National Careers Service: Area Based Contracts

Generic - Once Only (OO) Questionnaire Template for completion.

NOTE: Organisations choosing to subcontract some or all of their delivery are accountable and responsible for the performance of each subcontractor. The ESFAs assessment of Prime Contractors' performance will also take into account the performance of any subcontractors and will be marked accordingly.

It is Mandatory to complete only once all of the questions listed, irrespective of your Bidding Area(s) selected and upload once in the relevant place in the online technical envelope.

Futures Advice, Skills and Employment

Question [OO-01]: Understanding of context

Please describe how the National Careers Service contributes to the Governments economic growth and social mobility agenda's.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Sound knowledge of policy context such as DfE Careers Strategy, Fuller working lives, Industrial Strategy and other relevant policy documents, and how you will keep up to date with policy changes;
- How you will support both the strategic direction and the delivery priorities for the National Careers Service and explain how your business model will respond to changes in policy;
- How your strategic planning will be aligned to government policies and priorities;
- Sound knowledge of key National Careers Service principles such as:
    - o Universal and impartial service;
    - o Service is independent from learning provision;
    - o Tailored to the needs of the individual;
    - o Sound knowledge of advice and guidance that supports career management for individuals;
    - o Focusing on priority groups customers; and
    - o Encouraging customers to self-serve using the digital service.

Maximum score 150 points – weight = 1
Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

The National Careers Service (NCS) provides careers advice to help individuals make the right decisions on learning, training and work. By raising aspiration, helping people to access the support they need to enter or progress in work, NCS supports social mobility and economic growth.

Sound knowledge
Futures plays an active role informing and supporting the policy context in which NCS operates. Development of our NCS model has been informed by consideration of the Careers Strategy, Industrial Strategy, Fuller Working Lives and Social Mobility Commission reports. We keep up to date through strategic partnerships; playing an active role in regional and national policymaking by engaging with local authorities (LAs) and LEPs at local/sub-regional level. We have a good relationship with ESFA through our current NCS contract. Our CEO is Vice-Chair of Careers England from whom we receive daily careers related policy updates. We are members of AELP, AoC and the IoD which all produce policy briefings. Managers receive monthly Policy and Evidence briefings, produced by our full-time researcher, which underpin all decision-making and is a standing item on Leadership Team and NCS Steering Group meetings.

Responsive Business Model
We will ensure delivery is aligned to national priorities and responds to developments through flexible service design, weekly communications, regular staff/manager training to inform changes in focus of activities delivered. Futures' Target Operating Model (TOM) ensures activities, including NCS, are tailored to address local need and emerging policy. The TOM captures best practice and analyses this alongside policy developments. Policy and Evidence brieifings feed into weekly Senior Leadership meetings and inform changes to our model. Changing local priorities and need are fed into Operational Management meetings, and used to inform changes to our local model.
As a current Area Based Contractor (ABC) our delivery model was built on: 'National Careers Service: The Right Advice at the Right Time'. Throughout our time as an ABC, we have developed our delivery in line with new priorities and 73% of current customers are in the new Priority Groups (PGs) outlined in the specification. We will increase this to 100% by Oct 18.

Aligned to Government policies
All strategic planning is aligned to Government policy. Our external policy specialist assesses delivery against policy monthly and recommends changes. The Careers Strategy informed the evolution of our model; focusing on four themes: employer engagement, excellent Advice and Guidance programmes (monitored against Gatsby benchmarks), personalised support and guidance, and integral use of data and technology. Our separate, independent ATA brokers apprenticeships with a range of providers so we are aware of the opportunities such as those presented by the National Retraining Scheme and Opportunity Areas. We have tracked the development of the Industrial Strategy and are working with LEPs to tailor their implementation. E.g. in Leicestershire we are part of the LLEP's People Board and have informed planning for its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS). In SEMLEP we commission ESF Community Grants; giving us strong understanding of local priorities.
We work in partnership with LAs and LEPs to support the skills and apprenticeship agenda. We manage the Nottingham Jobs Hub which brokers employer skills solutions. We have advised LAs across both regions in establishing their own hub models. We work with LEPs to engage with the emerging Skills Advisory Panels to inform analysis that feeds into LISs. We are active in the Fuller Working Lives agenda, working with ESFA and DWP to deliver pilots in both our NCS areas to test careers advice for employed older people, engage them with retraining and retain them in the Labour Market. Social mobility is an increasing area of importance for our wider mission. Our CEO chairs the Careers England Social Mobility Group. Our developing model takes a holistic approach to supporting customers, inspired by the Social Mobility Commission Report and Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential: the Plan for improving Social Mobility through Education, DfE.

