility as appropriate. The relevant information will be provided to the successful provider(s).
- 3.6. The successful provider(s) will be required to:
- detail how they will deliver the programme virtually using video conference technologies;
  - detail how they would deliver the programme face-to-face if COVID-19 restrictions permit;
  - set out how suitable SMEs will be identified, recruited, and enrolled;
  - detail how many peer networks will be delivered across the duration of the contract period;
  - detail how many participants (SMEs) will be supported across the duration of the contract period;
  - set out how they will ensure optimal cohort mix and balance within a group;
  - explain how the peer networks will be successfully managed, run and facilitated;
  - ensure that SME participants are representative businesses within the Dorset LEP area;

- detail how the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be met, how evidence and record keeping requirements will be undertaken, and how the external evaluation process will be supported;
  - provide detailed costing associated the service delivery to ensure that the budget is utilised effectively, provides good value for money and a strong economic return.
- 3.7. Critical to the success of this programme is the use of qualified and suitably experienced facilitators deploying an action learning style to drive the peer network and deliver high-impact outcomes. The facilitator(s) should have the skills, experience and qualifications needed to successfully facilitate sessions with small business owners. The provider must be able to clearly demonstrate and evidence a track record in facilitation and show how the facilitator(s) they plan to deploy meet the facilitator specification provided as part of the tender documentation.
- 3.8. In addition, the provider must be also able to demonstrate the successful delivery of similar support to SME business owners, entrepreneurs, and managers. The provider should be able to demonstrate an excellent understanding of the specific needs, characteristics and issues faced by SMEs within the Dorset LEP area, and a detailed understanding of the range of business issues associated with growth, productivity, innovation, strategy, people and skills, driving change, resilience, technology adoption – and how to address these.
- 3.9. Complementing the delivery of facilitated action learning sessions will be targeted one-to-one support for individual participants this will add value to the professional and personal growth achieved through the group sessions. The provider(s) are required to deliver this one to-one support, which can come in the form of coaching, mentoring or advice and will need to be delivered by suitably qualified and experienced individuals to SME business owners or senior leaders. This one to one support element will be specific to the individual needs of each participant, so the provision may need to address a wide range of areas across the one to one support spectrum.
- 3.10. The provider(s) must be able to clearly demonstrate and evidence a track record in one-to-one support and show how the Individuals they plan to deploy meet the specification provided as part of the tender documentation. They must also provide an overview of the experience and skills of those providing one-to-one support, detailing the coaching, mentoring, or advice approaches deployed, what a typical one-to-one session resembles, and how the impact and outcome for the individual and the organisation would be measured in line with KPI and evaluation requirements.
- 3.11. The provider(s) will need to demonstrate that they understand the business support landscape within Dorset to ensure that the service provided will complement and add value to the existing support currently available within the county to help SMEs.

- 3.12. Providers are expected to provide all platforms, equipment and materials required for the delivery of the programme, unless agreed in advance through specific arrangements.
- 3.13. The expectation is that all (or a vast majority) of the sessions will run virtually as a result of the ongoing uncertainty regarding COVID-19. The wider use of digital technologies to support the efficient, effective and timely administration and delivery of activities is encouraged, and providers are recommended to demonstrate how they can meet this requirement.

#### 4. DELIVERY MODEL

- 4.1 The programme invites leaders and senior managers from the SME business community who meet the eligibility criteria below to participate in a local peer network that will meet regularly over several months.
- 4.2 Target SMEs profile:

Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
In operation for 1 year+	Scale ups
At least 5 employees	Exporters and potential exporters
An aspiration to improve	
A turnover of at least £100,000	
In operation for 1 year+	

- 4.3 The provider will need to carefully consider who is recruited to minimise participant drop out.
- 4.4 The provider will be expected to deliver against the playbook. In summary, the delivery model is:

<b>Target cohort size:</b>	11 business owners or senior decision makers per cohort. No cohort will be able to start with less than 11 participants.
<b>Number of sessions:</b>	Led by a qualified and/or suitably experienced facilitator using the action learning methodology, the number of sessions will be determined by local needs. Each cohort must meet for a total of 18 hours.
<b>Frequency of sessions:</b>	Typically, fortnightly (determined by local needs). All group sessions must aim to be completed by 28 February 2022. Any variations to this must be discussed with and agreed by Dorset LEP.
<b>Location:</b>	Given the uncertainty relating to restrictions and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the sessions will be delivered virtually. As restrictions and guidance are changed, face-to-face delivery may be considered where there is a demand for this.

