



Request for Tender

Audit of the range and type of agencies, or 'visitors' available for facilitation of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in post-primary schools

In the school setting, RSE is delivered in the context of SPHE and the school's teaching staff are the RSE/SPHE educators. The Department of Education and Science (DES) provides guidelines and resource materials to teachers to deliver RSE/SPHE in the classroom. While teachers are the educators for RSE/SPHE, opportunities exist within the RSE curriculum where outside facilitators, or 'visitors' to the classroom, may be of particular benefit. These may include delivering lessons devoted to sexual and reproductive health, sexual identity, sexual harassment and building sexual health literacy. In order to develop a more robust sense of the breadth of facilitators/visitors assisting post-primary teachers and schools to implement RSE/SPHE, a comprehensive audit of the range and type of existing organisations that currently provide classroom inputs on RSE/SPHE is required. This would include a description of the range, scale and nature of such services – their similarities and differences.

The outputs from this project, a joint initiative by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Crisis Pregnancy Agency (CPA, the Agency), will provide information and data that can, in the longer term, help inform the further development of existing guidelines or supports for schools and teachers. Outputs in the short term will support the development of practical recommendations for how schools, teachers and students can be best supported to use/engage outside agencies in RSE/SPHE delivery.

Background to this research:

Issues identified in a research report, jointly commissioned by the DES and the CPA in 2004, set the context for this project. The report, entitled 'Relationships and Sexuality Education in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education: An Assessment of the

Challenges to the Full Implementation of the Programme in Post-primary Schools', was launched by the Minister for Education and Science, Ms. Mary Hanafin in March 2007¹. The research found that while RSE/SPHE implementation levels improved since previous assessments, barriers to full RSE/SPHE implementation remain. Identifying and removing barriers to RSE/SPHE implementation is the impetus for the DES and CPA in addressing the issue of outside facilitators. Some of the findings of particular interest from the Mayock et al. (2007) study are outlined below:

- 90% of schools teach RSE/SPHE in First Year; this declines to 48% by Leaving Certificate year.
- 71% of schools agreed 'discomfort' of some teachers in teaching RSE/SPHE was an important barrier to full RSE/SPHE implementation.
- 40% of schools reported using 'outside facilitators' to teach RSE/SPHE; 80% of respondents thought that having more outside facilitators would help enhance future RSE/SPHE delivery.
- Government level respondents interviewed for this study felt the role of 'outside facilitators' merited further development and expansion.
- Regional level respondents interviewed for this study expressed strong views on *"the need for outside facilitators to complement the schools existing RSE programme as a way of ensuring that holistic and consistent messages are delivered to students and to avoid an over-emphasis on preventive messages"*.

It is crucial that where outside facilitators are supporting RSE in post-primary schools that they are doing so in a way that is consistent with the RSE/SPHE model of delivery outlined in the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Curriculum and Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, and the Junior Cycle Guidelines for Teachers, also produced by the NCCA. 'Outside facilitation' is seen as supporting the RSE/SPHE model of delivery as part of an enabling curriculum; the aim is to *assist* teachers (who remain the primary educators) when schools agree to allow facilitators/visitors input into the school curriculum and environment.

The origins of the proposed project lie in recommendations contained in the report; it made the following recommendations with regard to the use of outside facilitators in the teaching of RSE/SPHE in post-primary schools:

- In schools where outside agencies are involved in facilitating RSE, greater care should be taken to ensure that their input is in line with school policy. Schools also need to ensure that the work of outside facilitators complements, rather than substitutes, the work of RSE/SPHE teachers in the school.

¹ Relationships and Sexuality Education in the context of Social, Personal and Health Education: An Assessment of the Challenges to the Full Implementation of the Programme in Post-primary Schools' Paula Mayock, Karl Kitching, Mark Morgan. February 2007. Dublin. ISBN: 1-905199-09-0

- Schools should be encouraged to seek advice from the SPHE Support Service and RSE Co-ordinator on assessing the benefits of having an outside facilitator teaching RSE in the school.
- Further research is required on the role of outside agencies in the delivery of school-based RSE/SPHE. This research needs to address the apparent lack of co-ordination/standardisation in this area and take account of who is doing this work and how often. Consideration also needs to be given to the content (and emphasis therein) of outside-agency teaching within RSE/SPHE.