Sound knowledge of NCS principles
Throughout our 22-year history, all age careers advice has been our core activity and remains our prime purpose. We are a founding member of Careers England, member of the CDI and known by our stakeholders as a 'careers advice' company. We have been highly successful in delivering the NCS since

its inception. In 2017 our Ofsted Outstanding Report said 'Leaders and managers have a sound and detailed understanding of the service and the region it serves.' This places us in an excellent position to deliver the new service, with a sound knowledge of the key NCS Principles:

-Universal and impartial service: We will promote NCS delivery, the National Contact Centre (NCC) and the NCS website as a universal offer through partner networks, social media and local/regional media. We provide a range of channels for customers (e.g. face to face/online/phone) delivered in combination to meet needs. Advisers are highly skilled at delivering impartial advice and present a full range of options to customers, supporting them to make 'Well Informed Realistic Decisions'. Impartiality is embedded into our service; guaranteed through performance management including Adviser observations 3 times per year.

-Service is independent from learning provision: NCS delivery is completely independent of any learning provision. Futures and its subcontractors are contractually obliged to offer independent advice to customers. Robust quality assurance processes for both direct and subcontracted delivery to guarantee independent advice. We will measure the percentage of referrals to all provision, investigating unusual patterns of referral.

-Tailored to the needs of the individual: Customer and Adviser work together to explore and identify the customer's skills, interests and motivations. The customer is the architect of this process which is built around individual needs and leads to the development of a Careers Skills Action Plan (CSAP). Each customer's journey is different, reflected in the bespoke nature of their CSAP.

-Sound knowledge of advice and guidance that supports career management for individuals: Futures is an experienced provider of advice and guidance for career management. All Futures NCS staff will be Level 4 qualified in IAG as a minimum and we have a plan to ensure that 75% of staff are Level 6 qualified. Empowerment is embedded into Adviser practice; we ensure customers have the tools, skills and motivation to self-serve, e.g. using Jobs Profiles independently.

-Focusing on priority groups: We will develop our existing offer to priority groups using innovative examples of how we currently meet customers' needs. We will raise awareness of apprenticeships as one route to work for those who may not have considered it before e.g. single parents or over 50s.

-Encouraging customers to self-serve using the digital service: Advisers explore the needs of customers assessing digital capabilities and IT access. Customers are introduced to self-serve options and coached to use suitable products, such as our digital CV writing service. Digital products are an integral part of the customer journey; with a focus on building customers' capacity to self-serve and to transition to support from the NCC/online resources

Question [OO-02]: Marketing, Social Media and Branding

Please explain how you will support a nationally co-ordinated marketing and social media strategy for the service as detailed in PART C - Marketing and Branding of the ITT.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your capability and experience of supporting media activities through radio and press interviews, and digital media activities such as on-line interviews, engagement through social media, webinars, etc. You should include details of how you have measured the impact of media activity;
- Your capability and experience of producing content which can be used across a range of media platforms including print, digital and social media;
- Your ability to use digital and social media to raise awareness of the value of careers advice through differentiated activities which address the needs of particular audiences;
- Your experience of managing co-ordinated marketing activity across different media (including digital and social media) in support of national campaigns and promotions, so that consistent messages reach local areas and venues.
- How you will ensure that all careers advisers use social media strategy to promote the service by generating and sharing local relevant content which exemplifies how the service benefits customers;
- What you will include in your marketing strategy for each of the geographical areas that you are bidding for and the impact measures that will be used;
- What investment you will make to achieve these requirements and in what timescale
- How you (and your subcontractors) will ensure you comply with the brand for the Service and any related brand values and guidelines as detailed the tender specification.

Maximum score 150 points – weight = 3

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

We will support the nationally coordinated marketing and social media strategy through:

Supporting media activities
As an existing Area Based Contractor (ABC), we have extensive experience working with the media on the National Career Service (NCS). Media trained staff respond to radio, television and print media requests. We use social media to share our work and generate publicity, e.g. posting short films of 'live' case studies on Facebook. We have strong links with local media outlets and promote services and events, e.g. BBC Radio Leicester feature on supporting people into self-employment.
We measure the impact of coverage using Google and social media channel analytics. We analyse spikes in web activity, social media engagement and increased calls into the business following coverage to inform future campaigns.

Producing content
Our multichannel marketing and communications approach produces content that can be adapted across a range of platforms. Using NCS brand guidelines, we produce high quality posters, leaflets, social media graphics and film to raise the service's profile and encourage customers to self-serve.
Three in-house designers have detailed understanding of the NCS brand and produce the majority of the material to promote the service. Copy is controlled by the Marketing and Communications Manager or is from NCS approved material.
We schedule communications promoting specific sectors to coincide with TV programmes that people might be watching and discussing with friends, e.g. focus on hospitality when MasterChef is aired. We schedule social media content at peak times.
We create hashtags to showcase our NCS work e.g. #wordonwork. We actively engage with NCS campaigns or activities such as WhenIWasYounger, polls, live Q&A sessions.