<b>Topic selection:</b>	<p>Topics could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finance</li> <li>▪ HR</li> <li>▪ Sales and Marketing</li> <li>▪ Adjusting to social distancing</li> <li>▪ Business Model Innovation</li> <li>▪ Change Management</li> <li>▪ Embedding formal management processes and systems</li> <li>▪ Digital (including adoption and implementation of technology, cyber security)</li> <li>▪ Use of data to drive value in the business</li> <li>▪ EU transition</li> <li>▪ Net zero</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology:</b>	Each session must be facilitated according to action learning principals by a suitably qualified or experienced facilitator.
<b>Added support:</b>	Individual one-to-one support relevant to identified businesses needs must also be provided. This must be a minimum of 3.5 hours. This requirement can be met from within the programme, or through other existing local activities. This support must be completed by 31 March 2022.

4.5 Each of the sessions will be led by a qualified and/or suitably experienced facilitator utilising the action learning set (ALS) methodology. All facilitators must be suitably qualified to facilitate ALS by training and/or through substantial experience. the ALS methodology is a highly effective way of running peer networks and provides a common framework to ensure national consistency across all the local groups. The facilitator will lead and host the sessions (using video conference platforms such as MS Teams, WebEx, Zoom, etc.), and use principles of action learning to successfully facilitate each one.

## 5. KEY STAGES & DELIVERABLES

5.1. The key deliverables are to support the development and delivery of Peer Networks within the Dorset LEP area.

5.2. Key deliverables for the Peer Networks Programme include:

### **Management:**

- A robust application process for recruiting appropriate businesses/participants
- A robust model for undertaking the 'change in attitudes' survey of businesses supported on the programme
- Meeting programme quality assurance requirements to be set out in a quality assurance framework



- Commitment to undertake monthly reporting, including using a programme microsite for network KPI capture – see Annex 3 for details.

#### **Engagement:**

- Number of participants entering the programme
- Number of cohorts built
- Number of participants receiving a minimum of 6 hours' facilitation
- Number of participants receiving a minimum of 12 hours' facilitation
- Number of participants receiving a minimum of 18 hours' facilitation

#### **Results:**

- Number of cohorts completing 18 hours of action learning
- Number of individuals completing 18 hours of action learning
- Number of participants who have received a minimum of 3.5 hours' one-to-one support through the programme
- Number of participants who have received a minimum of 3.5 hours' one-to-one support outside the programme
- Number of participants who have received both – 18 hours of action learning sessions and a minimum of 3.5 hours' one-to-one support
- Commitment to report a summary of participant support received, and signposting and referral details

#### **Provision of Facilitators**

Key regional deliverables for the Peer Network Programme include:

- Provision of experienced facilitators with the necessary levels of flexibility and availability that can deliver a minimum of 18 hours' action learning facilitation per cohort, pre-cohort participant familiarisation, in-cohort insight gathering and reporting, and post-cohort review and handover activities
- Undertake programme orientation
- Meeting programme quality assurance requirements to be set out in a quality assurance framework
- Percentage of participants remaining on programme
- Completion of the facilitator notes post session

## **6. BUDGET**

- 6.1. The budget allocated is up to £13,700 per cohort, excluding VAT.
- 6.2. For applicants looking to deliver more than one cohort, they will need to clearly provide a breakdown of costs per cohort and identify any cost savings generated as a result of delivering these networks at scale.
- 6.3. Tenders should be submitted clearly setting out, individually for each member of the proposed team, the hourly rate at which they will be charged (exclusive of VAT).
- 6.4. Tenders should also show the proposed hourly rates if the total value of work charged exceeds £25,000. Tenders should be valid for six months.

