

Active **Partnerships**

Safe and Inclusive Club Cultures; The development of a Culture Assessment Approach for the Sport Welfare Officer (SWO) network

Invitation to Tender Documentation Pack

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Section 1. Background to this Invitation to Tender (ITT)

This ITT Documentation Pack

- The information included in this ITT documentation pack has been put together to support a response to tender by the potential supplier organisation(s).

- The information contained, should only be used in connection with the development of a tender response to the requirements.
- This pack is made up of:
 - o The background context to the purpose of this ITT, including 1 summary slide deck (Annex 1)
 - o The Monitoring Evaluation Framework for the project, including the Theory of Change (Annex 2)
 - o Examples of existing sector resources (Annex 3)
 - o Information regarding the response to tender process
 - o Response to tender guidance
 - o Evaluation criteria guidance

This Contract Opportunity

The Active Partnerships National Organisation (APNO) is seeking a Supplier to develop a Culture Assessment Approach for the Sport Welfare Officer (SWO) network. As part of the project, the Supplier will be responsible for;

- the development of a methodology
- the development of a culture assessment tool which can be used by SWOs as practitioners with clubs, or by clubs themselves
- the development of practitioner resources
- capacity building for SWOs to support with the delivery of the approach
- support for SWOs in implementing the approach with pilot clubs
- working with our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Partner to align the culture assessment tool with the SWO network Evaluation study
- sharing of findings and lessons with key audiences

A collaborative approach to working with the SWO network, partners and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) will be essential throughout. Any deliverables (including any intellectual property rights in the deliverables) which are created by the Supplier as part of the project will be owned by APNO, and the Supplier will need to develop these so that they can be made freely available to the sector.

Who the Active Partnerships National Organisation (APNO) is and what we do

Active Partnerships is a nationwide physical activity and sport network that exists to help make active lives the norm for everyone. We take a place-based approach to reducing inequalities through our network of 43 local active partnerships. We partner with local and national stakeholders to transform lives through physical activity and affect widespread social change. Our focus is on creating conditions in communities that enable sustainable impact. For more information please visit [our website](#).

The National Organisation

We are a small team with bold ambitions. As a membership organisation we connect, strengthen, and enable our network. Our role is not to manage local active partnerships. We bring places, people, organisations, sectors, policies, and ideas together to make change happen. We might be joining up local active partnerships, agencies, and national government departments, using our insight of places to drive national impact; or amplifying voices and agendas to ensure they are carried further than a single organisation could.

One of our core principles is to be a sustainable and ethical workplace. The climate we create as a fair, socially responsible and environmentally focused organisation is important to us. We are working to understand how best we embed this commitment into our everyday work lives, and we are resolute that being an ethical employer and improving sustainability in all areas of our work must be part of our organisational consciousness.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are at our core. It is central to our work in tackling inequalities, and we have an authentic and transparent approach to everything we do. From the values we hold to the policies and processes we put in place, and investment we make, our relentless place-based approach helps to reduce inequalities through our diverse network of experts across England. As an organisation we still have work to do but are firmly committed to inclusive practices which demonstrate fairness and equality in everything we do.

All of our work is underpinned by the following values:

- **Passion for our purpose** – our vision is our passion because we all believe in the power of sport and physical activity to change lives and tackle inequalities
- **A collaborative spirit** – we know that when we welcome, listen, understand and respect each other's knowledge and perspectives we're more creative, flexible and open to ideas.
- **Trust brings connectivity** – we work through building relationships.

Who is commissioning this work?

The APNO is seeking an organisation(s), to assist the APNO team on the development, implementation and review of a Culture Assessment approach, for the Sport Welfare Officer network between April 2025 and September 2026.