Project Aims:

- To document and describe the range, scale and nature of outside facilitators or 'visitor' services, and the characteristics and framework of service delivery for teaching RSE/SPHE in post-primary schools. In doing so, reliable and comprehensive information will be gleaned that will be used to help support the full implementation of RSE/SPHE.
- To support the further development of 'good practice' guidelines and/or models for RSE delivery by outside facilitators ('visitors') at post-primary level.
- To assist teachers and schools to adopt an evidence-based approach when formulating plans and policies that allow external people into the school environment.

Objectives

This audit should:

1. Develop a sampling strategy that will achieve the participation of a representative sample of post-primary schools who engage(d) 'visitors' for RSE – representative in terms of size, gender mix, socio-economic mix of students, geographical spread, type of school (voluntary secondary, vocational or community / comprehensive). The final sample should comprise not less than 100 schools.
 - The initial sample will include schools that do and do not use 'visitors' services.
 - The study will compare those schools that do, with those that do not, use 'visitors' in terms of attributes described in 1. above, and other areas deemed relevant by the researchers.
 - The main focus of the study is on schools that use 'visitors' services – these will comprise the final sample.
2. Describe the range and type of organisations and individuals who provide 'visitors' services to schools, or who have done so in the recent past.
 - The study will document the extent and frequency of use of 'visitors' by schools in the final sample – this to include a typology or way to classify the range of 'visitors' e.g. individual health or other professionals, individuals

not aligned to any professional or occupational grouping, organisations (Accord for instance; other examples are given in 3. below).

3. Develop a framework that will describe 'visitor' characteristics, as reported by the respondent. These should include all relevant aspects, known to the respondent, of the individual or organisation, for example:
 - organisational profile (local/regional national) or affiliation if any (i.e. named national/regional organisation – Accord, Faith groups, IFPA or LIFE are examples)
 - size of organisation
 - range of functions provided
 - professional status or special training received by 'visitors'
 - affiliation to groups or organisations or employment (where relevant to their 'visitor' function)
 - voluntary or other arrangement for services rendered.
4. The descriptive framework will provide information not alone for the organisations or individuals providing services but on the models of service delivery; thus issues that should be addressed will include:
 - single class or lecture, or series of same (to include duration)
 - sole deliverer of class/lecture (i.e. with/ without regular teacher presence or participation)
 - types of resources/materials used
 - the degree to which evaluations of the 'visitor' service are conducted, as per SPHE guidelines, or other forms

(The above suggested lists of characteristics and descriptive elements are not exhaustive – the research process itself will reveal further attributes of interest and relevance to the aims of the research).
5. Depending on the number of 'visitors' identified by schools, it may be necessary to draw a sample from the 'visitors', in order to provide a comprehensive but manageable description of the range and characteristics of the services they provide.
6. Draw comparisons amongst the largest and / or 'most frequently used' visitors, in terms of range, characteristics and models of delivery and other attributes relevant to their role and function, revealed by the research process.
7. Describe the process by which 'visitors' engage with schools sampled; this should include as much as possible about the interaction between schools, 'visitors' and other agents if any, e.g. Regional Development Officers (RDOs) and /or Health Promotion Officers (HPOs); areas covered could include:
 - the procedure for inviting or arranging 'visitors' to the school
 - questions around existing guidelines for this interaction and how they are interpreted by both teachers and visitors
 - resource materials that may be sourced through various channels by teaching staff, and/or by 'visitors' for teaching RSE/SPHE (e.g. downloaded

from the internet, or provided by sources unsolicited by teaching staff/'visitors' from the commercial/ state /voluntary sector)

8. Identify and gather information from a selection of key individuals who, while not members of school staff, can provide data relevant to 7. above; such individuals may include DES personnel and SPHE support services personnel. It is envisaged that 8 to 10 selected individuals would be an appropriate number for this element of the research; guidance in selecting appropriate interviewees will be provided by the commissioners of the project.
9. Implement data gathering strategies that emerge as relevant in the course of research process. It may be that there is a preponderance of use of particular named organisations, e.g. Accord. If so, then senior personnel in such organisations may provide data of particular interest for the project. It is anticipated that this process would entail 4-6 interviews.