## **7. CONTRACT MANAGEMENT & MONITORING**

- 7.1. The work will be overseen by the Dorset LEP Business Engagement and Dorset Gateway (BEDG) Manager and the Dorset LEP's Performance and Investment Committee (PIC).
- 7.2. The provider(s) should nominate a dedicated point of contact to act as Contract Manager to oversee the work and liaise with and report into the BEDG Manager.
- 7.3. As part of the regular reporting arrangements, the provider(s) will need to attend scheduled meetings with the BEDG Manager to assess the ongoing performance and development of the programme.
- 7.4. Dorset LEP requires a high level of accuracy in this piece of work, particularly in relation to the data and management information provided. The provider's Contract Manager is responsible for ensuring the quality of the work and the accuracy of the information provided.
- 7.5. All activities in relation to the provision of Peer Network activity must have been completed by 31 March 2022. No activities will be funded beyond this date and any activities taking place beyond this date will not be paid for by Dorset LEP.

## **8. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- 8.1. Dorset LEP may exclude the Supplier if there is a conflict of interest which cannot be effectively remedied. The concept of a conflict of interest includes any situation where relevant staff members have, directly or indirectly, a financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise their impartiality and independence in the context of the procurement procedure.
- 8.2. Where there is any indication that a conflict of interest exists or may arise then it is the responsibility of the Supplier to inform Dorset LEP, detailing the conflict in the Supplier response to this tender.

## **9. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)**

- 9.1. Company data will be required to be collected by the Supplier and shared with Dorset LEP for evaluation and data archiving purposes. In respect of the contract, Dorset Gateway acts as data controller and the contracted supplier acts as data processor.
- 9.2. All information and data collected for the purposes of evaluation will be managed according to strict confidentiality requirements. All findings will be confidential, with data anonymised and aggregated for the purpose of reporting to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

All data will be presented in such a way that it does not allow any individual contact details will be shared without their prior consent.

## 10. TIMESCALES

Activity	Date
Invitation to Tender	08.03.21
Deadline for submissions	22.03.21
Assessment of responses received	by 26.03.21
Interviews	w/c 12.04.21
Inception meetings	w/c 19.04.21
Contract start date	19.04.21

- 10.1. The LEP reserves the right to cancel the tender process. No work is guaranteed to be awarded under the tender process and Dorset LEP is not responsible for any costs incurred as part of the bidding process.

## 11. ASSESSMENT

- 11.1. Tenders will be assessed using the following criteria and weightings and the weighted scores within each sub-criteria will be added together to arrive at the total score for this piece of work.

Question	Weighting
Understanding of requirement	20%
Experience of similar work and credibility with stakeholders	20%
Proposed approach to this work (including digital capability)	20%
Proposed team	20%
Pricing	20%

- 11.2. Tenders will be scored according to the below scheduled; scoring and comments are confidential and will not be shared with any applicants.

Score	Comment
4 - Excellent	Proposal meets, and in some places exceeds, the required standard
3 - Good	Proposal meets required standard
2 - Acceptable	Proposal meets the required standard in most respects, but is lacking or inconsistent in others
1 - Poor	Proposal falls short of expected standard
0 - Unacceptable	Significantly fails to meet required standard or does not provide the relevant answer

- 11.3. Clarifications may be sought in writing from the suppliers and scores adjusted accordingly. Full or partial proposals that in the opinion of the Dorset LEP are unrealistically low or not reasonable sustainable (in terms of Quality or Price) may be rejected.
- 11.4. Dorset LEP reserves the right not to make any appointment.

## 12. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

- 12.1. In order to be considered for selection, proposals to this tender must be received by **22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021, 16:00hrs**. Any individual or organisation responding to this tender must submit its response via email to the following:

Finn Morgan  
Business Engagement and Dorset Gateway Manager  
Email: [Gateway@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:Gateway@bournemouth.ac.uk)

- 12.2. Please note that submissions not received via the means identified in this document may not be accepted or considered. Any tender submitted and/or received after the time specified may not be considered and the Bidder will be advised of this. A template to help guide applications can be found in **Annex 1**. This template can be used for submissions if applicants wish to but it is not a requirement.

## 13. GUIDANCE

- 13.1. Take the time to read and understand this document. In particular, develop a strong understanding of the Commission section.
- 13.2. In structuring your proposal, consider how it will be evaluated.
- 13.3. Bidders are advised to allow adequate time for uploading documents and to dispatch the electronic response well in advance of the closing time to avoid any last-minute problems. Failure to submit the tender submission as required may result in the relevant Bidder being excluded from any further participation in this procurement.
- 13.4. If you require clarification or you have any questions, please direct these to:

Finn Morgan  
Business Engagement and Dorset Gateway Manager  
email [Gateway@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:Gateway@bournemouth.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0)1202 965755

## ANNEX 1: DORSET LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) PEER NETWORK: TENDER RESPONSE PROPOSAL

Please complete the following questions and email back to [Gateway@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:Gateway@bournemouth.ac.uk) by no later than **16:00 hrs on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021**. Documents received after this time will not be considered.