The APNO is therefore looking to enter into a contract for services for this work. Sport England has provided funding to Active Partnerships to deliver the Sport Welfare Officer Network until March 2027. Sport England is an arm's-length body of government established by Royal Charter in 1996. They are responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and helping more people get active across England. They use their expertise, insight, campaigns and targeted funding from the government and the National Lottery to do just that. In January 2021 Sport England launched a new strategy for the sector, Uniting the Movement, with a 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. Find out more at www.sportengland.org

Key partners

The Sport Welfare Officer network was developed from its inception in a collaborative way with Sport England, representatives from Active Partnerships, APNO, NGBs, Sport England, the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and the Ann Craft Trust (ACT). A Project Oversight Group of key partners is overseeing the delivery and evaluation phases of the project.

The CPSU and ACT are providing ongoing support and advice to the APNO team to ensure the project aligns with best practice in relation to Child and Adult Safeguarding. Ecorys UK and Professor Melanie Lang, from Edgehill University, were appointed as the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Partner up until May 2027.

The Sport Welfare Officer Network – Further Information

The Sport Welfare Officer network is a nationwide workforce employed across England, to support National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and local clubs to promote good practice and safe sport for children, young people and adults at a local level.

The officers help support clubs move from welfare compliance to developing effective welfare and inclusive cultures. The officers will add capacity and expertise to the existing safeguarding work of NGBs and Active Partnerships.

Sport England's policy response to The Whyte Review, published with UK Sport in January 2023, included the proposal to fund this network using National Lottery funding. Sport Welfare Officers are being employed by, and are based within, local Active Partnerships.

Recruitment of the new Sport Welfare Officers took a phased approach from October 2023. The officers are currently funded until March 2027. In addition, two national officers including Laura Middleton, Strategic Lead for Welfare and Katy Thompson, Programme Manager, are employed within the Active Partnerships National Organisation to support and connect the work at a national and local level. The Active Partnerships National Organisation is also supporting the administration of central resources, including training.

The supporting slide deck (Annex 1) in this ITT Documentation pack provides further information about the project, including a summary of:

- The APNO
- The Sport Welfare Officer network
- The wider context
- Ways of working
- Our journey so far
- SWO Universal Offer
- How we offer support

The supporting slide deck (Annex 2), is the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning Framework and includes the full Theory of Change.

The supporting document (Annex 3), contains a list of links to sport and physical activity sector best practice.

Supplier role

We are now seeking a supplier to lead on developing a Club Culture Assessment methodology, with accompanying resources, training, support and culture assessment tool, aimed at supporting sports clubs in creating safer and more inclusive cultures in clubs and improved experiences for all.

Given the broader context for this project, it is an important and high-profile piece of work, which could be subject to scrutiny throughout and beyond March 2027.

We want the approach to be meaningful and usable for Sport Welfare Officers, and clubs, and provide learning and best practice for the wider sector. It needs to be developed in collaboration with partners, and in particular NGBs to ensure it meets the needs of their sports and harnesses the potential of collaborative working. It also needs to be sensitive to the context the network is working in, and the pressures faced by community sports clubs and volunteers. Sports clubs will all likely be at different starting points in terms of safeguarding and welfare culture and practice, and the approach will need to be strengths based and adaptive to different sporting contexts.

APNO reserves the right to engage with multiple suppliers and support negotiations for how multiple suppliers will work together on this piece of work.

The full scope of the work is outlined in the next section.

Alignment with other best practice tools and resources

There are many other resources available both within Sport, and beyond which are available to assist Sports Clubs to assess their culture. APNO are looking for the development of a methodology which aligns or complements key partner resources such as those available through CPSU, ACT and Safe in Sport International to ensure consistency of approach and messaging across the sector. Links to a sample of other resources can be found in Annex 3. The approach could consider the inclusion of existing resources and training, to bring the relevant skills and knowledge to the clubs the network is working with. Any approach must encompass a methodology which is applicable to both children and adults.

Section 2. Club Culture Assessment Approach development

Purpose of the Culture Assessment approach

The Club Culture Assessment approach forms an important part of the project. It will allow a consistency of delivery across the network.

It is also an important component of the Evaluation study, as we seek to understand the contribution of the network towards improved welfare practice and strong welfare culture among the clubs we are working with. Appendix 2 – MEL Framework and Theory of Change

The main activities of the network are detailed in the Theory of Change. One of the activities is the delivery of the SWO Universal Offer. The SWO Universal Offer describes the CORE approaches which will be delivered nationally; and a notable element for this tender is the approach to 'Offer Support; which includes 'help with developing safer and more inclusive club cultures'.

