

## Invitation to Tender

**To evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of a Visitors' Council and a Departure Lounge at HMP Birmingham**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This tender has been prepared for the purposes of obtaining information, options and recommendations from suppliers to assist The New Leaf Initiative CIC in finalising its preferred operating model and in order to select a supplier with a specialism in prisons/families of prisoners to act as an external evaluator of the efficacy, efficiency and impact of a Visitors' Council and Departure Lounge being established to operate at HMP Birmingham.

#### **1.2 Introduction to The New Leaf Initiative**

The New Leaf Initiative is an award-winning CIC, founded five years ago and is one of the leading organisations working as prison to employment specialist and service user consultants within the criminal justice system. We provide holistic support, advice, guidance and peer mentoring to people who have served custodial sentences or being supervised in the community. We seek out the views of service users, in custody, the community and from those impacted by imprisonment.

#### **1.3 Background to the projects**

#### **1.4 Visitors Council and Peer mentoring**

It is now widely accepted that maintaining family relationships whilst in custody is crucial to the welfare of those in custody and in sustaining a life free of crime post release. Research carried out by Lord Farmer, 'The Importance of Strengthening Prisoner' Family Ties to Prevent Reoffending and Reduce Intergenerational Crime' highlighted the importance of families in the lives of prisoners and described them as the 'golden thread'. Whilst this recognition is important, families are often positioned as the carrot or the stick with their role seen as significant only in relation to the prisoner. It is significant but does not focus on the whole story. The families of prisoners have their own experience, and this should be recognised. Families carry the emotional and financial burden whilst their loved one is imprisoned, attending visits is only one element of the support that they provide but often this goes unrecognised.

The New Leaf CIC undertook independent research with over 250 visitors at HMP Birmingham to learn more about the experience of being a visitor. Given the opportunity to

talk and have their voices amplified, visitors spoke openly about their experiences of being a prison visitor and the broader issues of having a loved one in custody. The idea of a Visitors' Council was communicated during this research and welcomed by visitors. During the time that the research was being undertaken HMP Birmingham went through an HMiP Inspection and HMPPS stepped in to take over management of the prison from G4S. The new governor has given his commitment to regular meetings between the SMT and the Visitors' Council. We also have agreement for a number of joint meetings between the Prison Council and the Visitors' Council.

#### Departure Lounge

Research has shown that a lack of resettlement support on leaving custody can lead to reoffending. The latest research from Birmingham City University highlights the lack of resettlement support for prison leavers, Sophie Grace Gregory and Dr Aidan O'Sullivan looked at experiences of resettlement, drawing on themes of addiction, debt, accommodation, employment and social support. They analysed data from 100 prison leavers, across England and Wales, who had served fixed and indeterminate sentences for a range of categories of offence, 86 per cent reported suffering from a mental health problem, 81 per cent said they had received no help with preparing for release from prison and more than half were expecting to return to debt on release, having accrued fines, rent arrears and mobile phone charges during their sentence, and almost 90 per cent said they had experienced substance misuse.

HMP Birmingham has recognised the need for additional support for men leaving the prison and have supported the development of a Departure Lounge that will offer men the support that they need. Currently there are over 200 men who have been recalled to prison in a population of over 900 men at HMP Birmingham; the aim of the Departure Lounge, delivered by the New Leaf Initiative's intensive case workers is to dramatically reduce this number by increasing support, motivation, access to interventions at the time when it is needed the most; during the transition back into the community

#### 1.5 **Overview of current operations**

Visits at HMP Birmingham are currently delivered by Halow Birmingham who have been providing the service for over twenty years. Visits take place six days a week with special visits for vulnerable prisoners on Sundays. Visitors attend the Visitors' Centre which is across the road from the prison, in order to book in. At the centre they have access to a café that has recently been reopened by Newbigin House, a local charity. There is a family support worker and a children's worker who can engage with children in the play areas in the visitors centre and in the Visits Hall. There are lockers where visitors store personal items, their mobile phone, handbag etc and there are images of the dress code displayed.

From there, visitors go across to the prison and undergo a search via a walk-through security monitor and are searched with a handheld wand. They are then allowed through to a

secondary waiting area where they can leave property for loved ones. A dog search then takes place before visitors can access the visits hall. Visitors raised the issue with us that this process was very time consuming and that they rarely got into their visit on time.

HMP Birmingham offer some basic resettlement services prior to release and the Staffordshire and West Midlands CRC offer Through the Gate support to men leaving HMP Birmingham. The Departure Lounge will compliment and provide additionality to this work, filling gaps as identified by the prison leavers in the research. The current offer is provided by statutory services with the focus being on meeting the requirements of a post custodial licence that involves men being compelled to attend appointments, report regularly and follow guidelines that are being imposed on them by order of the courts and the requirements of post custody supervision. Recent reports by the Inspectorate of Probation have highlighted the difficulties faced by those leaving custody in receiving the support that they require due to staff within the CRCs carrying very high caseloads and the services being under-resourced. Our own experience over 5 years also informs us that both men and women leaving custody feel that there is 'nothing out there' for them and that returning to a life of crime often feels like the only tangible option. New Leafs solution-focussed, linear pathway provides a clear route away from crime by utilising the experiences of peer mentors who act as relatable role models for change, whilst providing clear steps through volunteering, work experience, training, education and sustainable employment.