Raising awareness

We will build on our strengths by consulting with new priority groups to ensure we are relevant and able to meet their needs. We will build upon existing good practice and by analysing the demographic make-up of customers in priority groups will ensure communications are available in appropriate languages.

We share local Labour Market Information (LMI) through our social media channels using accessible infographics to amplify local LMI that Advisers provide to customers. We use a range of channels, e.g. targeted blogs, to highlight the value of careers advice to different audiences.

Coordinated activity

Our communications calendar enables planning for national campaigns and initiatives. Through the NCS Prime bulletin and our close relationship with Cabinet Office Communications team, we generate consistent messages, locally reinforcing national key messages. We deliver events supporting careers advice and related decisions every year, seeing on average 8000 people.

We manage activity across multiple platforms via weekly communications meetings to agree new initiatives and determine content across platforms, using Hootsuite to monitor impact. We respond to Adviser print requests to ensure the NCS brand is promoted in local venues.

Careers Advisers

Advisers use social media to provide ongoing customer support and information e.g. on local vacancies and learning. We will ensure we demonstrate service benefits by providing content, digital media training and individual guides to Advisers. We will ensure any nationally produced materials are shared, such as the Social Media Playbook. All activity on social media directs customers to National Contact Centre and self-serve options. Advisers are required to follow the NCS accounts to see and share examples of best practice.

Geographical sensitive marketing strategy

Local strategies for East Midlands and East of England will align with national direction. We will use local data to gain a solid understanding of the areas we deliver in and differentiate communications using customers' preferred methods.

East Midlands:

Our approach across the East Midlands will be digitally led, communicating the benefits of NCS through social media and web based services. In rural areas in particular, e.g. Derbyshire Dales, this will be backed up by materials disseminated through local community partners and in community venues and JCP offices. In the East Midlands marketing strategies will complement and support the strategies of LEPs and the Midlands Engine, as well as local initiatives e.g. the Derby/Nottingham Metro Strategy.

East of England:

Our approach across the East of England will also be digitally led, communicating the benefits of NCS through social media and web based services. There is less strength in depth in the voluntary sector infrastructure in many Eastern areas, e.g. VCS groups lack resources and so the focus on local community groups and partnerships will be much stronger, as will linking to communities through FE colleges, which are important community anchor organisations in areas such as Suffolk.

In both regions we will adapt our approaches to meet the needs of those we aim to support by ensuring our calls to action are simple.

We will introduce the following impact measures in both areas:
1. Referrals to gov.uk NCS pages
2. Referrals to our CV upload service
3. Referrals to Adviser-led workshops
4. Engagement rates across all platforms

We will continue to promote the helpline to all customers at every intervention, through printed material and across digital channels.

Implementation and Investment
We will use the implementation time to ensure materials, processes and strategies reflect developments in the service and will effectively engage customers. As the incumbent high performing ABC in both areas, our communications will continue without service interruption. We have a bank of relevant, current materials (digital and print) and well developed plans for dissemination. We feel that our position as incumbent ABC means that our marketing and publicity budget will not require the benchmark figure of up to 10% contract value. We envisage additional cash investment in Publicity and Marketing of £31,500 per region per annum. Along with staff resource, and contributions of existing collateral, this brings the total value of the marketing budget to 5% of contract value. Use of existing resources allows a greater proportion of the budget to be invested in delivery.
We will hold marketing and brand clinics during the implementation period in each area by 17.8.18 to ensure subcontractors are aware of requirements. We will provide an initial pack of essential collateral by 20.08.18 to reduce the risk of anyone creating non-compliant materials.
We will conduct telephone market research with a sample of new priority customers by 5.07.18 to understand their preferences for communications and identify barriers to accessing the service.

Brand
Our Communications Team will consult with ESFA, staff and stakeholders before contract start to discuss use and protection of the NCS brand. We have significant experience of managing white labelled contracts. We provide an extranet facility and webinars to subcontractors and Advisers, providing detailed brand guidance and sharing best practice. Marketing support materials include the national strategy, our local strategy, guidance on supporting customers completing case study forms and a central ordering system for collateral.
The Marketing Team provide feedback to subcontractors and Advisers to ensure the quality of case studies and that brand standards are met.