<b>Name of organisation</b> If part of a consortium/joint bid, please provide the name of the lead organisation	
<b>Website address</b> (where available)	
<b>Company/registered charity number</b> (where available)	
<b>Contact name</b>	
<b>Contact email address</b>	
<b>Contact phone number</b>	

<b>SECTION 1: PROGRAMME MOBILISATION AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Question 1:</b> Please outline how you would undertake the requirements of the tender brief.  <i>1,000 words</i>	
<b>Question 2:</b> Please provide details on your capability, knowledge and resource capacity to demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the tender brief.  <i>750 words</i>	
<b>Question 3:</b> Please give specific details about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your track record in the overall design and delivery of leadership and business growth programmes for the SME audience;</li> <li>• what innovative approaches you may use in the design and delivery of this programme; and</li> <li>• how you will engage and brief suppliers/associates involved in the delivery of the programme.</li> </ul> <i>750 words</i>	
<b>Question 4:</b> Please demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and experience of the local SME business environment and the challenges/opportunities for business growth.  <i>500 words</i>	
<b>Question 5:</b> Please provide details of the team that you will use to deliver the services, including the relevant qualifications and experience of the specific staff who will support the activity, including any specific accreditations held.	

500 words

**Question 6:** Please detail any additional value that you would derive for the participating SMEs and/or the Dorset LEP area. This should focus on any additional benefits that your proposals will deliver – above and beyond the core outputs and outcomes.

500 words

## **SECTION 2: PROVISION OF FACILITATORS**

**Question 7:** Please give specific details about your track record of supporting the development of SME Business Owners through leadership and business growth learning and development approaches and how you will manage the participant learning journey.

500 words

**Question 8:** Please give specific details about your track record of providing small group facilitation, especially at small/medium business owner levels.

500 words

**Question 9:** Please give specific details about your approach to action learning and the styles that you use, including your approach to the development of sustainable learning practices.

500 words

**Question 10:** Please provide details of facilitator(s) who are likely to be involved in this contract. Include any relevant qualifications and/or accreditations held by individuals, including whether they are fully employed or whether they have associate status.

500 words

## **SECTION 3: PROVISION OF ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT**

**Question 11:** Please give specific details about your track record of providing one-to-one coaching, mentoring or advice, especially at small/medium business owner levels.

500 words

## **SECTION 4: REFERENCES**

**Question 12:** Please provide details of up to three contracts/projects/assignments you have delivered within the last two years where you have provided similar services to those required by the Dorset LEP. These can be drawn from the public or private sector, or voluntary, charity or social enterprise (VCSE) that are relevant to our requirement. VCSEs may include samples of grant-funded work.

At final award stage, Dorset LEP may elect to contact any of the organisations for a reference and any references received (or declined) will be considered during the final evaluation. Your permission for Dorset LEP to seek a reference from the contacts provided above at any stage during the tender process is assumed.

Please provide the following information for each reference

#### **REFERENCE 1**

- Customer Name:
- Contact Name:
- Direct Telephone Number:
- Email Address:
- Contract Award Date:
- Contract Duration:
- Contract Valuation:
- Brief Description of Contract (Project):

#### **REFERENCE 2**

- Customer Name:
- Contact Name:
- Direct Telephone Number:
- Email Address:
- Contract Award Date:
- Contract Duration:
- Contract Valuation:
- Brief Description of Contract (Project):
- 

#### **REFERENCE 3**

- Customer Name:
- Contact Name:
- Direct Telephone Number:
- Email Address:
- Contract Award Date:
- Contract Duration:
- Contract Valuation:
- Brief Description of Contract (Project):

### **SECTION 5: BUDGET**

**Question 13:** Please provide a detailed budget for all costs involved in your proposal for the delivery of the project.