#### 1.6 **Objectives of the project**

The objective of New Leafs projects are to improve the visits experience and improve outcomes for men leaving custody over an initial pilot project period of 18 months. The objective of the evaluation is to establish whether this has been achieved and to what extent, as well as making recommendations for further improvements in response to feedback gathered from participants and staff. The Visitors' Council is intended to provide direct benefit to visitors by improving their experience of the visits process via a direct and solution-focused dialogue with the prison SMT and access to suitable peer mentors and that this will have the intended consequence of improving the prison as positive visits can impact on the prison wings. The Departure Lounge is intended to improve the outcomes for men leaving HMP Birmingham, reducing reoffending and increasing engagement in pro-social activities and interventions which will support their desistance and subsequent rehabilitation.

The aims of the external evaluation are to:

- Investigate the value of establishing a Visitors' Council and a Departure Lounge at HMP Birmingham
- Evaluate the extent to which the Visitors' Council meeting with the SMT improves the visits experience.

- Provide suggestions as to how the Visitors' Council and the Departure Lounge can be more effective
- Explore the added value of peer mentors supporting new visitors and men leaving HMP Birmingham
- Explore and identify any issues that arise while establishing a Visitors' Council and a Departure Lounge
- Evaluate the value of the Visitors' Council and the Departure Lounge to HMP Birmingham, CRC and Probation in the West Midlands
- Evaluate how and to what extent the Departure Lounge impacts on the life of men leaving HMP Birmingham

The New Leaf Initiative CIC overall objectives are to:

1. Improve the visits experience at HMP Birmingham
2. Deliver training with members of the Visitors' Council to HMP Birmingham staff that are involved in the visits process.
3. Train a percentage of longstanding visitors as Peer Mentors so that they can support new visitors.
4. Develop a better understanding of the issues faced by visitors amongst HMP Birmingham SMT, staff and prisoners.
5. Provide support, opportunities advice and guidance to men leaving HMP Birmingham
6. To reduce the numbers of men being recalled to prison whilst under post sentence supervision
7. To increase the numbers of men leaving HMP Birmingham accessing education, training and employment post release
8. Developing a better understanding of how a Visitors' Council and a Departure Lounge could be scaled and established in other prisons across the estate.

## 1.7 **Budget**

The New Leaf Initiative has up to £7,000 available for this evaluation. Savings on this will be taken into account when awarding the Tender. Please note that as a CIC, we will fund only the full directly-incurred costs of the evaluation. We do not fund overheads. Furthermore the research will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.

## 1.8 **Timeline**

We expect service evaluation to be ongoing throughout the lifetime of the project, and fully completed within one week of the end of the service delivery. The expectation is that evaluation will take place at regular intervals and include the setting up, establishing, imbedding, engagement, delivery and efficacy of the project over an 18 month period beginning on the 1/04/2020 (TBC). A final evaluation report will be launched at an event in 18 months time and disseminated amongst prison stakeholders, funders, academics and other interested parties

## 1.9 **Confidentiality**

The contents of this document together with all other information, materials, specifications or other documents provided by The New Leaf CIC, or prepared by respondents specifically for the CIC, shall be treated at all times as confidential by the respondents. Respondents shall not disclose any such information, materials, specifications or other documents to any third parties or to any other part of the respondents' group or use them for any purpose other than for the preparation and submission of a response to this tender nor shall respondents publicise the CIC name or the project without the prior written consent of the CIC. The CIC in turn confirms that it shall treat all information provided to it by the respondent as confidential and further confirms that such information will not be disclosed by the CIC to any third parties, other than its advisers, funders and consultants.

Respondents shall ensure that all third parties to whom disclosure is made shall keep any such information, materials, specifications or other documents confidential and not disclose them to any other third party except as set out above.

Respondents must seek the approval of the CIC before providing to third parties any information provided in confidence by the CIC or its professional advisers and must maintain a register of all employees and third parties who have access to such information. If so requested by the CIC, respondents must make such a register available for immediate inspection by the CIC or its duly authorised representatives.

## 1.10 **Intellectual property**

All intellectual property rights in this tender document and all materials provided by and to the CIC or its professional advisers in connection with this tender are and shall remain the property of the CIC. The final report will be disseminated at an event in 2021 to various interested parties and credited to New Leaf, our funders and the researcher responsible.

1.11 **Enquiries and contact procedure**

Any enquiries or requests for clarification of any matters arising from this tender document should be sought from Caroline Carr or Marie-Claire O'Brien at the CIC and must be made in writing by post or e-mail as follows:

Contact name: Caroline Carr – Community Development Director

Marie-Claire O'Brien - CEO

Address: The New Leaf Initiative CIC, 9 Allcock Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, B9 4DY

E-mail: [caroline@newleafcic.org](mailto:caroline@newleafcic.org) / [marie-claire@newleafcic.org](mailto:marie-claire@newleafcic.org)

Enquiries should be submitted to The New Leaf Initiative CIC as soon as possible.