Question [OO-03]: Information Technology (IT) Systems

Please provide evidence of your capability to meet information technology requirements and the systems and resources you will have in place to deliver the service integration by the required timescale.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your current or proposed operational IT systems and the changes required to them to support the delivery of the service; ensuring the security measures are in place that reduce the risk of exposure of sensitive information from these systems;
- A plan that demonstrates how you will integrate with the Data Sharing Service from October 2018;
- Your approach to delivering the obligations set out on the Code of Connection;
- Your approach to delivering the data interfacing defined in the tender specification;
- Your approach to establishing/amending service management arrangements to ensure continuity of services and ability to develop/enhance services over time;
- Your planned 'end-to-end' service solution, clearly describing the key components including telephone capability;
- Your service integration plans, highlighting any bespoke aspects that need development and when they will be delivered;
- How the IT systems and the business processes will be tested;
- What criteria will be used to demonstrate readiness;
- How you will drive and support growth (scalability) through information technology;
- How you will cater for change and evolution of the service;
- Your track record of delivering projects for ICT integration to agreed deadlines; and
- How subcontractors will use IT systems;

Maximum score 150 points Weight = 3
Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

Current system
We use Cognisoft YETI to manage customer data, internal reporting and transfer of data to ESFA for MI collection and CDS. YETI meets all current NCS requirements and Cognisoft has worked with ESFA on the CDS integration and XML MI Collection projects.

System Testing
Secure IT infrastructure wraps around the service delivery process. This is covered in more depth in 00-06. Cognisoft are ISO27001 certified. The system is tested to CREST standards by a CESG CLAS consultant. Annual Penetration testing on corporate network and all hosted platforms has been completed for several years. YETI's security section allows us to establish a security structure and manage tailored system access/usage. Security Groups are created on a permissions-granted basis– specific rights must be granted to each feature, section or sub-section of the application.

Cognisoft's hosting services are provided by Equinix, offering one of the most secure data centre facilities in the industry. Equinix employ multi-layered physical security including secure perimeter, biometrics and video surveillance. Controls on Information Security are governed by Cognisoft's ISO27001:2013 Certification. Equinix hold security certifications including ISO27001:2013 and ISO22301. Equinix's UK data centres are audited by the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure.

Data Sharing
Cognisoft will work with ESFA to integrate with the Data Sharing Service. Our high level plan includes:
•Create PID
•Establish Governance, Stakeholder management
•Establish contingency data extract requirements
•Gap and impact analysis
•Design
•Build any required system and process changes
•Testing
•Documentation/training
•Integration testing
•Cut over onto the new system
A timeline of this plan is included in our Implementation Plan

Code of Connection
We have worked to the Code of Connection since 2014. We collect and store client data to underpin integrated customer journeys, specified in the Code of Connection. Cognisoft have worked to the Code of Connection since 2014 and have satisfied the annual NCS security questionnaire and external audit. Policies and processes set out how we will meet obligations. Structures are in place to manage compliance including staff training. The dedicated infrastructure Cognisoft provides the Code of Connection, and employs physical and logical separation between hosting environments.

Data interfacing
Cognisoft have referable experience of delivering RESTful services, having produced and used RESTful services covering around 200 methods across several implementations. Many can be seen in core YETI functionality, e.g. Universal Job Match integration. All Cognisoft's applications are compatible with RESTful services.

Management arrangements
Our MI/IT team has 10+ years' experience of NCS management arrangements (including NextStep) and we have strengthened the team with a new Chief Information Officer post, as part of our leadership team. This is supported by our and Cognisoft's business continuity arrangements including a contract and SLA, reviewed quarterly. We worked closely with Cognisoft and ESFA to develop systems to support changes in the NCS offer and drive service enhancements.

'End-to-end' service solution
YETI is integrated into our end-to-end solution. NCS Advisers enter data into YETI at point of referral and update customer records in a timely and accurate manner. This allows us to produce real time MI reports, allowing Advisers to track customer progress using integrated telephony (First Contact and PUZZEL) which links results back to YETI. Customer contact is arranged through booking systems, e.g. ADEEMA.

Service integration

Cognisoft and Futures have a track record working together delivering NCS using YETI. This provides substantial flexibility allowing complex requirements to be met with no/minimal development changes. The system meets all requirements for NCS and we view the changes outlined in the ITT as an evolution of the current system rather than a fundamental re-write. Cognisoft favour Agile methodologies and worked with the ESFA in this way on delivery of the CDS integration in the current contract. Futures and Cognisoft would work with the ESFA in this way on the Data Sharing Service once further details are published to meet the agreed timescales.

Testing
YETI is proven in current live NCS implementations. Cognisoft's ISO27001 policies include documented processes for software releases to ensure these are handled consistently and securely and Cognisoft will support us with a range of acceptance testing requirements. We are working towards ISO27001, which will be in place ahead of service launch. Wider systems and processes will be tested in a compliant manner. Cognisoft will work with the ESFA to fulfil the required testing regime for go-live of the Data Sharing Service project service. For sign-off go-live of the CDS service, Cognisoft facilitated a 3-day session where customers followed all steps of the testing regime with 2 members of the ESFA project team present at their offices.

Readiness
Acceptance Tests will be implemented to demonstrate contract readiness against ISO27001 standards to ensure a robust and compliant solution. Current usage and data management will be tested to ensure input errors are at a minimum agreed level. Disaster recovery processes will be tested through a simulated incident with support from Cognisoft, ensuring maintenance of services and backup recovery.