The methodological approach should take clubs on a journey from welfare compliance to creating and embedding sustainable, effective welfare cultures and therefore will improve the experiences for participants, staff and volunteers within the clubs.

The work comprises of five areas of focus;

1. Collaboration with Sport Welfare Officers and key partners including NGBs to develop methodology, culture assessment tool and practitioner resources
2. Upskilling of 63 Sport Welfare Officers, with recorded sessions for future capacity building of new SWOs to the network.
3. Supporting the delivery of the methodology with 12 pilot clubs
4. Alignment and contribution to the evaluation study, through the culture assessment tool and four case studies.
5. Review of approach, and cascade of learnings to key audiences.

The APNO will support with national conversations with NGBs to identify those who have interest and capacity to co-develop the approach, and be part of the pilot stage. Sport Welfare Officers in Active Partnerships will utilise their local relationships to identify and engage pilot clubs and provide ongoing mentoring and support throughout. The Supplier will work with the network to think creatively about how clubs may be encouraged to engage with the pilots trials, and the wider network potentially through the use of incentivisation and/or recognition of achievement.

We would expect the methodology to consider the following aspects;

- An approach which facilitates and builds understanding amongst club personnel (CWO/leaders) of what effective welfare culture looks like
- An approach which allows clubs to reflect on their current safeguarding and welfare practices, identifying strengths and opportunities
- An approach which allows contribution from differing perspectives within a club, ensuring the voice of participants is at the centre
- An approach which allows clubs to easily see changes to their welfare culture over time and use that insight to inform future priorities
- Inclusion of opportunity for shared learning with other clubs

- An approach which is relational, and which builds a supportive environment for learning, reflection and development
- An approach which provides clarity on recognised indicators of good practice around welfare culture

This work aligns with the role of APNO to connect and strengthen places, people and organisations, to enable change in safeguarding and welfare culture, and opportunities to develop best practice and shared learning.

This tender brief is led by one of our organisation's values, a collaborative spirit- welcoming the knowledge and perspective of organisations with expertise and being open to ideas to be more creative and forward thinking.

Collaboration

It is important that the methodology is developed with key partners, including NGBs and Sport Welfare Officers.

Local Sport Welfare Officers will work alongside the provider to:

- Build relationships with clubs and support them throughout the pilot stage
- Assist in supporting clubs during and between sessions, to progress their journey
- Provide further bespoke guidance, support and encouragement to ensure ongoing engagement as needed.

APNO will work alongside the provider to:

- Engage NGBs who are receiving support from the SWO project, to co-develop the methodology
- Identify NGBs whose clubs may be ready to receive additional support to assess their welfare culture
- Work with NGBs to explore options for aligning the approach with other departmental workstreams/projects, to encourage engagement
- Discuss with NGBs the opportunity for future collaboration, to embed the approach and leave a legacy tool for sector use
- Work with partners to consider the best location to site any resources or digital assets.

Section 3. Specification

Overall requirements

The APNO wishes to enter into a contract for services with an external organisation to provide the following services:

- Collaborative development of methodology, culture assessment tool and accompanying resources for Sport Welfare Officers. The approach, tool and resources should be for practitioner use and be available in a variety of formats to cater for the differing needs of clubs. The Supplier should consider how the tool and resources may also be adapted for independent use by clubs

- Capacity building sessions, initially for up to 10 Sport Welfare Officers who are supporting with pilot clubs
- Facilitation support (as required) with 12 pilot clubs, to test methodological approach with Sport Welfare Officers
- Review of approach, tool and resources
- Capacity building sessions for the rest of the SWO network, and legacy training assets (recordings) to allow upskilling of future SWOs
- Working with MEL partner to ensure Culture Assessment Tool data and learnings contribute to the SWO Evaluation Study, including a contribution of four Case Studies
- Working with NGBs to develop the approach, implement pilots, review and plan for future collaboration
- Dissemination of lessons and learnings to key audiences, including the Project Oversight Group, SWOs, NGBs and a wider stakeholder webinars and/or events.

