Annex A1
Technical Questionnaire

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1   This document allows us to evaluate the quality of your Service proposal for Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) for the region selected in the question before the Mandatory Declarations.

1.2   The document is split into 3 sections;

    1.2.1   Region of this response

        1.2.1.1   Please submit one copy of this template per lot you are bidding, this template is applicable the following Lots:

- East Midlands

- East of England

- London

- North East

- North West

- South Central

- South West

- Wales

- West Midlands

- Yorkshire and the Humber

        1.2.1.2   Note: The Technical Questionnaire for Kent, Surrey and Sussex differs to this form. Please do not submit this form in response to Lot 3 – Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

    1.2.2   Mandatory Declarations

        1.2.2.1   Please populate the checkbox table selecting 'Yes/No' from the drop down in the end column, and entering any additional information in the bottom row;

        1.2.2.2   If you state "No", you must provide an explanation, detailing which areas of the specification you cannot comply with, and how you propose to mitigate these failings to ensure there will be no gaps in service delivery. The Authority shall assess the mitigation provided and may, at its discretion, request additional information in relation to the submission where this requirement has not been substantially met and;

        1.2.2.3   reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder from the Call-Off Competition, in accordance with 1.2.2.2.

    1.2.3   Technical Criteria

1.2.3.1 Please provide a written response in the section marked 'Response' on each table

1.3 Bidders should complete all sections within this document if they wish to bid for Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) for any of the Lots.

1.4 The Methodology given within table 1 below will be used for the evaluation of the quality criteria unless otherwise specified within the response requirement.

1.5 Bidders should fully explain their answers and provide evidence backed up with examples to the question specifics. Bidders should aim to give the evaluator confidence that they can deliver the proposed service with features and benefits to MoJ. Unsubstantiated claims will not be given higher marks. Under no circumstances include any marketing information, materials and/or handbooks within your bid unless specifically requested to do so within the Limitation boxes.

1.6 Bidders should always provide their best possible proposal and answers for each individual question.

1.7 The Bidders Responses to each of the Award Criteria questions will be scored and weighted as shown in each individual question. These scores will determine the most economically advantageous Tender.

1.8 A statement that a particular requirement will be met is not in itself sufficient. Such Responses, or Responses that are ambiguous, may be taken as failing to meet the Requirement. Detailed information regarding how, when and to what extent a Requirement can be met must be provided where appropriate. Furthermore, if any requirement or part of a requirement cannot be met, this must be stated explicitly along with the reason why.

1.9 Bidders should be mindful that each criteria question may be evaluated in isolation. Where a bidder has already provided information that addresses a specific requirement in another question, this information should be re-stated, not simply referenced. Please note that any Response simply making reference to handbooks, marketing material or accreditations and not describing how this will be applied to the Requirement will not be accepted.

1.10 Please provide Responses clearly and concisely in a question answer format.

1.11 Word Count – All word counts stated for each specific question must be adhered to, if a response exceeds the relevant side limit, or the Authority determines a Supplier has included additional text as including but not limited to those identified in para 1.8, the additional text will not be considered by the Authority and will not be taken into account for the purposes of evaluation or moderation.

1.12 The technical evaluation will be split into a Mandatory Declaration checklist, and 4 Technical Criteria sections which have been weighted accordingly;

1.13 The Weightings of these sections will total 100% the weighting of each question is detailed below in the relevant section of the criteria, the response to each question will be evaluated and scored based on either;

(a) a pass/fail basis

(b) a weighted score with a minimum quality threshold; or

1.14 The Questions listed below will be evaluated against the criteria and scoring matrix detailed.

1.15 Technical Questionnaire responses should be uploaded as a <u>word document</u> to the appropriate question on the eSourcing portal. PDF documents's will not be accepted unless explicitly stated as otherwise in the limitations.

2. Scoring Methodology

2.1 The methodology given in the table below will be used for the evaluation of the award criteria unless otherwise specified within the Response requirement.

QUALITY THRESHOLD SCORE (%)	ASSESSMENT	INTERPRETATION
100	Exceptional	The Supplier's response: (a) meets all of the minimum stated criteria in an **exceptional manner** with a robust proposal that provides full confidence of an overall **extremely effective solution**, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources *OR* (b) meets all of the minimum stated criteria in an **acceptable manner** with a proposal that provides full confidence effective solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources, *AND* provides evidence of factor(s) that will add **exceptional value** beyond what is described in the criteria.
86.6	Very Good	The Supplier's response: (a) meets all of the minimum stated criteria in a **very good manner** with a robust proposal that provides full confidence of an overall **very effective solution**, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources *OR* (b) meets all of the minimum stated criteria in an **acceptable manner** with a proposal that provides full confidence effective solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources, *AND* provides evidence of factor(s) that will add **significant value** beyond what is described in the criteria.
73.3	Good	The Supplier's response: (a) meets all of the minimum stated criteria in a **good manner** with a robust proposal that provides full confidence of an overall **effective solution**, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources *OR* (b) meets all of the minimum stated criteria in an **acceptable manner** with a proposal that provides full confidence effective solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources, *AND* provides evidence of factor(s) that will add **some value** beyond what is described in the criteria.
60	Acceptable	The Supplier's response: meets all of the minimum stated criteria in an **acceptable manner** with a proposal that provides full confidence in an acceptable solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources. There may be **minor concerns** which are **easily resolvable** and in any event which **do not have a material impact** on the overall acceptability of the proposal.
40	Minor Reservations	The Supplier's response: <u>does not</u> fully meet one or more of the minimum stated criteria in an acceptable manner and/or meets the minimum stated criteria in an acceptable manner but <u>does not</u> provide full confidence in an acceptable solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources causing some **minor reservations** in one or more areas which **may be resolvable** but, if not, **may have a material impact** on the overall acceptability of the proposal.
20	Major Reservations	The Supplier's response: <u>does not</u> fully meet one or more of the minimum stated criteria in an acceptable manner and/or meets the minimum stated criteria in an acceptable manner but <u>does not</u> provide full confidence in an acceptable solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources, causing one or more **major reservations** in one or more areas are **unlikely to be resolvable** but and **may have a material impact** on the overall acceptability of the proposal.
0	Unacceptable	The Supplier's response: <u>does not</u> meet one or more of the minimum stated criteria in an acceptable manner and/or contains insufficient information to provide full confidence in an acceptable solution, including the relevant ability, understanding, expertise, skills and/or resources, causing **major reservations** in one or more areas that are **not resolvable** and **will have an impact** on the overall acceptability of the proposal.