Scalability
Effective use of IT is the cornerstone of Futures' high quality delivery across two NCS regions and we have established objectives to support growth:
•Further integration of YETI into Futures' in-house systems allowing integration of tactical and strategic management
•Integration of systems into the National Contact Centre and integration of tools through the digital service, providing seamless service to customers and higher quality outcomes
•Build on strengths in MI and Performance Reporting to drive improvements which feed into improved customer outcomes
•Extend and enhance use of IT, tools and infrastructure to better meet the needs of customers (e.g. smartphone upload of evidence)

Service evolution
We will continue to play a positive role in supporting the ESFA to develop and test new systems through our strong and effective relationship. We are familiar with the drivers for change and the rate of evolution across NCS contracts. This familiarity and experience helps streamline the change management process. Cognisoft worked on behalf of all customers in the current NCS contract to ensure service evolutions such as CDS and the XML MI submission were developed and introduced in line with timescale expectations.

Track record
We have significant experience delivering IT integration projects having supported multiple funders, LAs, ESF and ESFA (and predecessors) implement services of comparable complexity e.g. the successful implementation of the existing NCS contracts in two regions, which were delivered to agreed deadlines.

Subcontractors
Subcontractors input directly into YETI which uses 'System ID' technology creating a ring-fenced subset of data for each subcontractor, and restricting customer data to those who are entitled to it. YETI has all ESFA business rules embedded to validate data upon entry and ensure data quality is consistent at source. We hold quarterly 'train the trainer' session for all subcontractors using YETI.

Question [OO-04]: Subcontracting

Please explain how you intend to manage the risks associated with delivering the service through a network of subcontractors to meet ESFA requirements?

In your response please provide evidence of:
- The capacity in which you intend to use subcontractors in the delivery of the service, including:
  - Information, Advice and Guidance services; and
  - Supporting services including, but not limited to, technology, telephony, marketing, advertising, administration and finance.
- The processes you will put in place to:
  - Select and appoint subcontractors; and
  - Monitor, measure and manage the performance of all subcontractors including how you will deal with poor quality and under or over performance; and
  - Manage risks and mitigation.
- How you will ensure they meet the mandatory requirements and the minimum service requirements as set out in the ITT;
- How you will ensure consistent quality in the delivery of the service;

Please **supply details on the Subcontractor pro forma** of all of the organisations (name and type of organisation) with whom you intend to subcontract with and how they will support your delivery model.

Maximum score 150 points Weight = 2
Maximum 5000 characters (2 pages)

We will control subcontracting risks by robustly managing a small group of carefully selected organisations, accounting for less than 20% of delivery.

Delivery
We will use a range of Careers Advice subcontractors (subcos) to add value and provide specialist support to meet the needs of customers e.g. Watford Women's Centre, Polish British Integration Centre and Leicester College. The level of direct delivery will move from 40% to 81% in East of England (EE) and from 82% to 85% in East Midlands (EM). The balance will be subcontracted. This will strengthen our high quality delivery to maintain our Outstanding Ofsted grade in EM and move from Good to Outstanding in EE.
We will subcontract to SCS for tracking and telephony, Labour Insight to provide LMI data and Cognisoft to provide our data collection and reporting system.

Selection

Our Open Competitive Tendering process has been graded 'Excellent' by Merlin. We advertise requirements reflecting ESFA specification, applicants provide evidence through an ITT and a panel evaluate submissions using ranked criteria. Any organisation that has not been through the ESFA SSQ will be required to complete both ours and ESFA's as a condition of contract. This includes evidence of capacity, quality, reach, data security, track record and references. This process is supported by our contract compliance, commissioning, MI, finance and IT functions.

Management
Operations Managers drive performance with the same high challenge/high support approach we use for our teams. Improvement Coordinators (ICs) monitor quality, e.g. audits of CSAPs to ensure high quality, consistent services. If daily MI monitoring identifies a subco is forecast to slip below ESFA tolerances we implement an escalation process to prevent underperformance. Subcos who fail to improve are put into special measures, targets set for improvement and support provided. A time-bound Performance Improvement Plan is set. Failure to meet targets in this timescale results in withdrawal of the contract, with volumes transferred to over-performing subcos.

Continuous improvement plans are in place for all subcos, covering:
•KPIs for CSOs, CMOs and JLOs
•Expectations around case studies and customer feedback
•Impact measures e.g. Distance travelled and increased employability outcomes
•Quality of service delivery
All subcos receive:
•Monthly meetings to monitor against targets, customer feedback and quality audits
•Quarterly Formal CIP reviews
•Daily RAG Rated performance reports
•CSO/JLO ratio

Cognisoft, SCS and Labour Insight are managed through contracts, underpinned by SLAs owned by the relevant teams, e.g. IT manage the relationship with Cognisoft. Any themes, issues or examples of best practice identified through this subco management process are discussed and actioned at internal Leadership and subco performance management meetings.