Deliverables / Outcomes

- To develop a **clear project plan** with associated timelines for duration of the contract (April 2025 to September 2026). An outline of a project plan is required (as part of the response to tender process) to provide an indicative timeline for key elements of this project's development. A detailed project plan will be required in the early implementation phase of contract delivery.
- Design and develop a **methodological framework, facilitative practitioner resources, a culture assessment tool for use with and by clubs**, and for use by the wider sector as best practice.
- To provide a package of flexible **guidance, support and training** for the effective implementation of the approach at a local level. This will need to include video guides to ensure the longevity of the training resources for the future SWO workforce and beyond.
- Provide the APNO with **progress updates and presentations to the Project Oversight group and key partners as required**, in line with specific areas of interest and to comply with our governance and reporting structures. It will be important to provide updates on the understanding, capability and capacity of the workforce – and the barriers and/or opportunities in connecting with clubs.
- **Evaluation and review** of the approach
- **Case study data** to contribute to the Evaluation study
- Develop a **summary report** capturing key themes, learning and recommendations of future scaling/replicating the approach.
- The **sharing of lessons and findings** should also be built into plans. This might include attendance at collaborative events or online webinars.

Provider requirements

The commissioned organisation(s) must demonstrate:

- Expertise in safeguarding, welfare and cultural transformation within sport or similar sector.
- Experience in delivering high quality training and mentoring programs.
- Strong facilitation skills to support active/positive engagement and peer learning.
- Experience in developing case studies or similar to capture / demonstrate impact.
- Experience in developing assessment frameworks/tools, preferably to evidence/understand culture and cultural shifts over time.

Ways of working

- **SWO Ways of Working** – The supplier will be required to align their delivery and approach with the project Ways of Working (see Appendix 1)
- They should also align to **APNO values** in the way that the supplier operates throughout the evaluation period. These can be found within our strategy on [OUR WEBSITE](#)
- **Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion:** a fully inclusive approach should be embedded in work with SWOs, partners and clubs, where EEDI is fully considered in each component of the design and delivery.
- **Seek efficiencies** wherever possible e.g. aligning with existing tools and resources and data collection methods
- **Advocacy and support:** throughout the framework development, a collaborative co-design approach should be fostered working in collaboration with the APNO to drive innovation with better decision-making by including key strategic decision-makers / national partners on this journey
- **Working with the APNO:** As the APNO is responsible for tendering this opportunity, it will manage the contract and support its development throughout the timescales of this award. The appointed supplier will therefore be expected to work closely with, and be accountable to, the Strategic Lead for Welfare within the APNO, with an agreed process to monitor identified and agreed objectives.

Section 4. Timescales and budget

Timescales

The indicative timescale for this procurement process is set out below:

Stage	Date
Invitation to Tender issued	Friday 28 th February 2025
Deadline for clarification questions	Thursday 13 th March 2025
Deadline for application submission	Monday 17 th March 2025 4.00pm
Shortlisting	18 th – 19 th March 2025
Interviews	Monday 24 th March 2025 (online)
Notification of result to successful applicant	Wednesday 26 th March 2025; pending any due diligence checks
Project commencement	1 st April 2025 (subject to contract)

The APNO reserves the right to amend the above timetable.

Payment for services: the contract value is up to a **maximum of £30,000 inclusive of VAT** between April 2025 and March 2026. Please note, payment will only be made by APNO on receipt of a valid VAT invoice from the successful organisation.

Length of Contract: the contract is for 18 months from 1st April 2024 until 30th September 2026.

The APNO has the right to amend this start and end date depending on any adjustments that may have to be made to the programme or tender process.

