



THE NURTURE GROUP NETWORK (NGN)

INVITATION TO TENDER

Comparative nurture groups (NGs) research

Introduction

1. The NGN invites tenders to conduct a study to meet three aims:
 - (a) Create or identify a methodological framework for assessing the impact of provisions for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties;
 - (b) Identify five primary schools with nurture group provision and two primary schools with other psychosocial interventions (seven case studies in total), and specify how the schools and comparative interventions in the case studies were chosen.
 - (c) Compare outcomes of all the interventions in five different areas: the individual pupil, the nurture group/alternative provision, the mainstream class, the whole school, the carers/parents.
2. The deadline for proposals is **12 noon on Friday 6th February**. The study is expected to begin in March 2015 and be completed by November 2015.
3. Funding of between £15,000 and £20,000, inclusive of VAT and expenses, is available for this study.

General Background

4. The Nurture Group Network exists to promote the development of nurture groups and to ensure the continuing quality of their delivery through accredited training programmes, research on effective practice, relevant publications and information exchange. Its aim is to make the nurture group approach available to all pupils who need it and also to ensure that the connections between learning and early development are understood throughout education.
5. Nurture groups are founded on evidence-based practices and offer a short-term, inclusive focused intervention that works in the long term. Nurture groups are classes of between six and 12 children or young people in early years, primary or secondary setting supported by the whole staff group and parents. Children attend nurture groups but remain an active part of their main class group, spend appropriate times within the nurture group according to their need and typically return full time to their own class within two to four terms. Nurture groups assess learning, social and emotional needs and deliver whatever help is needed to remove the barriers to learning. The NGN is aware of over 1500 groups currently in operation across the UK, with others in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Malta.

Terms of Reference for the Study

6. This study aims to:
 - (a) Create a methodological framework for assessing the impact of provisions for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The framework will identify appropriate criteria, provide the rationale behind the choice of the interventions to be compared and highlight the advantages and challenges posed by them;
 - (b) Identify 5 primary schools with nurture group provision and 2 primary schools with other psychosocial interventions (seven case studies in total) collecting quantitative and qualitative data relating to five different areas: the individual pupil (e.g. gains in social and emotional functioning/academic achievement/improved attendance/reduced exclusions), the nurture group/alternative provision, the mainstream class, the whole school (e.g. impact on fixed period and permanent exclusions/staff turnover/costs on support programmes for students with SEBD), the carers/parents parent/carer outcomes (e.g. better relationship with children/more involvement in school community/improved home life).
7. It is expected that in order to gain more comprehensive, balanced and rounded findings, the study will take into account and compare a number of different criteria, which will include a mixture of **quantitative** data (academic attainment/attendance/exclusions/components used within the interventions/SDQ scores/Boxall Profile scores), and **qualitative** indicators obtained through semi-structured interviews and observations.
8. Researchers will also need to take into consideration the intended outputs of the case studies. They include:
 - a. Evidence for policymakers and Local Authorities as to the outcomes and impact of nurture groups and other interventions and in what particular contexts (child/mainstream/ wholeschool/ community and parents), along with their economic cost;
 - b. Dissemination of findings through academic papers and presentations to further establish knowledge and understanding of the efficacy of nurture groups compared to other psychosocial interventions in the academic arena.
9. A number of previous studies have already identified the optimal conditions for nurture group provision. Bidders carrying out this study are encouraged to review, and build on, previous work in the area, including, for example: Dr Oonagh Davies' Realistic Evaluation framework, [available here](#); Dr Hanna Bennett's meta-review, [available here](#); Dr Schlosser and Hume's meta-review, [available here](#); Summary of evidence-based practices within NG provision, [available here](#); Farrell, P. and Billington, T. (2008) *The Development of a Framework for the Evaluation of Nurture Groups*.

Outputs and Timetable

10. The indicative timing for the key outputs and timetable for this study are:
 - a. Methodological framework: the framework will include and detail:
 - selection of appropriate schools;
 - selection of comparative interventions;
 - appropriate criteria for assessing the mechanisms, contexts and outcomes;
 - the rationale for the choice of the above criteria, including a discussion of the advantages and challenges posed by their adoption and a synthesis of any previous work in the field;
 - a methodology for obtaining and interpreting relevant data;

- recommendations for the practical implementation of such a framework.
- b. Data gathering: Identify the impact of nurture group provision and other psychosocial interventions collecting quantitative and qualitative data relating to the five different levels: individual pupils, nurture group/other intervention, mainstream class, whole school, carers/parents.

Timing:

March 2015-April 2015: project set-up time and piloting of instruments

May 2015-July 2015: main data gathering activities both qualitative and quantitative

11. Interim report : featuring two main sections:
- i. Methodological framework:
 - ii. Case studies: detailing the results of this study with suggestions for possible improvements, and preliminary outcomes.

Timing: August 2015

- b. Final report: including the two sections above as well as an additional final section providing an overall assessment of the impact, drawn from a collective analysis and interpretation of the case studies of each individual school. This final report will address all three aims:
- (a) Create or identify a methodological framework for assessing the impact of provisions for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties;
 - (b) Identify five primary schools with nurture group provision and two primary schools with other psychosocial interventions (seven case studies in total), and specify how the schools and comparative interventions in the case studies were chosen.
 - (c) Compare outcomes of all the interventions in five different areas: the individual pupil, the nurture group/alternative provision, the mainstream class, the whole school, the carers/parents.

Timing: November 2015

Funding Available

12. Funding of between £15,000 and £20,000 (inclusive of VAT and expenses) is available for this study. A suitable profile of payments of the funding will be agreed with the successful bidder following the award of contract.