Risk management
The Operations Director uses a Business Continuity and Risk Register to monitor subco financial viability, quality, performance and system capability/capacity. This is collated with risk registers across the organisation by the Compliance Manager, challenged at leadership meetings and reported to our Audit Committee. We manage risk through a rating system with established mitigation plans underpinned by the Performance Management Framework. We have commissioned 110% of required capacity from subcos to ensure capacity in the supplier pipeline to pick up volumes from underperforming providers.

Mandatory requirements
Our OCT process elicits evidence that subcos meet mandatory requirements and deliver high-quality careers advice by qualified and vetted staff. Subco contracts mirror ESFA mandatory and minimum service requirements: Matrix, equality and diversity, health and safety, branding, safeguarding, quality (ISO), Adviser qualifications, indemnity and data protection requirements (GDPR), and IT requirements (e.g. Cyber Essentials+) to ensure compliance. Our compliance team audits these and scrutinises adherence to KPIs and quality standards, reviewing a sample of performance reports, Adviser observations and customer feedback quarterly.

Quality Assurance

ICs ensure consistent quality through systematic monitoring cycles, observed Adviser assessment and customer feedback. All subcos are required to provide a single point of contact for quality and take ownership though self-assessment, analysis of customer feedback and daily monitoring of performance. Challenge and scrutiny is provided by our Operations Managers at monthly subco meetings where they identify, discuss and address areas of concern using the risk register.

Our 2017 EM Outstanding Ofsted inspection reported 'performance management of subcos is outstanding. Managers make use of a particularly wide range of data to rigorously monitor subcos and hold them to account. Their use of live updated information on the performance of each subco, centre and adviser is particularly effective in driving up standards.

Question [OO-05]: Performance Management

Please include details of your performance management processes that will ensure your performance (and that of any of your subcontractors) is maintained at the agreed level and explain how your performance management will result in an improved service and improved Outcomes for Customers.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your performance monitoring measures, the relationships between them and how they are used to get a holistic view of performance;

- How you use benchmarking to measure performance;

- How you utilise trends to measure improvements;

- How you use performance management to improve Outcomes for Customers;

- The intervention activities you will have in place and how are these will be implemented and monitored;

- How you will use accurate and timely data to provide a targeted, relevant personalised service offering;

Maximum score 150 points   Weight =2
Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

Our proven track-record in providing excellent customer outcomes is driven by our strong performance culture, supported by robust performance management processes, consistent across subcontractors and our own staff. This contributed to our Ofsted Outstanding Grade (East Midlands) and over-achievement of national National Careers Service (NCS) targets in the last contract year.

Measures:
We monitor performance against measures including:
•Achievement of Customer Satisfaction, Career Management, Jobs and Learning Outcomes KPIs (CSO, CMO, JLO)
•Customer follow-up
•Case studies
•Telephony performance
•Customer feedback on soft outcomes e.g. helpfulness of Careers and Skills Action Plan (CSAP), increased employability skills and recommendation to a friend
•CSAP audits
•Graded observations of advisers
•CSO/JLO ratio
These performance measures are monitored against the different Priority Groups, and demographic make-up of our customers is scrutinised at organisation, team and Adviser level. This ensures service improvement is targeted where under performance or under representation is identified. Our robust data collection system enables us to report performance in line with other initiatives e.g. Fuller Working Lives, Enabling Apprenticeships and Assist.

Measures monitored daily include customer outcome by Adviser, team and organisation. Monthly reports are used extensively for regular 1:1 Adviser, team and subcontractor performance reviews and include performance against outcome, comparison with previous month and cumulative data. Quarterly reports cover E&D performance, CSAP audits, customer feedback and graded observations and compare with previous quarters to show trends.

All measures are scrutinised by senior leaders at the NCS Steering Group and quarterly NCS performance reviews where any targets for improvement are set and are added to performance reports. An annual Self Assessment Report gives a holistic view of the performance of the service. Our performance measures allow us to provide strategic reports such as job outcomes by sector and learning outcomes by qualification in relation to LEP Strategic Economic Plans, giving a local context to impact of the service.

As well as quantitative reports customer feedback and case studies are reviewed to understand specific barriers for customer groups, or problems they face accessing the service. Benchmarking against other teams can identify best practice which is then shared to improve the service. Performance management is a standing item in 1:1s, team and subcontractor meetings ensuring performance is a priority and we meet KPIs, while providing customers with outstanding service. Our 2017 Ofsted inspection cited OFSTED highlighted: "Performance management of the service…is excellent. Managers work closely with advisers to set and achieve challenging objectives that benefit customers. Managers, in their pursuit of achieving these goals, support and nurture advisers very well."