Section 5. Response to Tender requirements

Key questions

The lead organisation is required to put together a response to tender document covering the questions below:

1. Please describe how and why your **organisation(s) experience and expertise** ensures you are well placed to provide services to the APNO and develop and deliver a high-quality methodology and support for the Sport Welfare Officer network. Please append relevant biographies and CVs. This should include:

- An understanding of the requirements of the brief
- An understanding of the wider welfare and safeguarding context in the sport and physical activity space and considerations for this evaluation in terms of the scrutiny the programme could come under. Please include any direct experience you have working in this space and what you've learned.
- Track record of your organisation(s) relevant expertise and experience in developing culture assessment approaches.
- Team members and their proposed roles in the project. This should include short biographies of the proposed team and appended CVs.

2. Describe how your organisation will develop the **Club Culture Assessment approach** and how you would ensure the involvement of key partners, NGBs and SWOs. Please include thoughts on how you may support SWOs, and work in collaboration to encourage the engagement of clubs.

This should include:

- How the approach may contribute to the existing work of NGBs and their safeguarding teams
- Consideration of existing tools and resources available in the sector and beyond
- Consideration of the context of sports clubs, and their capacity to engage
- Explanation of principles your organisation would look to embed in the approach

3. Describe your approach to **capacity building and facilitating learning** at all levels.

This should include:

- Consideration of existing knowledge, skills and capacity of the workforce
- Your proposed approach to building/developing capacity at a local level, including how you would approach designing and facilitating learning spaces

- How you would work collaboratively and embody the ways of working of the SWO network and values of, the APNO
- Your proposed approach to providing appropriate, proportionate and flexible support, guidance and training for the network.
- How you would ensure this Club Culture Assessment approach is appropriately linked with other partner assets.

4. Please describe your approach to **inclusion, research ethics, safeguarding and governance**.

This should include:

- Safeguarding and ethical considerations for working with clubs, and their participants
 - Data protection and management, and GDPR considerations and processes. Please include your organisation's relevant policies.
 - Safeguarding statement/policy(ies) of organisation(s) and how this will be applied to this project.
 - Governance arrangements, including quality assurance and sign off processes.
 - EEDI considerations. Please include your organisation's relevant policies.
5. Please identify any possible **issues or challenges** that could be encountered during the contract period and describe how you would attempt to overcome or avoid these. You should present this in a table to identify any potential risks and their mitigations associated with the issues or challenges you consider may be encountered.
6. **Project costs:** What is the cost for your organisation to provide this work up to a maximum of **£30,000 inclusive of VAT** to be achieved by the end of March 2026. Please provide the headline cost breakdown. Please include a table with costs for each activity and day rates.
7. Please provide a clear **project plan** to include indicative timelines for key activity and milestones (this can be appended as an additional attachment). Please note: the project plan may need to be shaped further with the APNO team and key partners once the Supplier has been appointed.
8. Please state whether your organisation(s) can begin delivery from 1st April 2025.
9. Please include general information about your organisation(s). This should include:
- **Organisation type** (Charity, Community Interest Company, Local Authority, University, Company Ltd by Guarantee, etc.)
 - **Registration Number(s)** (if applicable)
 - **Email address**
 - **Full Postal address** (all correspondence relating to this application will be sent to this address)
 - **The lead contact for this project** (name, position in organisation, telephone, email)
 - **Named Partners/Collaborators on the proposal and one sentence about the role they will play (if applicable).**

The response to tender should **not exceed 10 pages** (this does not include appendices)

Please submit any questions to via email to lmiddleton@activepartnerships.org

The Application Form should be submitted **by 4pm on Monday 17th March** via email to lmiddleton@activepartnerships.org

Section 6. ITT Evaluation Process and Interview

Assessment and Evaluation Panel

The responses provided will be assessed against the criteria below. An assessment panel will review all submissions and score the responses, as part of the short-listing process. An assessment panel meeting will then be held with the panellists to collate scores and validate the process. The three or four submissions with the highest score will then be invited to interview, which will take place online on **Thursday 18th March 2025**.