Terms and Conditions

13. Any information gathered during the course of the project and not already in the public domain is deemed to be the property of the Nurture Group Network. The information provided in the report, and the rights to all other outputs, shall become the property of the Nurture Group Network which will ensure that the intellectual property will be properly exploited in academic papers and presentations.

NGN Management of the Project

14. This project will be overseen by Edurne Scott Loinaz based at NGN's London Office (Email: edurne@nurturegroups.org; Tel: 020 3475 8980) and reviewed by a sub-group of NGN Trustees.

Costing and Pricing a Proposal

15. All bids submitted by UK higher education institutions should use the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology in order to cost the activity. An Example Budget and guidance on the budgetary terms used can be found at **Appendix B** to this document. Bidders should then consider how they wish to price the activity (by considering the level of institutional contribution) in order to submit a competitive bid.
16. Other institutions and organisations submitting bids should use their usual costing and pricing practices but all costs should be clear and transparent, clarifying the number of days each individual working on the activity will provide, in order to assist the evaluators in determining the value for money of a proposal.

Structure of Proposals

17. Tenders should include:
 - a description of the proposed work;
 - a detailed programme of the work to be undertaken, including a work plan showing key date/milestones and deliverables;
 - an indication of the proposed methodology for carrying out the study;
 - a summary of relevant experience to undertake this project;
 - CVs of key personnel proposed for this project, including relevant experience and qualifications, and the responsibilities they will manage within the project;
 - an assessment of the risks associated with the project and how these will be managed;
 - the total cost and a breakdown of costs including a statement on VAT. Staff costs should be broken down into the estimated number of days to be contributed to the project by each person; the cost per person; salary grade (if applicable). Calculation of other costs, such as travel and subsistence; hardware and software (if applicable) should also be clarified. Any institutional contribution should be clearly identified;
 - A completed bid cover sheet (**Appendix A**).
 - Names and addresses of two referees
 - A reference to the research ethics, policies and practices that will be taken into consideration for the project
18. Tenders should clearly demonstrate:
 - Research questions to be addressed
 - Knowledge and understanding of the area and related issues;
 - Experience of undertaking similar work;
 - Clear project management set up;
 - Clear outputs and deliverables;
 - An appropriate mix of skills for the project, including rationale for collaboration in the case of consortia bids for this project;
 - The risks associated with the project have been considered;
 - Transparent, easy to understand costs for the project, with a clear rationale provided.
 - How they will compare outcomes in five different areas: the individual pupil, the nurture group/alternative provision, the mainstream class, the whole school, the carers/parents

Evaluation Criteria

19. The proposals will be evaluated by a panel appointed by the NGN. Evaluation criteria, in no particular order, to be used to evaluate the proposals, are as follows:

- Knowledge and understanding of the area and related issues
- Relevant experience
- Methodology
- Project management and project plan
- Risk assessment & management
- Value for money

Submitting a Proposal

20. The deadline for receipt of submissions is **12 noon on Friday 6th February 2015**. Late proposals will **NOT** be accepted. It is the responsibility of the bidder to ensure that the proposal has arrived by the deadline stated.
21. **An electronic copy of the proposal should be received in PDF format by this deadline.** This is an electronic-only submission process, therefore all documentation (including letters of support) must be submitted in PDF format **as a single file**.
22. Tenders should be no longer than 10 single-sides of A4 pages and should be typeset in Arial or a similar font at 10-point size (plus staff CVs attached as appendices, no longer than 2 A4 pages each). All key information as outlined in the guidance on structure of proposals **MUST** be included within the ten-page limit unless otherwise indicated. **Any bids exceeding the ten-page limit for key information will be rejected by the Executive prior to the evaluation stage.**
23. Tenders should include the name and full address details of a contact to whom queries may be directed (or cover sheet – see below).
24. Tender proposals should be emailed to Edurne Scott Loinaz (edurne@nurturegroups.org). An acknowledgement of receipt of your bid will be sent to you. If you do not receive such an email it is the bidder's responsibility to contact NGN to ensure that the bid has been received.

Award of Contract

25. It is anticipated that bidders will be notified of the outcome of this tender exercise during the week beginning 23rd February 2015. The successful bidder should commence work from March 2015. The project must be complete by November 2015.
26. NGN will expect to work with the successful bidder to agree the workplan. NGN shall determine the profile of payment to the successful bidder(s), once appointed.
27. NGN shall be under no obligation to accept the lowest, or any tender, and tenderers shall submit offers on the basis of so doing at no cost to the NGN.

Further Information

28. For any general enquiries regarding this work, please contact Edurne Scott Loinaz, edurne@nurturegroups.org; Tel: 020 3475 8980)

Appendix B: Example Budget for Tenders

Directly Incurred Staff	March – November	TOTAL £
Post, Grade, No. Hours & % FTE	£	£
Etc.	£	£
Etc.	£	£
Total Directly Incurred Staff (A)	£	£
Non-Staff		
Non-Staff	March – November	TOTAL £
Travel and expenses	£	£
Hardware/software	£	£
Dissemination	£	£
Evaluation	£	£
Other	£	£
Total Directly Incurred Non-Staff (B)	£	£
Directly Incurred Total (A+B=C) (C)	£	£
Directly Allocated		
Directly Allocated	March – November	TOTAL £
Staff	£	£
Estates	£	£
Other	£	£
Directly Allocated Total (D)	£	£
Indirect Costs (E)	£	£
Total Project Cost (C+D+E)	£	£
Amount Requested from NGN	£	£
Institutional Contributions	£	£
Percentage Contributions over the life of the project	NGN X %	Total 100%