Benchmarking

Nationally we benchmark performance against other NCS Area Based Contractors and work collaboratively to improve outcomes for customers. We will continue to benchmark against data from other stakeholders to assess performance e.g. Work and Health, FE, LEPs, NOMIS and Census data. We benchmark internally across regions, areas, teams, subcos and Advisers providing a way to identify best practice, areas for improvement and provide motivation.

Trends

Our YETI CRM system highlights trends enabling identification of best practice and areas to improve e.g. Trend analysis identified that East Midlands teams made effective use of analytics to predict changes in the local labour market. We shared this practice across both regions and used MI reports to benchmark and track a corresponding improvement in customer outcomes as teams adopted the more effective approach. Monitoring trends allows us to set improvement targets that are relevant and bespoke.

Improving Outcomes

Clear performance management measures and processes improve Outcomes for customers by highlighting areas of good practice to share. Our robust approach also enables us to forecast performance issues and act swiftly to ensure a seamless service for customers. Advisers and subcontractors are able to monitor their own performance. This leads to high levels of staff retention and motivation resulting in a high JLO rate of 56% (Q2 benchmark data). OFSTED highlighted: "Highly skilled leaders and managers unrelentingly focus on providing an outstanding quality of information, advice and guidance for all customers. Board members and senior management team set and achieve very high, ambitious expectations for staff and customers"

Interventions

Mandatory Intervention activities will include monthly Adviser 1:1 reviews, monthly team/subcontractor performance meetings with Operations Managers, Quarterly Continuous Improvement meetings at team and subcontractor level and quarterly regional network meetings.

Minutes of meetings will be recorded and any themes identified for sharing of good practice or escalation to the NCS Performance Group.

There are clear Performance Management procedures if an Adviser or subcontractor falls below set tolerance levels. Performance reports are RAG rated and our approach mirrors that of the ESFA. We use quarterly tolerance levels to manage performance. These tolerence levels reduce during the course of the year to ensure a minimum of 100% delivery.

A clear capability procedure is in place if an Adviser falls below tolerance levels. Managers identify issues, put a support and performance improvement plan in place and review progress monthly. If this is unsuccessful an increasingly rigorous process of support and challenge commences that could lead to dismissal if underperformance does not improve.

Ops Managers support subcontractors to ensure they do not fall below tolerance levels. If a subcontractor falls below tolerances with no mitigating circumstances additional support is put in place. If there is no improvement by the end of three consecutive months their volumes will be re-profiled. Ongoing under performance will be used to assess subcontractor's capability to deliver contracted volumes. Should the total contracted volumes reduce to 75% of the initial contract, we may terminate the contract. Subcontractors who perform within tolerance levels may be able to increase volumes should extra volumes become available.

Targeted service

YETI (CRM) provides performance information, flags and reports are used by managers to drive performance, set tasks and challenge Advisers to provide a relevant, personalised and targeted service for customers. Interactive dashboards present real-time daily task lists for staff as they login. This prompts them to complete actions, enabling the delivery of an accurate timely service to customers and retaining focus on performance and quality. Access to local LMI enables Advisers to provide targeted support to guide customers to specific opportunities.

We will use external data to target resources and services. E.g. NOMIS Claimant Count to identify JCPs with large numbers of claimants by type. Local JCP links identify customers, and share data trends to identify sectors of interest. This will allow us to increase Adviser resources where required and tailor provision e.g. through a bespoke Sector Based Work Academy or allocating Advisers with specialist knowledge of key local sectors.

Question [OO-06]: Security Standards and Business Continuity

Please describe how your organisation is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of National Careers Service data will be protected.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- How your organisation, and any appointed sub-contractors or third parties, will meet all the National Careers Service security standards as set out in the relevant sections of the attached document set

- How you can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected. GDPR data processors must only be appointed if they can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected.

Please attach a copy of your organisations overall security policy and any other relevant documentation that demonstrates your organisations active commitment to security and how this policy is implemented. ***Attach this policy to the appropriately marked section in the Technical envelope.***

Please attach a copy of your organisations business continuity and disaster recovery policies and plans to ensure continuity of service in the event of a business continuity incident. ***Attach this policy to the appropriately marked section in the Technical envelope.***

Maximum score 150 points   Weight =2

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

As an existing Area Based Contractor, Futures currently meets the security standards required to deliver the National Careers Service (NCS) including being registered with the Information Commissioner's Office. We recognise due to the volumes involved that data held will likely be classified as 'OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE'.

Security Standards
We are Cyber Essentials certified, are working towards Cyber Essentials Plus and ISO 27001. Both will be in place by 30/07/18. The scope of Cyber Essentials Plus is relevant to the delivery of the NCS. We are compliant with the ISO 27002 Code of Conduct, including the application of controls. We hold an overall information security policy as specified in ISO/IEC 27001, section 5.2. Our system provider, CogniSoft are ISO27001:2013 certified and Cyber Essentials certified and are working towards Cyber Essentials Plus and will have this in place prior to commencement of the service.

