Invitation to Quote: Solihull Place - Research, Evaluation and Learning Partner

Issued by: Abi Dixon
Date: September, 2026
Contact for Queries and Submission: hello@thinkactive.org
Contract Value: Up to £24,000
Role Title: Solihull Place - Research, Evaluation and Learning Partner
Submission Deadline: 2nd October 2026 at 11pm
Contract Length: Until 31st September 2027
Reporting to: Abi Dixon, Development Director, abi.dixon@thinkactive.org
Location: Across Solihull - Office based in Leamington Spa.

About Think Active

Think Active is the **Active Partnership for Coventry, Solihull, and Warwickshire**, championing the power of sport, physical activity, and movement to transform lives and help people live well. We work with partners across health, education, sport, local government, and the voluntary sector to use physical activity and movement to tackle inequalities and support happier, healthier lives. Our work is increasingly focused on place-based systems change, recognising that creating the conditions for people to be active requires collaboration across organisations, communities and sectors. Read more at www.thinkactive.org .

1. Overview

Think Active is seeking to commission an experienced Research, Evaluation and Learning Partner to produce and implement a Solihull Place Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan. This will strengthen research, evaluation and learning practice, while enabling an understanding of the impact the investment from Sport England has had locally. Our approach is rooted in place-based working and systems thinking, recognising the complexity of behaviour change and the wider determinants of physical activity.

2. Purpose of the Work

The purpose of this commission is to appoint an experienced Research, Evaluation and Learning Partner who will support Think Active and its partners from both Solihull Active Minds (SAM) and the Solihull Community and Physical Activity Place Partnership.

The successful provider will work with Think Active and its Solihull place partners to co-create an evaluation and learning plan that enables us to understand how a number of funded projects are having an impact on the Solihull community. This will include collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, and analysing it, ensuring cycles of learning and action become an integral part of the place-based systems approach.

The partner will move beyond measuring activity and outcomes to understanding if, how and why change happens. Through the development and testing of '**If...Then...Because'** statements, the provider will continually test the assumptions that underpin this work, generate meaningful learning and adapt its approach as new evidence emerges

The provider will act as a trusted strategic adviser and critical friend throughout the commission.

3. Scope of Work

In line with Sport England and the National Learning Evaluation Partners descriptor plan (June 2026), the commissioned provider will produce a research, evaluation and learning plan which will:

- Develop a coherent, accessible and proportionate Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework that supports the developing Solihull Community Physical Activity Partnership, aligns with existing programmes (including Solihull Active Minds), and can be consistently applied across the partnership and its established and emerging thematic groups.
- Develop the **Solihull Active Minds, Research, Evaluation and Learning Framework** aligned to the four current projects within Solihull. This will demonstrate your use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
- Work with place partners to create a set of guiding principles and an ethos which will underpin the research, evaluation and learning work.

- Create a methodology for Solihull to complete the Systems Maturity Matrix, and Configurational Comparative Analysis.
- Utilise **'if...then...because...'** statements to explain and test our assumptions as we commission projects or approaches.
- Embed the use of the **'Moving Communities' Platform to gather participation data**.
- Work with other potential/future place-based research partners to understand their learning and how this can support and enhance the Solihull Community and Physical Activity Place Partnership, Solihull Active Minds, and other potential future pieces of work.
- Build evaluation and learning capability across the partnership by strengthening the confidence and capacity of Think Active, partner organisations and the partnership's thematic groups (including the VCFSE Infrastructure Partnership, Solihull Active Minds, Safeguarding and other developing workstreams) to use proportionate evaluation methods, share learning and demonstrate impact.
- Work in a whole-systems approach, recognising complexity and non-linear change.
- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded within all research, evaluation and learning work.
- Support Solihull Active Minds (SAM) to fulfil all external reporting requirements while maintaining a strong approach to learning and improvement.

The scope of work may evolve over the lifetime of the commission in response to organisational priorities, emerging learning and external requirements

4. Deliverables

Deliverables may include (but are not limited to):

Research, Evaluation and Learning Plan	Facilitate the co-design of Solihull place's Evaluation and Learning Plan using Sport England's Evaluation and Learning Plan Descriptor (June, 2026). This should be aligned to priorities of Solihull established through both the Solihull Active Minds group and Solihull Community Physical Activity. The current projects/priorities for this are: • Physical Activity Clinical Champion (PACC) Solihull • Solihull CAMHS Active Waiting Pilot • Solihull Community Physical Activity Place Partnership • System Maturity Matrix/Configurational Comparative Analysis
Theory of Change and use of 'If..Then…Because' Statements	• Support Think Active and its place partners to review and refine organisational and project Theories of Change and ensure evaluation methods are designed to test, strengthen and refine this over time. • Facilitate the development and testing of **"If...Then...Because..."** statements for each strategic priority to identify key assumptions to be tested;
Evaluation Methodologies	Recommend appropriate methodologies for evaluating complex systems change, including: • Test the assumptions within **If...Then...Because** statements, • Systems Maturity Matrix • Systems Mapping • Mixed methods evaluation. • Measurable outcomes • Qualitative and quantitative approaches. • Participation data collection
Learning and Reflection	Design and facilitate an organisational learning approach which embeds reflection into routine practice. This should include: • Learning workshops. • Reflection sessions. • Sense-making activities. • Learning reviews.

	• Knowledge sharing across programmes and Place Partnerships.
Training and Learning for the Think Active Team	• Facilitation of learning sessions, workshops or reflective spaces for the Think Active team and partners • Resources to support evaluation capacity-building and shared learning • Developing practical resources. • Producing templates and guidance. • Supporting colleagues to confidently commission and undertake evaluation. • Developing organisational confidence in monitoring, elevation and learning. • Ongoing advisory support and critical friend input throughout the commission.
Sport England Reporting	• Support the Think Active approach to reporting to Sport England and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Think Active welcomes proposals that suggest alternative or additional deliverables, provided they clearly support the purpose of the work and the development of evaluation capability within the organisation.

5. Budget and Timescale

- **Budget:** Up to £24,000
- **Contract start date:** October 2026
- **Contract timescales:** October 2026 – March 2027

6. Quotation Requirements

Please submit a short proposal that includes the following information:

1. Complete the following form Due Diligence form here

2. Submit a short proposal that includes the following information:

- Relevant knowledge experience and examples of similar work
- Your proposed approach to the work including:
  - Proposed methodology and approach
  - Risks and mitigation
- Project Plan, timeline, and milestones
- Names and roles of key individuals involved
- cost breakdown (inclusive of VAT and expenses, if applicable) including how you will ensure value for money
- Your commitment to sustainability, environmental impact, ethical practices, and social responsibility.

7. Our Criteria

The quotation will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Evidence of knowledge, expertise and experiences (30%)
- Suitability of the proposed approach (30%)
- Evidence of capacity to understand and deliver the work within the defined budget and timescales (20%)
- Value for Money (10%)
- Sustainability and Ethical Considerations, including commitment to sustainability, environmental impact, ethical practices, and social responsibility. (10%)

The percentage weighting indicates the importance of each area in the overall assessment.

8. Submission Process

- **Clarification Questions**: Submit to hello@thinkactive.org. Clarification questions and responses will be posted on the Think Active website.
- **Deadline for submission: 2nd October 2026 at 11pm.**
- **Submit to:** hello@thinkactive.org, referencing Think Active Solihull MEL Partner

9. Our Terms and Conditions

All procurement opportunities will be subject to our Supply of Services Terms and Conditions which are available here.

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