3.   Region of this response

Please select the region of this response: LONDON

Choose a region.

Please rename this file with the same name convention described in the Annex B – Financial Model, but replacing FRT for TQ.

4.   Mandatory Declarations

	Question Area		Requirement – Select Yes/No	
MD-001	Service Description	1	Please can you confirm you have reviewed 'Schedule 2.1 – Services Description' and confirm that you understand and can deliver on the requirements and outcomes therein?	Yes
	Digital & Technology and Information Assurance	2	Please can you confirm that your organisation will comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018?	Yes
		3	Please can you confirm you have reviewed, understood and will be compliant with Schedule 2.3 (Standards) and Schedule and 2.4 (Information Security and Assurance) of the Framework Agreement?	Yes
		4	Please can you confirm your organisation will be compliant with the requirements of Security Level 1 (SL1)? To note; this includes Cyber Essentials (Basic) no later than two weeks prior to Call-off Commencement Date.	Yes
		5	Please can you confirm your organisation will upgrade to Cyber Essentials Plus, and comply with Service Level 2 (SL2), Service Level 3 (SL3) or Service Level 4 (SL4) of Schedule 2.4, if the Authority, at its sole discretion, determines additional Information Assurance is required of the Bidder of this contract at any stage during the contract term?	Yes
	Estates	6	Please confirm your compliance that services will be delivered in a way that supports environmental sustainability, in accordance with Schedule 2.3 of the Framework Agreement.	Yes
		7	The Bidder shall have a duty of care to provide a facility that meets basic H&S standards and is accessible to People on Probation and Bidder Personnel with protected characteristics (in the main but not limited to physical impairments), and takes into account the specific needs of users of the service in question. Please can you confirm that you will comply with this requirement?	Yes
		8	Please can you confirm your organisation will be compliant with the Legal and Regulatory Requirements as outlined in Appendix 1 – CoSA Supplier Own Site Suitability Review?	Yes
		9a	Please can you confirm your organisation will be compliant with the Best Practice Requirements as outlined in Appendix 1 – CoSA Supplier Own Site Suitability Review? (where this isn't possible please confirm you will comply with 4b to pass this mandatory question)	Yes
		9b	Where you can not comply with 4a please confirm you agree that adequate consideration has been applied and where necessary, mitigations are in place or are in development, and will be agreed by the Authority?	Choose an item.
		10	Not applicable	Choose an item.
		11	Please can you confirm that your estates solution will deliver an appropriate number of suitably geographically dispersed sites that reflect the needs of the service?	Yes
	Workforce	12	Please confirm that you have appropriate processes in place to effectively carry out a relevant transfer under TUPE in the event of this being required, including accuracy and timeliness of payroll and pension payments with no disruption to transferring staff, and replication of contractual terms as necessary? Please note that all Providers must respond to this question in line with the documentation provided in this Tender process, and that no other consideration(s) should be taken into account.	YES
			Enter any additional comments here	

4.   Technical Criteria Questions

5.1   The tables below sets' out the Award Criteria and weightings relating to the provision of the Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), please provide your responses to each requirement in the 'Response' box, and upload the completed document to ITT_6417 question 1.2.1 in the technical envelope on the Jaggaer esourcing portal.

5.2   In responding to the technical criteria questions, Bidders are required to provide detail on <u>all </u>the following areas (these are the Authority's "minimum requirements").

5.3   Bidders should have regard to the appropriate scoring Matrix and the Specification (Schedule 2.1 of the Draft Call-Off Contract) and the wider Draft Call-Off Contract Documentation where appropriate when responding to the question (and should note that since the requirements listed are expected to be covered as a minimum, it may be appropriate for Bidders to include additional information as part of the response to the question in order to achieve a higher score).

TC-001 – Approach to Service Delivery

Weighting:	30%	Quality Threshold:	60	Limitations

Question:	Up to 2,000 words;
The Authority requires the Bidder to deliver, at a minimum, the requirements outlined in the Overview of Service Requirements of the specification (Schedule 2.1) throughout the duration of Call-Off delivery period. **Part A** **A-1)** Please describe your full approach to delivering the requirements stated in 'Section 6 Overview of Service Requirements' (Schedule 2.1 of the Call-off Contract), including how you will ensure that Supplier Personnel maintain the CoSA standards required in the Circles UK Code of Practice as volumes of referrals fluctuate. **A-2)** Please explain how your approach described in part A will be tailored to meet the needs of Person(s) on Probation with protected characteristics. You must demonstrate an understanding of the challenges faced by Person(s) on Probation with each of the protected characteristics as stated in G1, Schedule 2.1 of the Call-Off Contract and how you aim to mitigate these. **PART B:** **B-1)** Please explain how you will tailor service delivery across the local landscape to meet the needs of People on Probation, including those who are difficult to reach geographically and those who find it difficult to engage. You must evidence a clear understanding of the challenges across the region and illustrate how this understanding will shape your service delivery approach to ensure a responsive delivery model with no gaps in provision. **B-2)** Please outline how your service delivery will be responsive to changes within the landscape, e.g. in response to a pandemic for example COVID-19.	**The response should be entered in this table in the cell below;** **Additional diagrams and tables can be submitted to support your response, however any wording within these shall be included in the overall word count.** **Line spacing 1.5** **Arial font size 11**

Response

PART A

A-1)

Circles SE developed COSA's practice in the UK encapsulated in the design of the 3 Key Principles (Saunders & Wilson), the underpinning Theoretical Model for COSA. Over 20 years we delivered 500 Circles maintain an 86% completion rate. We have successfully delivered Circles London for 7 years and will review and re-establish all systems and processes at mobilisation.