The singular purpose of this audit is to gain a comprehensive profile and understanding of the use of outside facilitators, to teach RSE/SPHE in post primary schools.

A review of the international literature relevant to the project was recently commissioned by the Agency will be made available to the researcher(s) for this audit.

Management of the project

The project will be managed by a steering group comprising representatives from both the CPA and the DES (the Partners, Partnership), with the possibility of coopting others as the project progresses. Day to day liaison between researchers and the steering group will be through the Research Officer of the Crisis Pregnancy Agency.

Research Deliverables

- A draft and final questionnaire to be developed and signed off by the steering group.
- A series of progress reports on the research process.
- A draft research report (of a quality that is close to final) describing findings from the audit; this to be delivered with sufficient time to receive and incorporate feedback from the commissioners of the research.
- A final report delivered in electronic and hard copy to the commissioners within the agreed timelines.
- A series of recommendations are required as to how processes surrounding outside facilitation for RSE/SPHE can be further developed from the insights gained in conducting the audit.
- A presentation of the research findings by the researchers to the commissioners of the main findings of the research.

Budget and proposed timeframe

The maximum budget available for the research will be €50,000 inclusive of VAT. The tender will be awarded by the end of June 2009

The project is envisaged as taking 9 - 12 months to complete and the first stages would commence in July 2009. Fieldwork will need to commence in September 2009.

Tender requirements

The Partners would like prospective tenders to focus on *how* they will identify, describe, and compare the range of organisations and individuals involved in 'outside facilitation' for RSE/SPHE, and how they engage with schools. Tenders should outline more specifically:

1. The skills required to conduct an audit of this type.
2. The approach to be taken in conducting this audit. The researchers will need to comprehensively detail all aspects of the methodological approach they are recommending in their tender (will a singular or mixed mode approach to data collection be taken?). The intended approach to sampling and acquiring schools' cooperation should be described by the researchers, including strategies to: ensure the most knowledgeable individual at the school level fills in the questionnaire; the optimal response rate is achieved; and ultimate achievement of a final sample that is representative of post-primary schools who engage 'visitors' for RSE to the classroom.
3. A description of how the audit protocol and tools will be developed; the methods for identifying and describing the range of organisations and individuals that provide services and how schools engage visitors.
4. The challenges in conducting an audit of this type and suggestions for how these challenges can be addressed.
5. In order to complete as comprehensive an audit as possible, the researchers will require the cooperation of appropriate personnel within the SPHE and RSE Support Services e.g. the Regional Development Officers (RDOs), Health Promotion Officers (HPOs) and others. The commissioners will assist with identifying relevant individuals who may assist in this process.
6. How they will liaise with the steering committee over the course of the project.
7. A detailed breakdown of the budget is required, exclusive of VAT.
8. A timeline for the project.

Budget guidance:

The budget allocated for this piece of research is €50,000 inclusive of VAT.

Timetable for reporting process:

The deadline for the final report will be June 2010.

Closing date for receipt of tenders is Friday, June 19th, 2009. Tenders should be received at the above address not later than 12 noon on Friday, June 19th. Proposals will

be opened by two officials of the Agency. Tenders received after the deadline will be returned unopened to the tenderer.