Assessment Criteria:

Criteria and the related questions	Weighting
<p>Q1. Experience and expertise This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the requirements of the brief • An understanding of the wider welfare and safeguarding context in the sport and physical activity space and considerations for this evaluation in terms of the scrutiny the programme could come under • Track record of your organisation’s relevant expertise and experience in developing similar work. This should include short biographies of the proposed team and appended CVs 	20%
<p>Q2. Club Culture assessment approach and methodology This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective ways to work collaboratively with key partners and SWOs in the development and design of the approach and methods • Testing and iterating the approach • The balance between robust assessment and the capacity and needs of local Sports clubs. • Ideas regarding Culture Assessment tool and resource development for practitioners • Ideas regarding principles for the methodology 	20%
<p>Q3. Capacity building and learning This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of skills and expertise which exist in the network, and how this may be developed • Effective approach to build capacity at a local level including designing learning to allow SWOs to facilitate the approach 	20%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations on working collaboratively with partners • Ability to be flexible to meet the needs of the project, network and clubs 	
<p>Q4. Inclusion, ethics, safeguarding and governance</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key considerations of inclusion, ethics, safeguarding and governance for the work, and the approach • Data protection and management and GDPR considerations and processes including relevant policy documents; • Safeguarding statement/policy(ies) of organisation(s) and how this will be applied to this evaluation and learning programme. • EEDI statement/policy(ies) of organisation(s) and how this will be applied to this evaluation and learning programme. • Governance arrangements, including quality assurance and sign off processes. 	20%
<p>Q5. Value for money</p> <p>To what extent the organisation’s cost for this service provides optimal value for money to achieve the full requirements of this tender opportunity. This should include a breakdown of costs and day rates for each team member against key activity (detailed for Year 1; summary for subsequent years).</p>	20%
Q6. Identification of relevant issues and challenges that may be encountered with possible solutions (using a table to identify risks and their mitigation).	Y/N
Q7. A project plan has been included and you have provided an overview of key project timelines.	Y/N
Q8. Organisation is able to start delivery April 2025.	Y/N

The Interview Process

If your organisation(s) is successful at assessment stage and invited to interview, you will be asked to expand on specific areas of your response(s) or to clarify or substantiate responses.

We anticipate the interview taking no longer than 1.5 hours.

The interviews will be scheduled for **Monday 24th March 2025**. These interviews will be **online**.

You will be notified if you have been invited to an interview by **Thursday 20th March 2025**.

The Outcome

Following the interviews, the interview panel will discuss and confirm selection of the preferred supplier.

The preferred supplier will be notified by **Wednesday 26th March 2025**.

Please note, if you are selected as the preferred supplier, you will be required to attend an inception meeting **w/c 31st March 2025** and start delivery soon after. In your submission, please confirm you are able to do this, subject to the timely review and signing of contract for services.

If you have any questions about the ITT, please contact:

Laura Middleton – lmiddleton@activepartnerships.org.uk

Before completing a response to tender, please read the following information regarding Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Assessment. You should only proceed if you are happy to comply with the Freedom of Information and Data Protection requirements.

Freedom of Information

Where the APNO are holding or gathering data on behalf of a public authority (in this case Sport England), the APNO may be required to assist in responding to an FOIA request which Sport England receives.

Some information is exempt from The Act, such as personal details. If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act, we will release it. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release, you should email us and tell us why when you apply.

Data Protection

As a registered charitable organisation, we must comply with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. We are committed to protecting your privacy and will ensure any personal information is handled properly under the Data Protection Act.

We will collect and process the following information:

Organisation name

Organisation type

Email

Postal address

Name of lead contact

Senior contact

Named collaborators

Under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the lawful bases we rely on for processing this information are:

We have a Legitimate Interest

We will use the information you give us in your application form for:

- assessing responses to tender
- monitoring the tender project
- evaluating the way our funding works and its effect.

We may also give copies of this information to individuals and organisations such as:

- Accountants and auditors
- Other organisations or groups involved in delivering your submission.
- Other organisations for the prevention and detection of fraud.

We will keep the Invitation to Tender responses until the process is complete, and an organisation has been appointed. We will then dispose of your information by digital deletion and supported by our IT provider (this will be a period of between 6-12 months).