We are an approved member of CUK, subject to CUK Membership Review in December 2021. We achieved 96.5% compliance evidencing the meeting of national standards across delivery of COSA.

We have an intimate understanding of the Circles Model developing a Theory of Change (attached). Circles commence within 3 months of referral, running for 18 months with an agreed exit strategy. Coordinators agreed Action Plans, outcomes and timescales with Probation, SU and volunteers based on Suitability Assessment Report to support SUs to:

- Make effective transitions; from prison to community, utilising Through the Gate model (commences 3 months prior to release), from Approved Premises to independent living.

- Reduce emotional loneliness through development of community social networks, increased wellbeing, and pro-social identity.

- Accountability for risk management through improved self-efficacy, wellbeing, and resilience.

- Reintegrate in safe fulfilling way, developing appropriate relationships, pro-social interests and activities.

An effective Referral Pathway and monthly Referral Panel consisting of Probation and Circles staff will be re-established. Referrals are discussed in terms of compliance with suitability criteria, risk to volunteers, and time left of sentence. We responded to high Probation caseloads by introducing a telephone referral service providing a dedicated Coordinator to discuss cases and complete paperwork.

Coordinators are qualified professionals (meeting CUK competencies). Mandatory training and induction programme is completed with access to continuous professional development (quarterly) including safeguarding, attachment, and trauma. Staff contingency plans ensures availability of a pool of trained sessional Coordinators alongside current staff providing responsiveness to fluctuations across delivery including increasing referrals. Coordinators retain consistent caseloads ensuring SUs maintain relationships from assessment to closure of Circle; Changes are made in conjunction with Probation.

We have an Information Sharing Agreement with the MOJ, established Safeguarding, Risk Management, and Incident Reporting procedures verified by CUK. A Senior Manager is responsible for delivery, quarterly reporting, and staff supervision, supported by experienced Coordinators. From experience we have designed a KPI Framework ready for implementation with identified targets (referral, assessment, set up rates and caseloads).

Coordinators work in partnership with Probation, providing regular updates, and engaging with MAPPA meetings. Volunteers are trained to report concerns to professionals who make up the 'Outer Circle' which will take appropriate measures to prevent the SU from reoffending. The Coordinator mediates between the 'inner' and 'outer' Circles supervising the process. We will implement a rolling programme of promotion to probation teams providing continuity of knowledge and understanding across staff.

An effective process for recruiting and allocating volunteers is evidenced by 200 existing volunteers across London. Volunteers are screened (pre and post training interviews), receive training, development, and ongoing support as per Selection, Assessment and Supervision Policies and Procedures. Training Delivery is 'blended' utilising online and face to face resources. Volunteers receive 16 hours initial training, detailed training manual, policies and procedures, Code of Conduct, and access to a supplementary training programme (quarterly input), minimum additional one day. Volunteers sign a declaration confirming any breach can result in de-selection. Post training interviews cover reporting absences, safeguarding, risk escalation and incident reporting process. Volunteers receive a Circle mobile, key contact details, and out of office support line, ensuring effective communication.

We adapted the COSA model ensuring suitability for PoP with Protected Factor developing a specialist trauma led Circles model for adult rapists. Added Value is achieved through our Service User Engagement group, 'Rocketchat' and our work with the MOJ and external partnerships addressing employment barriers.

A Quality Assurance & Compliance subgroup meet quarterly, chaired by the Trustee QA lead. Responsibilities are compliance to CUK Code of Practice (CoP) standards, reviews and updates to all policies, procedures, staff, and volunteer training requirement i.e., implementation of procedures to support Coordinator decision-making for running of meetings where more than one volunteer cannot attend.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies and subgroup, ensure we actively promote equality and inclusiveness across staffing, SUs, and volunteers. Action for Trustee Racial Diversity is supporting recruitment at board level which will assist greater representation if the diverse characteristics across staff and volunteer communities. We are responsive to all Protected Characteristics and specific needs engaging specialist training, consultation, and supervision for staff and volunteers.

The COSA dashboard (attached London examples) collates data, shared quarterly with the Contract Manager. Exit satisfaction questionnaires and End of Service Reports are completed. External and internal referrals to additional services are managed in partnership with Probation. Access to free counselling, partner and family support programmes are available enhancing protective factors and risk management strategies.

A-2)

Strategically there is continuous reviewing and regular monitoring of all policy and procedure within the organisation by the Service User Engagement Group and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Group, allowing for appropriate adaptation of practice, protecting SUs with Protected Characteristics, ensuring a fair and equitable practice. We are implementing a new IT system that will safeguard this process from referral to completion for those with Protected Characteristics informing and enhancing the monitoring and reviewing process.

Adaptations / Actions Required to Ensure Accessibility for those identified under the 9 Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)

Age	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership	Pregnant / Maternity leave	Disability	Race	Religion/Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Adapted Models for young people	Volunteer Briefing / Training to cover specific issues related to gender dysmorphia and related trauma and	Access to Partner & Family Programmes	Childcare support with funding if required	Adapted Circle model for Learning Disability and Neuro diversity	Ensure training & understanding of Anti – Racist practice for staff & Volunteers	Liaison with community - based faith groups	Selection of appropriate volunteers	Promote volunteer awareness and appropriate Community resources
Requires additional volunteer training								
The needs of older persons								

assessed and accommodated	process of transitioning, All SUs are treated with dignity and respect for self-identity							
Work in partnership with residential specialist SWAYY and Glebe House supporting care leavers	Circles SE has experience of Circles for Transgender SUs respecting their chosen identity.	Awareness and responsivity to relationship dynamics	Awareness of specific personal situation and mitigate for that situation	Venue assessment for access & Hearing loops etc	Targeted volunteer recruitment strategy. Engagement with cultural community groups	Volunteer Briefing to cover specific issues	Evaluation of proposed Female Model for COSA	Appropriate & additional Support to the SU - If needed.
Access to Family programme.	Services delivered in accordance with the Transgender policy framework	Awareness of Child Protection issues	Awareness of wider Child Protection issues	Partnerships with specialist organisations i.e., Respond	Access to Interpreters	Additional training (If required)	Additional & specific Volunteer training	Actively support and work local LBGTQ+ organisations

All SUs including those with Protected Characteristics have access to the Circles South East HUB, which is a team that provides specialist non- offence focussed services i.e., Family & Partner programme, Trauma Counsellors, and Survivor Services.

