



THE SKILL MILL



Specification for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from Youth Justice Partnerships to Participate in a Social Outcomes Contract with The Skill Mill

1. Introduction

We invite expressions of interest from **Youth Justice Services / YOTs** to participate in a **Social Outcomes Contract** with [The Skill Mill](#). This initiative, designed to run over **four years**, aims to provide structured employment opportunities and skills development for Young People in the Justice System aged 16-18, to reduce reoffending and improve long-term outcomes. The contract builds on the **successful model** previously delivered through the **Life Chances Fund (LCF)**. This programme will be supported **by Bridges Outcomes Partnerships, an expert in the design and delivery of outcomes contracts. Bridges also have access to the social investment needed to launch to programme.**

2. Purpose of the Expression of Interest

This process is designed to confirm interest from YOTs to participate in the new programme. This will ensure they are; 1) included in the procurement process being planned at a national level (see details below), and 2) that their area is included in the operational planning for the programme.

At this stage we are not asking for a formal commitment to be part of the programme or to a final funding amount. However, we do ask that all YOTs who want to express interest **are able to demonstrate their interest by securing sign-off from the nominated representative of the Chief Executive of their Local Authority** and to commit to following the **procurement process and information-sharing protocols** established in the previous contract.

3. Background and Rationale

The Skill Mill has achieved significant success since its inception in 2014, operating as a social enterprise offering employment opportunities in environmental conservation and public works through the previous **Social Outcomes Contract** funded by the **Life Chances Fund**, the program demonstrated outstanding results, including:

- A **reoffending rate of only 8%**, compared to a counterfactual of 63% for Young people in the Justice System s with 11+ previous convictions.
- A positive impact on employability, mental health, and skill development.

Social Outcomes Contracts are an innovative way of funding services that have been evidenced to support more flexible and person-centred services that deliver better outcomes for participants while ensuring better value for money for the taxpayer, as the government only pay when meaningful long-term outcomes are achieved. Initial working capital funding is needed to launch a social outcomes contract, which in this case will be provided by socially motivated investors through Bridges Outcomes Partnerships. For more information on social outcomes partnerships, see the [GOLAB Social Outcomes Partnerships](#) report.



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Given these successes, the expansion of this model will involve sixteen Skill Mill teams across England, delivering social, environmental, and economic outcomes over the four-year contract period.

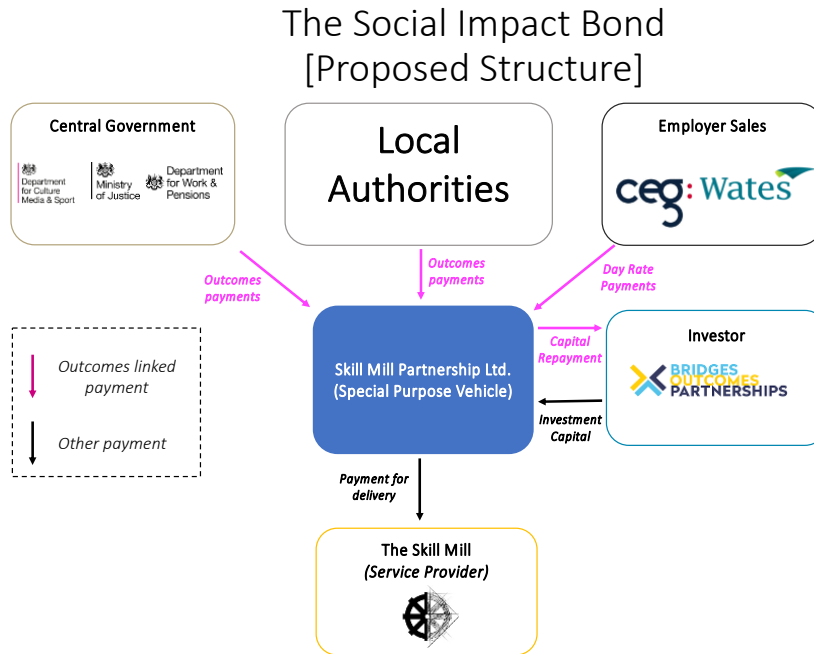


Figure 1 Proposed Contract structure

4. Objectives of the Social Outcomes Contract

The primary objectives of this Social Outcomes Contract are to:

- **Reduce reoffending:** Engage young people in structured, paid employment, leading to lower reoffending rates.
- **Improve employment prospects:** Provide skills development and vocational training to help young people transition into sustained employment or further education.
- **Enhance social outcomes:** Improve mental health, social skills, and community integration for Young people in the Justice System.
- **Deliver measurable social impact:** Outcomes will be tracked through robust evaluation metrics, including reoffending rates, employment, and well-being improvements.

Beyond its direct impact, the program will create added value for YOTs by fostering connections with national and local employers. These relationships can also be leveraged to additionally help justice involved young people **not engaged in the Skill Mill** programme **access paid work opportunities.**



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In **each area** a typical Skill Mill team will work with 8 Young People in the Justice System per year, 32 over the life of the programme. The expected outcomes from a typical programme would be;

- 670 hours of work placement delivered per Skill Mill participant
- Nationally recognised qualifications achieved for approximately 30 Skill Mill participants
- Preventing re-offending for an estimated 25 young people.
- Support a minimum of 20 young people to secure long-term sustainable employment.
- Access to labour market opportunities for the wider YJS cohorts.

5. Requirements for Participation

Youth Justice Services that are interested in participating must:

- **Demonstrate commitment** to the objectives of the Social Outcomes Contract and the expansion of The Skill Mill program.
- Have **capacity to refer** young people into the program and provide necessary support services in collaboration with The Skill Mill.
- Work with local partners to ensure the holistic development of participants.
- Ensure **sign-off from the representative of the Chief Executive of their Local Authority**, ensuring alignment with the broader children's services strategy.
- Commit to an **annual funding contribution of at least £60,000** for 4 years, to pay for the **outcomes** achieved. This funding must be able to be drawn down flexibly across the 4 years of the programme, as and when outcomes are achieved.
- We will discuss funding options with each YOT individually. These will be informed in part by progress made in securing central government support for the programme.

6. Procurement Process and Information Sharing

All successful YOTs will be required to follow the **agreed procurement process**, in which a lead council will be appointed to manage the procurement and legal procedures on behalf of the other YOT teams, and comply with the **information-sharing protocols** established in the previous Social Outcomes Contract delivered through the Life Chances Fund. This includes ensuring transparency, proper documentation, and compliance with data protection regulations throughout the four-year project period.

7. Outcome Metrics

Key outcomes will include:

- **Reduction in reoffending rates:** Measured over a 12-month period from programme commencement date.
- **Employment outcomes:** The number of participants transitioning into full-time employment, apprenticeships, or further education / training.
- **Skills acquisition:** Completion of accredited skills training relevant to local job markets.
- **Mental and physical well-being improvements:** Enhanced well-being outcomes through support and intervention programs.

8. Submission Guidelines

Interested YOTs should submit the EOI template attached to this letter including the following:

- A **summary of your team's capacity** to engage with The Skill Mill and support the delivery of the project's objectives.
- A clear outline of how your YOT will collaborate with The Skill Mill and other partners to achieve the agreed-upon outcomes.
- Evidence of **support from the Local Authority's Youth Offending partnership.**
- Proposed **local outcomes** that align with national objectives on youth offending and employability.
- Evidence of need locally for post 16 ETE participation.

9. Timeline

- **Submission Deadline:** Friday 13th December 2024 5pm
- **Review and Shortlisting** Friday 20th December 2024
- **Final Selection:** Friday 27th December 2024
- **Co-Design contract specifications:** January – March 2025
- **Contract Commencement:** Approximately April 2025 – March 2029

10. Contact Information

For further information or to submit your EOI, please contact:

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