- The budget should give an indication of the cost incurred for the delivery of each individual aspect
- Please state your proposed stages of payment in delivery of the project
- **Please note:** all prices quoted in this document should be exclusive of VAT.



## **ANNEX 2: PEER NETWORK FACILITATOR PROFILE & ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT PROVIDER PROFILE**

This section provides an ideal profile for a Peer Network Facilitator. It also provides a profile for a Peer Network One-to-One Support Provider where such support is provided directly as part of the programme.

### **Peer Network Facilitator**

The Peer Networks programme will see the creation of series of peer networks in each LEP area, which will be delivered by Growth Hubs across England working in partnership with BEIS. Each will harness action learning to gain powerful results for the participants helping them to explore new thinking or opportunities, or find ways to overcome difficulties, or address other challenges.

The role of the facilitator is critical to the successful management and optimisation of an individual peer network – supporting the rapid building of trust and collaborative relationships between participants within the peer group (the cohort), providing strong leadership and direction, and driving the in-session action learning process to deliver tangible actions and solutions for each member of the group.

The facilitator has three main strands of responsibility:

1. Management and direction of their individual peer network(s) and its successful facilitation using the principles of action learning
2. Individual one-to-one communication with each participant to support reflection and provide signposting to the most appropriate local support
3. The capture of Information, data, and insight to help inform contract manager and programme about frequent hot topics for delegates

### **The role**

The main duties of the facilitator are to enable participants to get the most benefit from their cohort experience this should include encouraging participants to:

- Express and discuss their ideas, concerns and understanding of the business situation facing them
- Reflect on and learn from things that did not turn out as expected
- Take responsibility for their own decisions, plans and actions
- Work together to agree both group and personal objectives
- Undertake constructive exploratory discussions within the cohort and avoid conflict.
- Maximise opportunities within their existing business
- Review their progress and identify realistic and practical options to realise their goals
- Connect with other sources of information, advice or further support when appropriate

Working to action learning principles the group facilitator will have the ability to:

- Respect the needs of participants
- Listen and respond effectively and check understanding
- Keep their promises

- Empathise with a range of different feelings and experiences
- Build and maintain an effective relationship with their participants
- Manage group dynamics and deal with conflict
- Generate creative energy within the cohort
- Develop a resourceful state in others
- Handle and respond effectively to change
- Encourage the group to focus on the output
- Shift group and individual perspective
- Evaluate people and processes
- Ensure the people involved retain ownership of the solutions arrived at
- Challenge people to think

## **The requirements**

### **Facilitation of the peer network**

- Facilitate and host a series of sessions (using video conference) that are inspirational and engaging
- Use the principles of action learning to successfully facilitate each session
- Work with participants to develop a collaborative and open culture and supporting behaviours within the peer network cohort
- React and respond to the specific issues presented by participants within the sessions
- Focus the session topics on specific issues as directed by the cohort participants (possible themes and topics provided by BEIS)
- Champion the programme, its benefits and its impact on productivity
- Gather and capture learnings and good/best practice and feedback back insight, share best practice, and identify opportunities for improvements and new initiatives
- Work collaboratively with programme colleagues and other facilitators to ensure high quality service provision

During the course of the programme identify opportunities where participants could benefit from deeper support by referral into the Growth Hub and at the end of the action learning series the facilitator will hold a one-to-one review with each individual participant to help consolidate their experience into potential next steps.

- Undertake a structured one-to-one 'review and next steps' discussion (using video conference) to understand the challenges and opportunities they need to address, and develop a short action plan for follow-on support
- Identify opportunities for further business support and ensure effective signposting, referrals, and connections
- Link clients into further one-to-one support if not already connected (offered by the Peer Networks programme) and/or onto appropriate Growth Hub support, and liaise effectively to support relevant account management activities
- Undertake any necessary handover requirements

### **Supporting the programme more broadly**

- Support relevant stakeholders to promote, engage, and sell the programme and its activities
- Be flexible and responsive to the needs of participants and the programme managers

- Participate in programme-specific training and orientation
- Maintain participant activity records and documents
- Conform with any other relevant contractual requirements, targets, outputs and reporting
- Comply with all aspects of the programme's Quality Assurance Framework
- Support in-programme and post-programme review and evaluation activities

### **Key skills and qualifications**

Facilitators should have a range of competencies, enabling them to demonstrate their individual credibility to businesses in the network. All will have the following attributes:

- Strong facilitation capabilities and toolset – including the use of action learning principles
- Proven facilitation track record built through work performed with small-businesses, entrepreneurs, ambitious business owners and leaders
- Technical skills to run and manage groups virtually using video conference/collaboration tools
- Excellent understanding of the range of business issues associated with growth, productivity, innovation, strategy, people and skills, driving change, resilience, technology adoption
- Good understanding of the specific needs, characteristics and issues faced by SMEs with the local region
- Appreciation of the business/organisational/economic challenges posed by COVID-19

### **Key characteristics:**

#### **Essential**

- Optimistic, enthusiastic and self-motivated, with an empathetic approach
- Engaging personal style, energetic personality
- Understanding and appreciation of smaller business – from micros to large SMEs
- Passionate about getting the best out of people, with a genuine interest in supporting others to excel
- Integrity, independence and patience
- Knowledge and application of facilitation methodologies and toolsets – including action learning styles
- Proven track record in high-impact facilitation in the SME space
- Strong interpersonal skills, with a robust but respectful and constructive approach to facilitation
- Able to offer constructive challenge
- Credibility, a strong business acumen, commercial mindset and excellent project management skills
- Able to interact comfortably at owner/MD/CEO/Board level, with great communication, collaboration and storytelling skills
- Flexible approach to solving business problems and the ability to articulate solutions
- High degree of personal ethics, able to understand and reflect LEP/GH/BESI strategy and values
- Ability to rapidly evaluate the needs of participants and suggest appropriate support based on their capacity, ability and motivation

- Practical understanding of the current landscape of publicly funded business support (local and national)
- Strong IT/technical skills, including an understanding of video conference platforms (e.g. Teams/ Zoom/ Hangouts), computerised management information systems, diary management, and CRM databases
- Excellent stakeholder management and relationship management abilities

### **Desirable**

- Experience of developing and leading peer-to-peer groups, peer boards, or peer networks
- Experience of operating in senior leadership positions within an SME
- Experience setting up, running, and growing an SME business
- Professional experience of managing and delivering business assessment, advice and development
- Ability to structure, analyse and present complex ideas and data, as well as resolve complex problems
- Relevant qualifications and accreditations

### **Peer Network One-to-One Support Provider – for the provision of one-to-one support**

The Peer Network Programme provides additional one-to-one support for each participant. This begins once the formal peer network set is complete and can utilise highly competent business coaches or mentors, the regional advisor network, or existing local business support programmes.

When provided within the programme the role requires the provision of one-to-one follow-on business-focused coaching/mentoring/support to individual participants through a mixture of consultations and signposting.

### **The role**

The main duties of the One-to-One Support Provider include:

- Analysing the specific difficulties posed to the business by the impact of COVID-19 and what actions should be taken by the SME participant to tackle those issues, in conjunction with their learning from the peer networks
- Agreeing with the SME participant ways to maximise opportunities within their existing business
- Encouraging the SME participant to express and discuss their ideas, concerns and understanding of the business situation facing them
- Supporting the SME participant in creating both business and personal objectives and goals
- Helping the SME participant to review their progress and set realistic and practical options to realise their goals
- Helping the SME participant to reflect on and learn from things that did not turn out as expected
- Signposting the SME participant to other sources of information, advice or further support when appropriate
- Encouraging the SME participant to take responsibility for their own decisions, plans and actions.

### **The requirements**

- One-to-one follow-on coaching/mentoring/support totalling a minimum of 3.5 hours

- Work with the participant to understand their strategy, the challenges and opportunities they face, and agree a plan for follow-on advice which will address specific barriers to productivity and growth
- Deliver a series of structured one-to-one sessions (using video conference) to help address the identified challenges and opportunities
- Provide wide-ranging coaching, mentoring, support and direction tailored to individual participants
- Understand the local business support landscape to ensure effective signposting, referrals, and connections
- Refer clients back into (or onto) appropriate LEP/Growth Hub support and liaise effectively to support their account management activities

### **Supporting the programme more broadly**

- Support relevant stakeholders to promote, engage, and sell the programme and its activities
- Be flexible and responsive to the needs of participants and the programme managers
- Participate in programme-specific training and orientation
- Maintain participant activity records and documents
- Conform with any other relevant contractual requirements, targets, outputs and reporting
- Comply with all aspects of the programme's Quality Assurance Framework
- Support in-programme and post-programme review and evaluation activities