General conditions of Tender

Contractual arrangements are not within the scope of this document. However, the following conditions should be noted as they will form part of the final contract:

1. Any conflicts of interest involving a contractor must be fully disclosed to the Partners, particularly where there is a conflict of interest in relation to any recommendations or proposals put forward by the tenderer.
2. Any registerable interest involving the contractor and the Partners must be fully disclosed in the response to this Invitation to Tender, or should be communicated to the Partners immediately upon such information becoming known to the contractor. The terms 'registerable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per Section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1994.
3. Without prejudice, the Partners will endeavour to give potential respondents an accurate description of the requirements. However, tenderers should form their own conclusions about the methods and resources needed to meet those requirements. The Partners will not accept responsibility for the tenderers' assessment of the requirements.
4. The Partners will accept no responsibility for any costs incurred in formulating or presenting proposals.
5. Information supplied by tenderers will be treated as contractually binding. However, the Partners reserve the right to seek clarification or verification of any such information.
6. All materials and information disclosed to the tenderer during the course of the project shall be treated as confidential by the tenderer and any third parties engaged or consulted by them. Materials and any copies of the information to be returned on completion of the project will be identified to the tenderer when the material is provided.
7. All information provided by tenderers will be treated in strict confidence subject to the provisions of the points above. Similarly, the Partners require that all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender will be treated in strict confidence by tenderers.
8. The Partners undertake to ensure the confidentiality of information provided in response to this invitation to tender, subject to obligations under the law. The tenderer should notify the Partners if it considers that any of the information it supplies should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity.

9. Where a Tax Clearance Certificate expires within the course of the contract, the Partners reserve the right to seek a renewed certificate. All payments under the contract are conditional on the contractors being in possession of a valid certificate at all times.
10. Payment for all services covered by the contract issued to the successful tenderer will be on foot of appropriate invoices. Payment will be linked to the successful completion of tasks or project stages. Tasks / project stages will be discussed with the successful tenderer. Invoicing arrangements will be agreed with the successful tenderer, subject to the terms of the Prompt Payments Act.
11. Under the terms of the Prompt Payments Act the Partners undertake to pay invoices within 30 days of receipt of invoice (or delivery of service whichever is later). However, this is subject to the following:
- the invoice must be properly addressed to The Administration Manager, Crisis Pregnancy Agency, 4th Floor, 89-94 Capel Street, Dublin 1.
 - incorrect invoices will be returned for correction with consequential effects on the due date of payment in accordance with the Prompt Payments Act.
12. The Partnership is not bound to accept the lowest tender or any tender offered.
13. Prices and rates quoted should be expressed in Euro and exclusive of VAT. The VAT rate(s) applicable should be indicated separately. The tender cost quoted will hold good for 30 days after the closing date for receipt of tenders. Prices quoted in the tender cannot be increased during the currency of the contract.
14. The cost stated must be the tenderer's best and final offer.

Evaluation of Tenders and Award Criteria

The contract will be awarded from the qualifying tenders on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender applying the following award criteria, listed in order of priority (weights in brackets):

1. Value for money (40%)
2. Comprehensiveness and quality of the approach to the assignment (30%)
3. Expertise, experience and resources allocated to the research (30%)

Timetable for reporting process

The deadline for the final report will be May 2010

Submitting Tenders:

Proposals (3 copies) in a sealed envelope, marked "Research Tender" and addressed to:

Dr. Stephanie O'Keeffe
Research and Policy Manager
Crisis Pregnancy Agency
4th Floor
89-94 Capel Street
Dublin

Disclaimer

The Request for Tender contains no contractual offer of any kind. Any submission will be regarded as an offer by the tenderer and not as an acceptance by the tenderer of an offer made by the partners. No contractual relationship will exist except pursuant to a written contract signed by the partners and any successful service provider(s) for specific services. The partners are under no obligation to appoint any service provider as a result of this competition. Tenderers should note that receipt of an offer does not guarantee appointment as a service provider even if that offer contains what appears to be an acceptable proposal.

Notes

Tenders will be awarded in accordance with Article 45, EU Directive 2004/18/EC of 31 March 2004 (co-ordinating procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts).

If you have any queries in relation to this brief, please contact Ms. Mary Smith, Research Officer, Crisis Pregnancy Agency, 01-8146292 or msmith@crisispregnancy.ie