CONFIDENTIAL

#### 1.12 **Submission of responses**

Responses to this tender must arrive no later than – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 at 5pm

The CIC will accept an individual or consortium submission.

The respondent must submit:

- A proposed evaluation protocol
- A flowchart &/or timeline
- A full list of variables to be collected as part of the evaluation process
- Any questionnaires or interview scripts that respondents intend to use or, if these are yet to be developed as part of the process – a brief description outlining how the information on key variables is to be collected (and highlighting the ones you expect the CIC to share)

All submissions should preferably be sent by email, with all files virus-checked, to the contact detailed. Alternatively, postal submissions are acceptable but must be received by the due date.

After evaluation is completed, The New Leaf Initiative will retain copies of all responses to satisfy its audit obligations and for other purposes.

#### 1.13 **Costs of preparation of response**

Recipients of this tender will be responsible for and bear all of their own costs, liabilities and expenses which may be incurred in the preparation of their responses to this tender regardless of whether a contract is awarded.

#### 1.14 **Evaluation method and selection criteria**

The CIC will use the following evaluation criteria when evaluating the responses in order to produce a short-list of suppliers:

- Technical suitability
- Capability to deliver the evaluation including compatibility with delivery of the Visitors' Council
- Track record and experience
- Staffing and resources

- Budget as set out in 1.7
- Communication and reporting
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Innovation and added value

#### 1.15 **Presentations**

Respondents may be invited to deliver an oral presentation of their proposals as part of their response. Respondents will be contacted nearer the time with a specific date and location for their presentation to take place.

#### 1.16 **Warnings and disclaimers**

- (a) Nothing contained in this document or any other communication made between the CIC or its representatives and any party or part shall constitute an agreement, contract or representation between the CIC and any other party (except for a formal award of contract made in writing by the CIC). Receipt by the respondent of this document does not imply the existence of a contract or commitment by or with the CIC for any purpose and respondents should note that this tender may not result in the award of any business.
- (b) The New Leaf Initiative may use the information included in a supplier's response for any reasonable purpose connected with this tender.

## 2. **PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

Please respond to each of the numbered bullet points set out below. You should repeat the bullet points in your response and then include your answer. Please number every page sequentially in the main body of your response as "Page x of xx" and include the date and title of your document on each page of the main body.

You are asked at the beginning of your response, before setting out the answers to the bullet points, to include an executive summary of your response to this tender. This summary should outline in brief terms (no more than 750 words) the main features of your response and should include the following:

- i. A summary of your proposed approach to meeting the requirements of the tender.
- ii. Your experience in delivery of similar services.
- iii. A summary of your key methods and techniques including any innovative approaches.

- iv. An overview of the costings for the delivery of the proposal.

### **3. GENERAL QUESTIONS**

#### **3.1 Contact details**

- (a) Please supply details of the person at your organisation who can be contacted by the CIC in relation to your response. Please give their name, title, address and location, telephone number and email address.

#### **3.2 Organisation details**

- (a) Please give details of your organisation, stating its full registered address and registration number if applicable.

#### **3.3 Your organisation's staff**

- (a) Please provide information about your organisational and management structure of your organisation, and the roles and responsibilities of the management teams involved in relation to the services in this tender.

#### **3.4 Consulting experience and References**

- (a) Please describe two projects you have conducted with partners, in providing similar services to the services envisaged in this tender. Please include the type of services provided, number of users and length of time such services have been provided by your organisation, and location of the services being provided and geographic spread of the users.
- (b) Please provide contact name(s), title(s), email address(es) and telephone number(s) of the project leader and other staff undertaking the evaluation, including details of past awards and publications. Please state when and how you would be happy for New Leaf to contact them.
- (c) Please specify any added value ideas or suggestions in relation to the services.

#### **3.5 Standards and procedures**

- (a) Please provide details of your quality assurance processes and management systems and if applicable, any quality related accreditations or certifications you hold.
- (b) Please set out your policies, procedures and processes in relation to the protection of all information and data in relation to the services and in relation to other security and confidentiality matters.

- (c) Please provide details of the accessibility and rights of New Leaf to inspect or audit your sites including rights to conduct audits of operations, resources, systems, costs and documentation.
- (d) Please provide a brief risk management overview of the risks that you foresee in the delivery of each area of the requirements you are responding to. Please categorise these risks according to whether they are risks for New Leaf, for you, or risks that are to be shared jointly. Please specifically state how you propose to manage or mitigate these risks.
- (e) Please give details of the systems and processes that are intended to be used to ensure security of personal customer data.

### 3.6 **Insurance**

Please provide details of the levels and types of insurance held by your organisation and describe which services and areas such insurance would apply.

CONFIDENTIAL