Circles SE has experience of working with both Veterans and Foreign National Offenders. For the former we liaised with SSAFA and the British Legion and SUs have access to our specialist HUB services. We successfully worked with Foreign National Offenders and undertook this work with Prisoners Abroad.

PART B

B-1)

We will utilise our 7-year successful Circles service delivery in London to adapt and develop this contract. Experience shows the need to consider the diverse and often transient population, utilising the local census results to support our approach. The large geographical area creates additional challenges to ensure equality of engagement opportunity. We implemented a dashboard and referral panel, providing a review process to monitor delivery and ensure area-wide equality of service. This collaborative approach, (which we will reinstate), to referral generations enables early identification and addressing of any anomalies.

Coordinators attend Probation Team meetings to manage changes in staffing ensuring renewed knowledge and understanding of service. We provide additional service to offices experiencing workload pressures whereby a Coordinator completes referral paperwork with Officers over the phone.

We've maintained an experienced team of 200 volunteers across London; with Circle delivery in all areas, including outer London zones where transport links are not as dense as in central areas. We have never been unable to offer a service to a PoP assessed as suitable or assessed anyone as unsuitable due to difficulties in finding suitable volunteers.

We have delivered 500 Circles with diverse populations since 2002 and are innovative in our approached to SU engagement. We developed our service delivery within the framework of the CUK CoP to enable responsiveness to the needs of the individual, supporting them to engage, developing their action plan and meeting their personalised objectives. We provide Easy Read documents and communication passports, address difficulties in personal interaction with others. We have a partnership arrangements with Respond to deliver Circles to those with significant Learning Disabilities who struggle to engage with the core model despite adaptions offered. Individuals' mobility, mental health, learning, and communication styles are discussed with volunteers in the planning stage. Flexible approaches include crafts, board games, quizzes, and pets in Circle meetings for those experiencing anxiety.

The Volunteer's relationship with the SU embodies Desistence Theory (McNeil, Maruna et al). Building trusted relationships compliments the professional input from Probation, encouraging engagement, desistence, and increasing belief in a future offence-free life. The relationship with Probation is key to our success, particularly with individuals who have difficulty connecting the professional involvement to support for their reintegration. Professionals are updated on developments and invited to quarterly review meetings, facilitating PoP's understanding of importance of connection between professional management and their identity as a member of the community.

'RocketChat', offers support in real time providing added value. A secure, anonymous way to communicate in-between meetings with professional oversight. Coordinators oversee with robust controls ensuring privacy and adherence to any licence/SHPO conditions. One PoP successfully negotiated new working terms with his employer rather than quitting due to anxiety. SU communicated his intention to quit and volunteers responded providing support and options to consider.

B-2)

In 2020, to minimise the impact of COVID19, we implemented multiple measures to support SUs, volunteers, staff and statutory partners. A recovery plan, prioritising safe and effective delivery within the imposed restrictions, facilitated responses to changes, restrictions, and regional variations. Introducing new policies whilst providing necessary service e.g., Door Step Drop Off, enabling volunteers to take essential supplies to shielding SUs. We moved meetings online/telephone where appropriate. With increased anxiety and isolation on SUs, and the potential risk they pose to others, Circle closures were suspended, ensuring continuity of support. For SUs waiting, we offered our newly developed Interim Mentoring Support Service (IMSS). Utilising 600 volunteers across the South East we allocated experienced mentors to each pending case providing telephone/online support. IMSS has become a valuable intervention. Our ability to be prompt and effective in implementing emergency strategies is a key strength in remaining responsive in difficult circumstances.

Total Word Count – (Bidders to self-populate)	1984
	2 Supporting documents

TC-002 – Supplier Personnel Skills and Continuity

Weighting:	25%	Quality Threshold:	60	Limitations

Question:	Up to 1,500 words;

The Authority requires the Bidder to advertise, recruit, train, support and retain Supplier Personnel (including volunteers) across the region to be able to deliver the Circles of Support and Accountability Service in a way that, reflects the diversity of the local community as outlined in the Overview of Service Requirements of the Specification (Schedule 2.1 of the Call-Off Contract).

PART A:

A-1) Please provide detail on how you will recruit volunteers and prior to the Call-Off Commencement Date, including examples specific to the Geographical Location, and detailing the specific advertising methods you will utilise to promote role attraction. Please outline how you will continue to build the pool of volunteers thereafter to maintain delivery of the service. If you have an existing pool of volunteers, please detail how you intend to use these volunteers.

A-2) Please explain how your approach to A-1 will maximise opportunities for attracting people from diverse backgrounds, including those with protected characteristics, to build a pool of volunteers that represent the diverse characteristics of communities in the local geographies.

A-3) Please explain how you will manage your Supplier Personnel (including volunteers) in the events of fluctuating referral volumes (both increasing and decreasing).

PART B:

B-1) Please describe how you will ensure that all Supplier Personnel (including volunteers) who deliver or support to deliver the services will have the appropriate skills and knowledge.

B-2) Please explain how you will ensure training is up to date throughout the duration of the contract, including in response to any key changes in legislation, policy or best practice (specifically updates to Circles UK Code of Practice).

Part C:
Please describe what considerations you will make to ensure service continuity in the event of disruption and changing landscapes, in particular the following staffing events:
  a) Annual leave;
  b) Staff sickness;
  c) Attrition.