### **Key characteristics:**

#### **Essential**

- Optimistic, enthusiastic and self-motivated, with an empathetic approach
- Engaging personal style, energetic personality
- Understanding and appreciation of smaller business – from micros to large SMEs
- Passionate about getting the best out of people, with a genuine interest in supporting others to excel
- Integrity, independence and patience
- Knowledge and application of coaching/mentoring/consulting methodologies and toolsets
- Proven track record in high-impact coaching/mentoring/consulting, and SME business advice
- Strong interpersonal skills, able to offer constructive challenge
- Strong influencer, significant experience of coaching/mentoring/advising/supporting others through change
- Credibility, a strong business acumen, commercial mindset and excellent project management skills
- Able to interact comfortably at owner/MD/CEO/Board level, with great communication, collaboration and storytelling skills
- Flexible approach to solving business problems and the ability to articulate solutions
- High degree of personal ethics, able to understand and reflect LEP/GH/BESI strategy and values
- Ability to rapidly evaluate the needs of participants and suggest appropriate support based on their capacity, ability and motivation

- Practical understanding of the current landscape of publicly funded business support (local and national)
- Strong IT/technical skills, including an understanding of video conference platforms (e.g. Teams/ Zoom/ Hangouts), computerised management information systems, diary management, and CRM databases
- Excellent stakeholder management and relationship management abilities

**Desirable**

- Experience of operating in senior leadership positions within an SME
- Experience setting up, running, and growing an SME business
- Professional experience of managing and delivering business assessment, advice and development
- Ability to structure, analyse and present complex ideas and data, as well as resolve complex problems
- Relevant qualifications and accreditations

## ANNEX 3: OUTPUTS AND LONG TERM OUTCOMES

### Agreed Outputs

1. Eighteen hours of ALS for Cohorts of (not more than) eleven SMEs and at least half a day (3.5 hours) of one to one business support per Participant.
2. Reporting in line with the below. This information will be inputted by the provider into a central dashboard maintained by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy

Outputs measured	Measure	Frequency (annually/quarterly/monthly/other)
	Number of Expressions of Interest	Monthly
	Number of participants entering the programme	Monthly
	Estimate of likely sign ups in next month and total	Monthly
	Number of cohorts built	Monthly
	Number of participants entering the programme	Monthly
	Number of participants receiving min 6hrs facilitation	Monthly
	Number of participants receiving min 12hrs facilitation	Monthly
	Number of participants receiving min 18hrs facilitation	Monthly
	Average number of hours' facilitation received per participant	Monthly
<b>Delivery of ALS sessions</b>	Number of workshop sessions delivered – With breakdown of virtual or face- to- face delivery	Monthly

<b>Outputs measured</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Frequency (annually/quarterly/monthly/other)</b>
	Number of cohorts with all 9 session workshops completed	Monthly
	Measure of how quality was ensured e.g. number of staff trained, number of quality checks made	Monthly
	Measures of fidelity to intended programme	Monthly
<b>Drop off rate</b>	Completion level – percentage attendance at sessions 1 to 9 (combined for all cohorts)	Monthly running total
<b>Coaching</b>	Number of SMEs that have requested coaching (out of total participants)	Monthly
	Number of SMEs that have received coaching	Monthly
	Hours of coaching provided (in total and average per SME)	Monthly
	Number of participants who have received 3.5 hours coaching	Monthly
	Number of Participants who complete 18hrs facilitated sessions and a min 3.5hrs Coaching	Monthly
	Number of Cohorts completing 18hrs coaching	Monthly
<b>Referrals</b>	Summary of referrals – breakdown of what has been referred to	Monthly
<b>Summary of qualitative feedback from participants</b>	Feedback (e.g. quality of sessions delivered).	Monthly



Outputs measured	Measure	Frequency (annually/quarterly/monthly/other)
<b>Summary of any feedback from facilitators/coaches</b>	Highlighting any areas for improvement and what the key issues are?	Monthly
<b>Overview of any other areas for improvement from delivery partner</b>	Highlighting any problems (if not apparent from above)	Monthly