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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) are looking to engage support to provide expert advice and practical support on Counter Fraud, with a particular focus on Local Government issues that arise from COVID 19.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE AUTHORITY

- 2.1 MHCLG's job is to create great places to live and work, and to give more power to local people to shape what happens in their area.
- 2.2 The Department's responsibilities include:
- driving up housing supply;
 - increasing home ownership;
 - devolving powers and budgets to boost local growth in England;
 - supporting strong communities with excellent public services.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>

3 BACKGROUND TO REQUIREMENT/OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENT

- 3.1 Due to the range of support Government is implementing to assist local authorities, businesses and individuals through COVID 19, there is an increased risk of fraud being attempted and committed. Therefore, MHCLG would like to seek immediate ongoing advice and practical support to mitigate against and report on the risk of fraud during this critical time.
- 3.2 The effective management of fraud and corruption risks should be viewed as a key element of providing oversight and assurance that a Council is well-run and uses its resources wisely. In this context, MHCLG seeks to ensure a culture of strong governance and robust accountability across the local government sector, including reinforcing sound financial management and underlining the importance of internal and external audit.

4 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

5 THE REQUIREMENT

- 5.1 The Authority are looking to engage expert Counter-Fraud support. This will include advice to the Department and Local Government on Counter Fraud and anti-corruption and the design and implementation of an effective departmental and external Counter-Fraud network, to be used throughout the Covid-19 response.
- 5.2 MHCLG has a role to play in championing Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption activity for the sector and will focus its efforts on providing leadership on this agenda. Through its work with the LGA, MHCLG will encourage capacity building and improvement in Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption activities.

- 5.3 Due to the unusual circumstances MHCLG are facing with the COVID 19 and the variety of financial support packages Government is current offering, MHCLG needs immediate support to provide advice and support on Counter-Fraud to the Department and Local Government. Because of the urgency of this work, the service is best provided by a Supplier that has prior experience on this topic and previous experience working with MHCLG with good contacts within Local Government; in order to provide immediate effectiveness in fraud prevention and to be able to start working independently immediately.
- 5.4 MHCLG will work with the Local Government Authorities as part of broader sector improvement work, to enhance and enable capacity in this area to build on the good work already underway strengthening expertise in detecting, preventing and investigating fraud.
- 5.5 The contractor will deliver the following services under this contract:
- 1) Contributing expertise and specialist ad hoc advice related to Covid-19 specific and general fraud threats to the department and broader government.
 - 2) Coordinate a cross-department and Local Authority Counter-Fraud working group and develop a suitable Terms of Reference and securing agreement from the group membership. The aims of the group will be to share knowledge from central government and act as a best practice forum. The group will need to have an agreed meeting cycle to discuss current and emerging fraud and anti-corruption risks and issues which can support investigations and inward fraud reporting to the department. By the end of the contract the ongoing sustainable management of the group will be transferred to MHCLG.
 - 3) Proactively assess and notify the Department on the emerging and developing counter fraud situation surrounding COVID 19 specific funding streams in Local Authorities.
 - 4) Promote improvement and consistency of fraud data quality and usage. Engage and support Local Authorities to improve the use of shared data tools and resources (such as NFI) to support Counter Fraud activities including fraud and corruption detection within high risk areas such as grants and procurement.
 - 5) In line with the MHCLG transparency commitment in the National Action Plan, the supplier will actively encourage Local Authorities to improve transparency and accountability of fraud data and information.
 - 6) Representing the Department where needed to Counter Fraud networks both in Cabinet Office, Councils and public/private sectors more broadly by agreement with the contract manager.
 - 7) Work closely with the Group Risk team, reporting to the Head of Counter-Fraud, to ensure alignment with MHCLG Counter-Fraud Covid-19 strategies and overarching policies. Providing weekly reports and updates on emerging threats and mitigation actions to the Department.
 - 8) This is not an exhaustive list, with the approach and plan for each deliverable being agreed and reviewed iteratively at contract management meetings.

This is to ensure that the work undertaken reflects, and is appropriate for, the changing Covid-19 fraud response environment.

- 5.6 The Authority anticipates this work will continue for a minimum of three months. There will be an option for the Authority to extend this contract for an additional three months. A key driver for this work is the effects of and management of fraud during the pandemic situation. As such, it is not anticipated that ongoing work will be required, although some deliverables will be handed over at the end of the contract and must be fit for purpose from a sustainability point of view.

6 KEY MILESTONES

- 6.1 Support and delivery of the requirement will be provided on a daily rate under the terms of the agreement.
- 6.2 Individual tasks may have performance milestones attached which will be agreed in advance between the Authority and Contractor.

7 AUTHORITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Authority will ensure that the Supplier is granted access to key stakeholders, systems and documentation where feasible to allow the Supplier to carry out the contract.
- 7.2 If for whatever reason we cannot provide timely access to the relevant information, the Authority are aware it may have an impact on the work and will manage this.
- 7.3 The Authority will aim to ensure that regular progress meetings are held between key personnel.

8 REPORTING

- 8.1 The Supplier will be expected to work closely with the Department and specifically the Group Risk team and Counter Fraud function, who will provide a Contract Manager and will support arranging internal conversations as appropriate.
- 8.2 The Contract Manager will require weekly update meetings as a minimum.
- 8.3 Contract management and progress reporting meetings can either take place at MHCLG (2 Marsham Street, SW1P 4DF) a mutually agreed location or remotely via teleconferencing.

9 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 9.1 The Supplier will be expected to continually improve the way in which the required Services are to be delivered throughout the Contract duration.

9.2 The Supplier should present new ways of working to the Authority during monthly Contract review meetings.

9.3 Changes to the way in which the Services are to be delivered must be brought to the Authority's attention and agreed prior to any changes being implemented.

10 SUSTAINABILITY

10.1 Not applicable to this requirement.

11 ACCREDITATION

11.1 Not applicable to this requirement.

12 STAFF AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

12.1 Potential Provider's staff assigned to the Contract shall have the relevant qualification(s) and experience to deliver the Contract.

13 SERVICE LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE

13.1 The Authority will measure the quality of the Supplier's delivery and if there are any concerns regarding the quality of the Supplier's work this will be raised in the weekly meeting.

13.2 The amount of resources the Authority requires can be amended with 5 working days' notice.

14 SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

14.1 The Contractor must supply an individual with the required baseline security level of clearance to enable system access and information disclosure.

14.2 A security clearance level of Counter-Terrorism Check (CTC) is required for the individual to allow access to the building. The Contractor should ideally supply an individual with current valid CTC clearance. However, during the Covid-19 response most staff are working remotely, so this requirement can be relaxed as long as the individual has current BPSS (basic) check security clearance.

15 PAYMENT

15.1 Payment will be made on an agreed daily rate.

16 BASE LOCATION

16.1 The base location where the Services will be carried out is 2 Marsham Street or remotely.

16.2 Work may be completed remotely where possible in accordance with governmental policy and guidelines during the COVID 19 UK Lockdown. Where work or a task would usually be conducted in person and this is not possible due to UK Lockdown, the approach to the task shall be discussed and agreed with the Authority prior to commencement.