 (NB: You may wish to use examples and/or case studies of how you have previously handled similar situations).

Limitations column:

Up to 1,500 words;

The response should be entered in this table in the cell below;

Additional diagrams and tables can be submitted to support your response, however any wording within these shall be included in the overall word count.

Line spacing 1.5

Arial font size 11

Response

A-1)

We have 200 volunteers across London trained and ready to deliver Circles in London.

Our volunteer recruitment and retention strategy cover all operational regions. In London, we advertise with do-it.org across all boroughs. Keywords attract people with a range of associated interests. Relationships with London Universities resulted in regular presentations, detailing what we require and what we offer. We would continue these relationships and resume our attendance at volunteer fairs, engaging with community groups, and seeking additional contacts. All information is delivered in a variety of ways; written, verbally and online.

At the time of contract closure, we were running bi-monthly training programmes. Our retention rate is excellent, with 2/3rds of our volunteers remaining with us after their initial 18-month commitment, due in part to the continuous personal development and support provided.

A-2)

Our strategy is to assess the locality, and engage local faith and community groups, advertise in doctors' surgeries, community centres, local interest groups and their newsletters.

In London we used 'do.it.org' advertising in each borough, contacting a variety of local faith and community interest groups. This networking resulted in both diversity and representation of many with Protected Characteristics. Building local relationships, we have spoken at Quaker meetings, Women's Institute, LBGTQ+ groups, University of the 3rd Age, Samaritans, DWP, church groups, and Victim Liaison services.

This approach would be on-going, recognising that community demographics are ever-changing and need constant monitoring. We would reinstate continual assessment of localities and use existing links and establish new relationships to build community contacts.

Our volunteer recruitment process is robust, offering support to reduce unnecessary barriers. An informal 'interview' allows us to explore possible barriers such as literacy, training attendance/accessibility, religious observance, prior to volunteering. An example is volunteers requesting daytime Circles, as evenings are not suitable during Ramadan.

We routinely run training both weekday and weekends, to ensure that potential volunteers who have commitments are not excluded.

We have a database of all 600+ volunteers highlighting their diversity and their skills, adding value in all project areas. In recognition of the importance of their needs and skills, we are in the process of enhancing our Information System to make it easier to manage and support the volunteer pool effectively.

A-3)

Continually monitoring, reviewing, and assessing performance, allows us to ameliorate any risks to delivery. Our commitment to this is exampled in the updating of our Information Systems, completed by the call off period, providing a comprehensive appraisal of service delivery enabling earlier detection of any fluctuations.

Monthly dashboard input and collaborative discussion with referral panel partnership colleagues remain key to this approach.

Experience of fluctuations in referrals resulted in our need to increase and decrease volunteer numbers. Increased need is managed by additional training events. We have the capacity to mobilize staff when required. A decrease in need, resulted in the suspension of volunteer training whilst increasing contact with those waiting. If the decrease continues, active volunteers can undertake mentoring in other geographical areas within one of our telephone/online services.

Our staff are skilled professionals working across the South East region. This is key to our flexibility in the management of referral fluctuation. All our staff have extensive experience of work within HMPPS/Police and have completed the CUK Coordinator training, ensuring they have a standardised level of understanding to compliment those with local knowledge. We can redeploy across all areas ensuring any fluctuations in volume can be managed appropriately and without disruption to service. Depending on the reasons for decrease in referrals in a particular area, we would increase promotional work within the region, increasing the support offered Probation Practitioners.

B-1)

Circles SE initially developed the recruitment, assessment, training, and selection, of volunteers. Over 20 years' experience ensures our staff and volunteers having appropriate skills and knowledge to undertake the delivery of Circles. We manage 600+ volunteers across the London and South East.

Coordinators are recruited and trained adhering to the CUK CoP. Staff are appropriately qualified with experience in the field of sexual violence. Required to attend the Coordinator CUK training, they also complete a 3-month induction programme including extensive shadowing of experienced staff. They receive a Coordinator Handbook and Staff Code of Conduct.

CUK training covers all requirements detailed in G6, Schedule 2.1 apart from domestic violence and extremism. This is provided for Circles SE by specialist agencies. We ensure staff's continuing professional development through supervision and training. A Training Needs Assessment Process ensures knowledge and skills are regularly reviewed. The annual training programme includes mandatory and refresher training quarterly across key subjects.

Volunteers represent their community. Diversity is key. Once interviewed, volunteers receive 16 hours training, post training interviews, DBS checks and ongoing supervision. Volunteer training covers all relevant subjects mandated by CUK.

Circles SE has a Staff / Volunteer Training and Wellbeing panel and Volunteer Training Subgroup responsible for ensuring all have appropriate skills and knowledge. The Training Subgroup is tasked with ensuring that the initial volunteer training programme and the additional training, includes relevant practice developments. The initial training has recently been updated ensuring that both the restorative and desistance elements of Circles is included.

Volunteers involved in specialist services receive additional training i.e., trauma recovery, attachment theory etc. Volunteers are briefed on relevance to their SU specifically.

Regular supplementary volunteer training, covers topics including complex needs, supporting those with Protected Characteristics, resilience, safeguarding and denial.

Our 'Towards Excellence Week', focuses on volunteer development. This year's programme included 20 different seminars including The SU's Journey, Through the Gate, Trauma Recovery Model, The Role gender plays in Sexual Abuse, and Online Child Sexual Exploitation. SUs also delivered a seminar.

Prior to engagement with a SU, all volunteers in that Circle are introduced to each other. This is a planning meeting where volunteers receive a detailed briefing, ensuring all volunteers feel comfortable and confident entering the Circle. Volunteers are provided with a complete risk assessment, detailed flowcharts highlighting the process of reporting concerning information. Regular Circle reviews and volunteer supervision ensure best practice.

B-2)

We have a QA & Compliance Trustee and Staff lead, supported by the QA and GDPR subgroups. The group meet quarterly, reporting to the Senior Management Team and Team Meetings. We recently secured a specialist GDPR consultant, reviewing all GDPR documents, ensuring any required updates to policy/best practice was implemented.

