



TreeHouse transition research project Tender brief

1. About transition for young people with autism

Autism is a lifelong neurological condition that affects 1 in 100 children in the UK (Office of National Statistics, 2005). This affects their communication, social understanding and imagination. Autism is a spectrum condition which means that it can vary from mild to severe.

Transition to adulthood is a challenging time for many young people with autism and their families.

Research undertaken by the North London Boroughs into transition services for young people with learning difficulties or disabilities in 2010 confirmed that there is:

- a significant shortage of specialist provision geared to the specific needs of these learners
- a worrying lack of preparedness and focus on this group of young people after they leave statutory education.

Recent changes in the funding and policy environment provide opportunities and challenges for the development of transition support for young people.

2. About TreeHouse

TreeHouse is the national charity for autism education. TreeHouse runs a special school for children and young people with autism; provides information and training for parents and professionals; commissions research and campaigns for change. Our vision is that children and young people with autism achieve their potential and live the life they choose.

TreeHouse's transition work includes:

- **TreeHouse School:** supporting students in their transition via person centred planning and an information, training and support service for families.
- **19 -25 Service:** developing a new service based in North London to support young people's access to education, employment, housing and community activities.
- **Policy work:** influencing policy to improve transition services for young people with autism across the UK.
- **Awareness raising:** promoting awareness of the needs of young people with autism and how to best meet them.

3. Transition research project

TreeHouse is now commissioning research into the provision of education to young people with autism aged 19 to 25 years to support their transition into adulthood. Funding for the project has been provided by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the Social Investment Business.

3.1 Aims

- To describe educational provision currently available for young people with autism in terms of the typology and features
- To measure the level of skills, experience, confidence and resources providers have to support young people with autism
- To identify key levers and barriers in the policy and funding environment to supporting young people with autism in education
- To identify opportunities for developing educational provision to better support young people with autism in terms of policy, practice or resource
- To gain a perspective on the experience of young people with autism aged 19 to 25 years in accessing and utilising educational services.

3.2 Scope

The project scope includes:

- Support of young people across the autism spectrum
- England only
- Mainstream and specialist provision in the public, commercial and voluntary sectors
- Provision that is formally identified as educational (colleges registered with the YPLA) as well as other providers that are not registered but provide educational support e.g. day care services

3.3 Principles

The project must be executed in line with the values of TreeHouse and therefore must:

- Focus on lifting aspirations for young people with autism
- Take into account the needs and views of young people and their families
- Be evidence based
- Be collaborative and inclusive of statutory partners, and build on existing research and networks. For example, we would expect the research project to build on a range of UK and international studies in this area, including:
 - The work on transition for young people with autism being led by the Social Policy Research Unit (ongoing)
 - The transition research being undertaken through the University of Newcastle led by Ann Le Couter
 - North London Boroughs LLDD Study (2010)
 - TreeHouse 19-25 Project Plan (Draft - 2010)
 - The All Party Parliamentary Group for Autism Transition Report (2009)
 - The Transition section of Aiming High for Disabled Children (2007)

- The Report from the Parliamentary Hearings on Services for Disabled Children (2006)
- The work of the National Transition Support Team and the Transition Support Programme
- The work of the Social Policy Research Unit on transition to adulthood for young people with autism

3.4 Timetable

Activity	Deadline	Lead
Brief disseminated	04.01.11	TreeHouse
Response to brief	21.01.11	Providers
Shorlisting of providers	25.01.11	TreeHouse
Interviews with providers	31.01.11	TreeHouse / Providers
Appointment of provider	01.02.11	TreeHouse
Initial meeting with provider	04.02.11	TreeHouse /Provider
Research plan submitted	14.02.11	Provider
Research plan approved	15.02.11	TreeHouse
Contract signed with provider	15.02.11	
Research commenced	16.02.11	Provider
First draft report produced	14.06.11	Provider
Feedback on first draft report provided	16.06.11	TreeHouse
Final report produced	23.06.11	Providers

3.5 Project management

	Detail	Role
Project sponsor	Director of CPR	Lead project
Steering Group	Director of Autism Services, Director of CPR, Provider, Parent, Funder, involvement of statutory partners as appropriate	Direct project, approve funding, approve providers, access networks
TreeHouse project support	Head of Policy and Public Affairs	Support day to day management of project
Provider project manager		Manage project day to day

3.6 Budget

The budget for this project is likely to be £25,000 inclusive of VAT and expenses.

3.7 Outputs

- Full research report in PDF and three bound hard copy format
- Executive summary of research

Project is to be delivered in accordance with the following quality expectations/standards/policy/laws:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All materials and text should be written to a high standard of clear and plain English, avoiding jargon. • The provider should be able to meet deadlines set and agreed. • The projects should be completed without risk to the reputation of TreeHouse. • All work must be carried out in line with Data Protection and other legal and good practise guidelines. • The work that is completed by the company appointed to undertake the tender is considered to be the sole property of TreeHouse. In consideration of the payments made by TreeHouse to the appointed company, the company will assign all of its right, title and interest in the Intellectual Property of the overall project to TreeHouse. • The scope of the work and terms and conditions will be outlined in a contract developed by TreeHouse once the work has been awarded. 	

4. Application process

How to apply	
Stage 1: Written Tenders/Project Proposals	
To submit:	Kate Williams, Head of Policy and Public Affairs E: kwilliams@treehouse.org.uk T: 020 8815 5441
Date due	By 4:00pm on the 21 st January 2011.
Format of the proposal	One copy - paper or electronic submission.
Limits to the tender (e.g. word or page length)	Maximum 8 pages not including attachments. Attachments to be limited to 2 pages.
Information to be provided and areas to be addressed in response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim and objectives as set out in this document • Proposed plan including methodology, resourcing and timescales • Anticipated challenges and risks and how to tackle these • How TreeHouse staff and groups will be involved in the project • Evidence of knowledge and experience of research, working with young people with disabilities and education for 19 -25 year olds. • Contact details for two references
Main assessment areas for written proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the TreeHouse purpose, work, audiences and constraints • Extensive experience in developing and delivering market and social research • Experience and knowledge of the people with disabilities and education • Demonstrable ability to deliver what is needed within the deadlines and budgets set.
Stage 2: Interviews and Presentations	
Presentation/Interviews:	Interviews will take place on 31 st January 2011