



Request for proposals (RFP): Learning Partner for Phase 2 of the Transitions from Secondary Education Special Initiative (2024 – 2028)

Requests for proposals for appointment as the Learning Partner for our Transitions from Secondary Education Special Initiative are sought by the Mercers' Company as trustee of the Mercers' Charitable Foundation, the funder of this work. Details of the requirements are set out in this RFP.

The deadline for submitting a proposal is 12.00pm (Noon) on 13 August 2024. Submissions should be sent to grants@mercercs.co.uk by this deadline.

If you have any queries about the tender process, or if you would like to speak to us about the requirements, please email grants@mercercs.co.uk

Summary of requirement

The Mercers' Company wishes to appoint a dynamic and creative learning partner for the second phase of our Transitions from Secondary Education Special Initiative (Transitions Special Initiative). The learning partner will work with us and two cohorts of grantees to support them to reflect on and improve their work throughout their funding term, as set out in more detail below.

Through the Transitions Special Initiative, the intention is to support organisations that use evidence-based interventions to address the following outcomes for young people:

- **Gain access to progression pathways, including further or higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and other similar programmes.**
- **Build experience and knowledge of work, including career specific work experience.**
- **Develop social and emotional capabilities including communication, leadership and resilience.**

The work is expected to be a long-term engagement from beginning to end of the Special Initiative (January 2025 until approx. November 2029), with the main output being reports that contribute to the evidence base about young people making successful transitions from secondary education.

Background to the Transitions Special Initiative

Making a successful transition into work, further or higher education, or training is critical to a young person's life chances as well as their social and emotional wellbeing. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often face additional barriers, making the pathways to education or employment opportunities even more difficult.

The Transitions Special Initiative will support organisations working with disadvantaged young people in London to progress successfully from secondary

education. Particularly, we want to support young people considering alternative pathways that build on the skills, knowledge and key competencies valued by future employers, such as apprenticeships and other related programmes, by increasing their knowledge and experiences of these routes.

The Young People & Education programme has been running the Transitions Special Initiative since 2019. Phase 1 of the initiative funded 15 organisations over 3 cohorts. A list of all 15 organisations is provided as an appendix in the [funding guidelines](#).

Following the success of Phase 1 and the continuing need in this area, we are pleased to announce the launch of Phase 2. We plan to fund two cohorts of grantees over a four-year period from Autumn 2024. Each grantee will be funded for 3 years. A copy of the funding guidelines is [here](#).

Brief

We wish to appoint a learning partner to work collaboratively with the Mercers' Company and the grantees across the four-to-five-year scope of the Transitions Special Initiative. We are an [IVAR Open & Trusting funder](#) and want this work to be delivered in line with our eight commitments and thus delivering tangible benefits to the participating grantees, the wider sector and to us as a funder.

We are open to a range of approaches to this work but wish to jointly agree the scope of the work and shape the project plan. Close liaison with the Mercers' executive team is expected throughout the project. The overall aim is to bring together the learning arising from each of the projects and identify common themes so that it can benefit the Transitions sector. Reports produced must be capable of external publication. Learning and dissemination events will be held at Mercers' Hall during the period.

Funding for the first cohort of 3 - 5 grantees will be approved in March 2025. Some grantees may begin delivery of the programmes straightaway but others may not begin delivery until autumn 2025. A second cohort is expected to be funded from 2026/27.

Experience tells us that the grantees delivering the programmes have a lot of knowledge and insight about what works in relation to the aims of their own Transitions programme. This knowledge and insight builds throughout the delivery of the programmes. The learning partner's role is to draw out knowledge from:

- delivery, teaching and other support staff as appropriate;
- the findings from the grantees' own evaluations; and
- current evidence and research in this area;

and bring this all together so grantees and other stakeholders in the Transitions sector can learn from it. We are particularly interested in the potential for a digital learning community to be created for the Transitions grantees to access and share their learning and experiences.

We reflect on the success of all our funding programmes using our own Impact Framework (Appendix 1) with three key impact indicators: improving people's lives; making organisations stronger; and contributing to wider social change. It is expected that the learning partner's findings would feed into this overarching framework and help us to track our progress against achieving these outcomes.

Proposals for how you would approach this work should include the following:

- approach to initial work with Mercers' executive team to set up Phase 2 of the Evaluation. Reports from Phase 1 can be found [here](#)
- bringing grantees together to facilitate reflection, sharing of insights and learning at least twice per year
- providing regular update reports for the funder on the learning from and progress of the grantees' work
- how data will be collected across the different programmes (if applicable)
- recommendations in relation to evolution of our funding in this focus area.

Reporting will include:

- concise annual reports and a final report which are accessible to its target audiences and able to be shared internally and externally (the Mercers'

membership and staff, grantees, and other stakeholders across the Transitions sector), bringing together the key learnings from across all programmes

- short presentations to the Young People & Education Committee about the emerging research findings (approx. one per year)
- leading on two learning events, one at a mid-way point and one at the end, to disseminate the learnings and insights from the programme (format to be determined)
- a plan of how the reports will be disseminated including any communication channels and networks, as well as findings from the learning events.

Skills and experience required

We wish to work with organisations with:

- a proven track record of evaluation, learning support and influence within the Transitions sector and/or in relation to education, preferably within London
- knowledge of current national education, skills and employment policies
- proven experience of stakeholder management, effective communication and engagement; both in dealing with individual grantees and in the production of high quality, authoritative and accessible reports
- flexibility to work with a dynamic programme and diverse cohorts of grantees where aspects of delivery may change in response to what is being learnt
- safeguarding policy and procedures which include enhanced DBS checks in place for all staff and associates who might have contact with children and young people
- evidenced practice of DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) in delivery of work.

Proposals

Organisations interested in undertaking this work should provide a short proposal of no more than 4 sides of A4 in a font size of at least 11 pitch. Please include:

- the name and contact details of the lead person submitting the proposal
- your approach and methodology for delivering the work, including a clear timetable and how the Mercers' Company will be informed of progress

- an outline of your organisation’s track record, expertise and suitability to undertake the work (including examples of previous work produced) with reference to the skills and experience outlined above
- a full budget, outlining fees, number of days provided (including day rates) and associated costs such as travel
- short biographies of key staff involved in the project, including which elements they will be working on
- confirmation of your availability to attend an interview in **early October 2024**. The interview is expected to last a maximum of one hour. Organisations are not required to prepare a presentation for this meeting.

Timescales

The indicative timetable for the contract is as follows:

Key actions	Dates
Proposal return deadline	Noon Tuesday, 13 August 2024
Clarification of proposals (if required)	No later than 6 September 2024
Interviews with shortlisted providers	October 2024
Contract Award	By end of November 2024
Contract Work Commencement Date	No later than 1 March 2025
Contract Completion Date	On agreement of final report, ideally no later than end November 2029

Fee

We anticipate the cost of the work to be £30,000 – £40,000 per annum across the 5-year period (inclusive of VAT, if charged, and expenses). The fee does not include the costs of the design, production and printing of the final report or costs of events held at Mercers’ Hall, which will be met by us.

Appendix 1: Philanthropy Impact Framework

Philanthropy Impact Framework