A Policies and Procedures designated Trustee is supported by a staff subgroup. All subgroups meet quarterly to review existing policy/best practice, and responses to changes in legislation. Subgroup minutes are shared with the CEO and Board.

All training programmes, policies procedures adhere to national standards, verified in the 2021 CUK Compliance Report

CUK notify providers of changes, updates or training requirements attached to their CoP. We have a designated person responsible for reviewing, coordinating, and implementing any CoP changes. Coordinators (as per memberships requirements) attend the CUK National Forums. A member of Circles SE staff participate in CUK's National Research and Evaluation subgroup.

Two Senior Managers are designated as Volunteer Training, Development and Wellbeing leads supported by a trustee. A Volunteer Training and Service Delivery working group meet quarterly and review practice, materials, training requirements, agreeing appropriate amendments. Examples

of changes implemented are amendments to the Volunteer training for those with dyslexia, and inclusion of an ex-service user explaining their own pathway to offending, and the subsequent process of change within their Circle.

These groups worked together at the start of the pandemic creating a new online volunteer training programme and identifying and developing new policies to support changes to practice.

The Volunteer Annual Supplementary Training programme ensures volunteers receive the most relevant training. We are responsive to changes from CUK, legislation, implementing changes quickly.

We are committed to staff's continuous professional development and staff training records are reviewed and updated at supervision and annual appraisals.

C)

We have an experienced staff team of 23 with flexibility to work across multiple locations and disciplines with only a 13% attrition in the last 5 years. We have an additional pool of specialist sessional staff available. We have a service continuity plan in place which can be implemented in response to any unexpected changes or challenges. If a Coordinator leaves or goes on long-term sick the charity will deploy an equivalent replacement to ensure continued delivery of the contract.

Organisational resilience facilitates staff prioritising defensible practice, safeguarding SUs and volunteers, through necessary time and resource management. We have exit, contingency and recovery strategies in place. In addition, we have a Risk Management Strategy and Register which is reviewed monthly by the Senior Management Team and quarterly by trustees. We have a dynamic and responsive Recovery Roadmap and Transition Timetable in place post pandemic consisting of 3 stages of delivery and are equipped to move the projects across stages depending on government guidelines in response to any further challenges. Our ability to continue delivery of a full service throughout the pandemic demonstrated our resilience and ability to implement contingencies effectively and minimise impact for service users.

Total Word Count – (Bidders to self-populate)	1483

TC-003 – Risk Management and Information Sharing				
Weighting:	25%	**Quality Threshold:**	60	**Limitations**
Question:				**Up to 1,500 words;**

Question:	Limitations
The Authority requires the Bidder to have clear procedures for responding to changes in the behaviour of People on Probation that may indicate an increased risk or concern. **1)** Please explain how you will ensure that all Supplier Personnel will recognise and respond to both subtle and overt changes in behaviour or relapse that may indicate an increase in risk to themselves, to victims, to other People on Probation, Staff Personnel (including volunteers), Probation Practitioners or members of the public? **2)** Please explain how you will deliver CoSA to People on Probation where concerns around safeguarding, risk of serious harm or public protection have been identified by the Probation Practitioner, or that have changed, in a way that takes full account of identifying, recording and informing the Probation Practitioner to a change in these risks? **3)** Please describe what information sharing processes will be established amongst Staff Personnel to ensure all reporting requirements outlined in section 7 of the specification are met. You should include an explanation of how personal data will be stored and securely shared with parties (including the probation practitioner) as and when requested.	**The response should be entered in this table in the cell below;** **Additional diagrams and tables can be submitted to support your response, however any wording within these shall be included in the overall word count.** **Line spacing 1.5** **Arial font size 11**

Response

1)

Circles SE has systems, procedures and policies supporting recognition, management, and reporting of SU's escalating risk. A new volunteer database and Circle Case Management IT System will highlight risk issues, ensuring all procedures are followed to safely deliver Circles.

Volunteers are vital to COSA; we have robust policies facilitating selection, training and supervision supporting SUs, focusing on risk recognition, assessment, management, and reporting.

Volunteer Training presents volunteers with Key Policies and Procedures. Subsequent training exercises and post-training interviews checks volunteers' understanding of the policies. They then sign a declaration stating their compliance with all volunteer policies. Policy revisions are provided via email to all volunteers promptly following internal approval. Key policies include:

- Volunteer Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure, fully complying with the CUK CoP.

- Volunteer Support and Supervision Policy
- Safeguarding and Protection Policy –for staff and volunteers, based on current legislation, reviewed annually by Safeguarding Lead.
- Roles and Responsibilities reporting risk – including procedures specific to Circles volunteers, assisting them in recognising and reporting risk issues relating to COSA SUs.
- Risk assessment and escalation policy – includes expectations regarding the effective risk assessment of SUs/Circles by coordinators along with risk reporting processes
- Staff and volunteers Code of Conduct and Incident Reporting Procedures

Volunteers are required to attend assessed Initial Training approved by CUK, covering

- An exploration of sexual offending
- Risk assessment and legal structures for community risk management
- Skills to support effective risk recognition/management (listening and questioning skills)
- An exploration of manipulation, boundaries, and safeguarding.

Pre- and post-training checks, as per the CUK CoP, ensures a volunteer's suitability for being approved for a Circle.

Planning meetings are necessary to brief volunteers on risk issues relating to the SU. A Risk Identification and Escalation document highlights key risk indicators for the SU, identifying requirements and timescales for initiating any actions; effective and timely reporting is paramount.

Quarterly supervision allows volunteers to reflect on safeguarding and risk issues (good practice and missed opportunities) and organise supplementary training.

Through meeting minutes, volunteers inform Coordinators of more subtle risk indicators. Circle Coordinators' expertise will appropriately guide the volunteers in responding to these behaviours, like supporting information-gathering, demonstrating empathy, developing discrepancy, holding individuals to account and pro-social goal setting, tailored to the individual SU's specific needs/risks, with ongoing support provided by Coordinators. All Coordinators are experienced and trained in offender risk management and subject to pre-employment checks, as per the CUK CoP, and provided with regular case-focused supervision. They attend MAPPA meetings, regularly communicating with statutory agencies regarding progress and risk issues.