Futures' IT and Data Security Policy sets out roles and responsibilities for information security, its management and access control, data and duties are segregated across the business including the storage of ESFA NCS data. Data is stored in line with clause 20.12 of the contract, encrypted using BitLocker, certified to FIPS140-2. This is also required by subcontractors. We are certified by relevant authorities, including DigiCert, for information security matters. Information Security is an integral part of our risk-based project management approach. An IT security policy is in place including controls for mobile devices. Domain connected devices are only issued by IT (e.g. pen drives, laptops, mobile phones). Mobile storage devices are encrypted as standard, and use limited to minimum. Data erasure and secure data destruction software is supplied by ICT Reverse using Blancco products, approved by the National Cyber Security Centre. Disposal of storage media is done by WEE

accredited disposal companies. Hard copy data is securely disposed of by our accredited Contractor, Shredall Ltd.

All staff undergo mandatory pre-employment screening, to a minimum of HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS); or hold a National Security Vetting clearance. During employment managers ensure that employees and subcontractors are made aware of, and comply with all information security obligations. During termination or change of employment, information security aspects of a person's departure from the organisation, or change of role within it, are tightly controlled. This includes a requirement to return all corporate information and equipment in their possession. Access rights are removed/updated. Our employment and consultancy terms and conditions enforce these requirements. We keep an asset inventory showing user and location for every asset. There is an 'acceptable use' policy for laptops and phones which are loaned to users. All Subcontractors contracts contain equivalent, legally binding obligations.

Access to information assets is restricted only to those who require it. This is controlled by permissions/restricted access within 'Active Directory'.

Secure physical areas are in place and access to offices controlled by a minimum of two layers of locked doors and further restricted access is in place for all server rooms. These are limited to authorised personnel only.

Operational procedures and responsibilities are in place with documented procedures for starters, leavers, back up procedure, and firewall management. Capacity and performance is managed by the IT team with robust monitoring systems including the use of a risk register and review meetings by external IT consultancy (Beeches Consulting) and Audit Committee. Protection from malware is managed centrally with anti-virus software (System Centre Endpoint Protection) installed on all computers with updates controlled centrally for all domain devices. Technical vulnerabilities are patched, and Software updates are sent out on a regular basis and controlled on all domain devices.

Information systems are backed up in line with a planned schedule. This schedule will be drawn up and enforced by our Chief Information Officer, and reviewed quarterly by the Leadership Team. Monitoring systems are in place for all computer systems connected to the domain. User activity is monitored centrally for all domain users and we have restrictions on all domain devices relating to the installation of software. Independent IT Health Checks (ITHC) and penetration tests are carried out using the CREST accredited certification body, IT Governance Ltd. We will use an NCSC certified provider to undertake an ITHC prior to go-live. We do not intend to host data or perform any ICT management outside the UK. Where removal media or hard copy documents containing ESFA data is transported, staff are required to carry and store it under lock and key and out of sight.

Communications security is managed through data and information sharing agreements for all third parties where data is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 (as amended by GDPR). Subcontractor relationships are controlled using contracts and SLAs that reflect all ESFA contract clauses, including clauses covering DPA and DPIA reviews. Escrow agreements are in place where required. As part of our performance and risk management approach, we ensure that subcontractors have sufficient data security controls in place (e.g. Cyber Essentials Plus) as part of the procurement process and ongoing management.

Information security incidents are logged, reported and lessons learned for improvements. The Business Continuity Plan refers to our IT Disaster Recovery Plan. This conforms to ISO 22301. IT facilities will have sufficient redundancy and capacity with fail-over and back up procedures in place.

Data security and systems policies are version controlled, subject to annual review and signed off by the policy owner. Changes to policies are cascaded to all staff, who sign up to them.

GDPR
Futures comply with the existing Data Protection Act regulations and we recognise the significant change that GDPR will bring. In mid-2017 we began a project working with NikTek Limited, a specialist consultancy, to bring all our personal data handling activities in-line with the requirements of GDPR. Plan deliverables include: data subject consent, their rights, sharing information with third parties, privacy notices, privacy by design and the storage, retention and disposal of personal data. All staff and Subcontractor employees will be trained using a third party (Virtual College) with mandatory annual re-training as a requirement. Project completion is planned ahead of 25/05/18 when GDPR takes effect. Our Data Protection Policy is attached and includes GDPR requirements.

CogniSoft have introduced functionality into YETI to help manage their obligations as sub-processor; rules can be applied to implement and manage data retention policies, a right to be forgotten function pseudononymises records and a SAR report exists to generate a copy of the subject's data should you as controllers require us to produce that information. YETI provides a facility to record categorisation of information under lawful processing principles. Where the principle is defined as consent, reminders are provided to obtain and confirm consent.

Futures' relationship with Cognisoft falls under the remit of the specialist GDPR consultant and will be reviewed as part of our GDPR project.