Coordinators manage dynamic risk throughout the life of the Circle using information provided by volunteers, professionals, and SUs. Safeguarding training, refresher training and opportunities to learn from any safeguarding incidents, near-misses, or good practice from across the charity, are also offered.

Circles run with an 'Outer Circle' of relevant statutory, partner and voluntary agencies, effecting communication of risk issues and joint working. The long history of developing and maintaining strong and effective communication systems with statutory agencies will continue under newly issued contracts.

2)

Circles SE have effective partnerships in place, allowing Probation Practitioners and other statutory partners to share risk concerns of a SU.
The Circles referral form identifies specific risk/safeguarding concerns impacting on the SU's suitability for a Circle. Referral Panel Meetings discuss new referrals, providing a multi-agency approach to risk identification and management.

A Coordinator completes a full Risk Assessment for the proposed Circle using information provided by Probation Practitioners, inviting feedback ensuring all parties are satisfied.

When responding to identified risk issues, there is an in-built flexibility within Circles' clearly defined delivery model to manage risk, such as the pool of volunteers, their level of experience, training, personal skills, age, and gender. The choice of venue and meeting time for a Circle may also be relevant.

Where urgent risk issues are raised by volunteers or Coordinators, Probation Practitioners are informed immediately. All information sharing takes place securely via email or telephone. Communications are recorded securely on the Circle Case Management System.
During the life of a Circle risk can fluctuate, so effective two-way communication is vital between the Coordinator and the 'outer Circle'. Where risk escalates, changes can be made to manage this effectively. A Coordinator may change the meeting venue/time, add additional volunteers, change the meeting frequency, or add extra, such as volunteer phone calls or access to RocketChat. Coordinators can also run additional volunteer supervision, workshops, or training events to support the volunteers where there is a particular risk issue.

Case example = SU relapsed on alcohol, a risk factor. The Circle risk management plan amended. Supplementary training and additional supervision for volunteers provided. Increased communication between inner and outer Circle, aiding multi-agency risk management. Activities away from alcohol, maintained sobriety. The SU re-engaged with AA and successfully completed their Circle, achieving numerous pro-social goals.

This process included Incident Reporting Procedures, Safeguarding and Protection policy, and are compliant with the CUK CoP.

3)

Circles SE achieves the secure sharing of information and storage of personal data through:

- Data Protection Policy
- Disposal of Removable Storage Media Procedure
- Information Security Agreement
- Legitimate Interests Assessments
- Privacy Notices
- Third Party Access to Data procedure
- Security Access Policy
- Data Protection Impact Assessment
- Appropriate Policy Document
- Record of Processing Activities

SUs' personal data will be stored on secure IT system and, where permitted, shared via secure email (CJSM). All referrals are received via secure email (CJSM) requesting key information outlined in section 7 (1.1). Probation Practitioners will ensure all relevant information is gathered. On referral our new secure Case Management System will ensure the relevant reporting requirements are achieved and monitored.

Referral packs allow Probation Practitioners to share new information as relevant and are encouraged to regularly share information regarding the SU with the Coordinator throughout the Circle, including risk or protective factors and practical issues that could be a barrier to attendance/engagement.

On receiving and accepting a referral, Circles SE will inform the Probation Practitioner within 2 working days and an Initial Assessment Interview will be arranged by the Coordinator for within 10 working days. The SUs will be offered this appointment via telephone and/or letter with 5 working day notice. Assessment Interviews take place at a Probation Office, with the option of a Probation Practitioner being present. If considered suitable the Probation Practitioner will be informed via secure email/telephone, followed by a full assessment report.

SU's personal information shared with volunteers is done securely via closed Microsoft Teams specific to the Circle. All documents are anonymised in line with our Data Protection Policy.

As per the CUK CoP, minutes from weekly Circles meetings are provided by volunteers to Coordinators, who share attendance and engagement summaries with the Probation Practitioner within 1 working day. This summary includes details of the next Circle meeting. Further requests for specific information regarding the SU from the Probation Practitioner will be responded to by Coordinators in a timely manner. In line with the CUK CoP, the Probation Practitioner will be provided with monthly progress reports summarising progress, risks, or concerns. Urgent issues are always communicated immediately to Probation Practitioners.

Circles SE provides an Out-of-Hour's emergency telephone support service for volunteers who need to report risk escalation/concerns or seek advice regarding a possible risk-related incident. Staffed by a trained Coordinator, all information received and responded to is recorded within the secure Case Management System and flagged with the Circle Coordinator. Where necessary, immediate contact will be made with the Police and/or Probation and an incident form completed.

Important risk information is readily available within the Case Management System, including full risk assessments and management plans, accessible by staff covering the Out-of-Hour's line when a Coordinator's on leave. Specific concerns are flagged and are visible to covering staff to action if necessary.

Coordinators complete an End of Circle report for every Circle, summarising engagement with the Circle, highlighting outstanding issues at the point of closure. Written and shared securely within the 5 working days following an End of Circle Meeting. SUs will also be provided with a Satisfaction Survey regarding their experience of service.

Personalised risk assessments and risk escalation processes are developed by Coordinators for each Circle, including emergency reporting of information to Police. Probation Practitioners are informed of the contents and will be informed immediately of any action taken due to an escalation of risk.

Trained volunteers gather information regarding escalations in risk e.g., by using appropriate questioning techniques. The Risk Assessment and Escalation Policy requires volunteers to report risk concerns to their Coordinator, who will provide guidance and a strategy, reporting to the Probation Practitioner. If unresolved, the coordinator's direct supervisor/manager will offer support, possibly raising concerns with supervisors/managers from the relevant partner agencies involved. If still unresolved, a Circles SE Senior Manager will report concerns to respective partnership agencies Operations Managers subsequently developing a robust risk management plan for all parties involved. Wellbeing and safeguarding concerns are priority, all actions will be recorded.

Total Word Count – (Bidders to self-populate)	1485

TC-004 – Implementation				
Weighting:	20%	**Quality Threshold:**	40	**Limitations**
Question: The Authority requires evidence and assurance from the Bidder that their implementation plans are robust, credible and achievable. **A)** Please explain how you will ensure the implementation plan is successfully achieved by the Call-Off Commencement Date. This should include how critical activities will be completed to ensure the delivery of services, supported by digital and technology, information security, workforce and estates. **B)** Explain how you will ensure that the appropriate accreditation to deliver this service is obtained by the Call-Off Commencement Date. **C)** Please provide an Implementation Plan (in any format) to detail planned timescales and responsibilities to meet the Implementation milestones as per Call-Off Order Form, clause 26A Implementation and Schedule 2.1 Section 10, in the Call-off Contract. This section requires explicit reference to the milestones and requires bidders to provide a confident plan of how each milestone shall be met on time. **D)** Please complete a RAID log outlining all Risks, Assumptions, Issues or Dependencies that you foresee in implementing this Service and how these shall be mitigated to ensure Service delivery is not impacted.				**Part A & B Combined – up to 1000 words** **Part C – up to 3 A4 Pages** **Part D – up to 3 A4 Pages** **The response should be entered in this table in the cell below;** **Additional diagrams and tables can be submitted to support your response, however any wording within these shall be included in the overall word count.** **Line spacing 1.5** **Arial font size 11**
Response				
A) Circles SE have extensive knowledge, experience, and resources available to support the establishment of the London Circles Project and ensure the implementation plan is successfully achieved. We anticipate set up under the new contract to be straight forward given our previous project management experience. However, recognising this is a new contract and specification we have built a clear review and development process into the Implementation plan and have designed a KPI framework with identified targets (referral, assessment, set up rates and caseloads); example attached. We have established relationships with the Head of Public Protection and the London Probation DSOU Manager which will assist Circles SE set up of the project under the new contract arrangements.				

The CUK CoP Compliance Report verifies Circles SE has the following infrastructure to support project delivery under new contract arrangements:

- Volunteer Policies, Training, and Management Arrangements
- Referral & Assessment Suitability Process and Templates
- Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding, Risk Management, Risk Escalation and Incident Report Templates, Policies and Procedures
- GDPR & Privacy Notices, Information Sharing Agreement
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion Policy and Procedures

The Mobilisation Manager in conjunction with Probation Contract Manager will review these documents making necessary and appropriate amendments to ensure they are compliant with the contract specification. Delivery of Critical Activities will be completed across the following areas:

Workforce
We will deploy an experienced Senior Manager as the Mobilisation Manager responsible for achievement of the implementation plan in identified timeframe.

A Coordinator will support mobilisation with an increase in staff at commencement of contract. Staff are trained and vetted in line with CUK CoP and Probation vetting requirements. Additional training will be completed Jan 23.

As the previous provider, Coordinators held a caseload prior to closure of project in Sept 22. The Coordinator breakdown outlines the allocation of role across responsibilities. The Mobilisation Manager will review all SUs who had been referred, assessed or had a Circle close early with the Probation Contract Manager. Agreements will be made on whether any SU from past contract can re-engage with the project under the new contract.

We have 200 trained volunteers in London. Our established recruitment strategy will be implemented to ensure a flow of newly trained volunteers to enhance this existing group. We will deliver 'Refresher Training' for existing volunteers recognising changes to reporting, timeframes, templates to

ensure volunteers understand and comply with new requirements. Based on an assessment of volunteer training needs we intend to deliver two supplementary training events.

Estates

Coordinators will prioritise the identification, assessment, and approval of appropriate and accessible venues ready for operational delivery within the 3 months set up period. All venues for operational work (training, meetings), are risk assessed (verified by CUK) and our H&S and EDI policies, ready for service delivery.

The charities office and staff home working arrangements have been reviewed using the Site Review self-assessment template.
We have appointed a Senior Manager responsible for net zero environmental impact.

Digital and Technology, Information Security

The delivery of services will be supported by a Volunteer Database and a linked Case Management System, developed by consultants to operate in Microsoft Dynamics. The systems are bespoke to Circles South East enabling us to record and manage our Volunteers/Service User details. The system is secure with passwords and Multi-factor authentication using Microsoft Azure Active Directory. Access is restricted to Coordinators with access for other staff limited to specific relevant information. The system enables us to generate reports that provide regular contract management and reporting.

We have designed and secured licences for delivery of RocketChat, an online messaging app to enhance effective communication between volunteers and SUs.

Partnerships & Added Value

During implementation we will coordinate and align additional packages of support to Probation ensuring appropriate agreements are in place for effective partnership-working across services (internal and external).

We provided Circles London with an additional funded Coordinator for 3 years. This ensured increased caseloads and a new application has been submitted following discussions with the Trust.

Circles SE Hub Support Services offer additional support to Probation providing free access to counselling and family and adult protection support programmes.

B)

Circles SE were subject to a CUK membership review in December 2021. We achieved a high score of **41.5 out of 43**, or **96.5%** The CUK CEO commented that our performance was "excellent, especially within the context of COVID-19. It has been such a challenging time and your review shows that Circles SE managed to maintain high quality Circles provision throughout". Notable highlights:

- Circles SE demonstrated a high level of commitment to ensure Core Members received support/service during Covid.
- Volunteers were appropriately vetted/trained with a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. Reviewers were impressed by their knowledge, skills, and commitment.
- The Service User Engagement Group, underpinned by a broader Service User Involvement strategy, is extremely positive with significant potential to give a real voice, skills, confidence, and other opportunities to Core Members.
- Interviews with members of the Outer Circle demonstrated service delivery is highly regarded; relationships with local statutory partners are positive.

Total Word Count – (Bidders to self-populate)	Part A & B – 1000 words 2 Supporting Documents