Specification Of Requirement: Hive Side Education Year 1 Pilot Contract

# Table of Definitions and Abbreviations

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| Term | Definition |
| “**APHA**” | Means Animal and Plant Health Agency |
| The “**Authority**” | Means the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, acting as part of the Crown. |
| “**Working Day**” | Means a day of the year that is not a Saturday, Sunday or Public Holiday |
| The “Supplier” | The successful tenderer appointed to deliver Services to the Authority. |
| **“HBP 2030”** | Healthy Bee Plan, covering the period of 2020 – 2030 |
| “**Intermediate Beekeeper**” | [TBC following market engagement] meaning non-commercial beekeepers with at least three years’ experience in managing at least one hive, for the purpose of reducing problem pests and diseases affecting the UK bee population. Whilst as a general rule of thumb we expect intermediate level hobbyist beekeepers to have at least three years of experience, the Supplier may however use their discretion and admit beekeepers who have kept more colonies over a short period, for example someone who has kept five colonies for one year. |

# Introduction to Defra and APHA

The Department Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (the “**Authority**”) is the UK Government Department responsible for the environment, food and farming and rural affairs. The Authority’s priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information on the Authority can be found at: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs).

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (“**APHA**”) is one of the Authority’s executive agencies with priorities to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy. Further information on the APHA can be found at: [Animal and Plant Health Agency - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency).

APHA’s National Bee Unit provide support to beekeepers, on behalf of the UK Government and Welsh Government, including delivery of the bee health programme. The bee health programme includes beehive inspections aiming to keep levels of bee pests and disease to a minimum. Inspectors provide various forms of training and advice to beekeepers to improve their competence in husbandry and disease recognition.

# Background to the Requirement

The Authority is seeking to appoint a Supplier to provide hive side training across England and Wales. In this context, “hive side” means the provision of face-to-face and practical training inside bee hives, as opposed to classroom based or online training.

The training sought will target intermediate level hobbyist beekeepers, meaning non-commercial beekeepers with at least three years’ experience in managing at least one hive, for the purpose of reducing problem pests and diseases affecting the UK bee population. Whilst as a general rule of thumb we expect intermediate level hobbyist beekeepers to have at least three years of experience, the Supplier may however use their discretion and admit beekeepers who have kept more colonies over a short period, for example someone who has kept five colonies for one year.

We are initially seeking a one-year contract to pilot hive side training in the 2025 beekeeping season (April – September). We expected to take lessons learned from the Contract with a view to tendering for longer term provision for hive side training in future years.

The Healthy Bees Plan (“**HBP 2030**)” aims to address the challenges facing beekeepers and bee farmers and to sustain the health of honey bees and beekeeping in England and Wales over the next decade by building on the experiences of the first plan. The UK and Welsh Governments targeting of intermediate level hobbyist beekeepers is a key aspect of the 10-year HBP 2030 running between 2020 - 2030.

# Introduction to Healthy Bee Plan (“HBP 2030”)

The HBP 2030 is a continuation of the 2009 Healthy Bees Plan, a 10-year programme of partnership working between Defra, Welsh Government and stakeholders. One of the main aims of the 2009 plan was to support the education and training of beekeepers, providing beekeepers with the skills needed to effectively manage bee pests and diseases. During the course of the 2009 plan, funding was provided to substantially expand both the range of training courses and the number of venues where these courses were delivered to hobbyist beekeepers, and to the Bee Farmers’ Association’s apprenticeship scheme.

The driver for Government to develop Healthy Bees Plans stems from the importance of honey bees as a generalist insect pollinator species. Colonies of honey bees can be moved to different locations to pollinate particular plant species, for example apples and field beans, and are of benefit to farmers and consumers. Honey bees, along with other pollinating insects, contribute an estimated £500m to UK agriculture.

Government involvement in bee health began during the Second World War when Government regulated the provision of sugar and enacted legislation to control harmful diseases affecting bees. For the reasons stated above, Government maintains a strong interest in honey bees.

Maintaining high standards of biosecurity is an important government priority to ensure that honey bees can continued to support UK agriculture for future generations. Ensuring that beekeepers are sufficiently competent to minimise outbreaks of honey bee pests and diseases is a key aspect of biosecurity.

TheHBP 2030 seeks to support the estimated 40,000 hobbyist and 400 commercial beekeepers in England and Wales to ensure high levels of biosecurity. Supporting and encouraging beekeepers to develop good husbandry skills and learn how to minimise pests and disease is therefore an important element of HBP 2030.

A review of the original 2009 Healthy Bees Plan highlighted many different achievements such as: greater collaboration between government and stakeholders; education and training provision for beekeepers improved husbandry standards; and a dramatic increase in beekeeper registration on the National Bee Unit's [BeeBase website](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=41). The review also identified areas which could be improved upon such as the provision of hive side training which this Contract seeks to address.

An independent, study commissioned by the Authority in 2021 examined the types of training and information available to beekeepers, along with possible approaches to training that could be used in future. The results of this study included a list of over 100 different training courses, along with the review of the original Healthy Bees Plan, and indicated that there were many different courses organised by local beekeeping associations available. The majority of these are aimed at new beekeepers, but there are insufficient training courses and support available for intermediate beekeepers. Providing access to training courses and support is key in ensuring that beekeepers who already have a minimum of three years’ experience can gain the skills and capability to continue keeping bees successfully for many years to come. The responses gathered from this study also showed that beekeepers preferred to learn using a combination of theoretical and practical learning methods. This suggests that training courses should be delivered through both online and in-person delivery methods. A previous contract delivered online courses, this Contract will deliver in-person training to the targeted bee keepers.

Further information on HBP 2030 can be found on the National Bee Unit’s [BeeBase website](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=41).

# . Objectives of This Contract

The overall objective is to provide high-quality practical, hands-on, hive-side training for beekeepers who are already beyond beginner level, to improve their competence in key bee health areas as described below, relating to pests and disease. The hive-side courses must complement the online modules on:

* + 1. Managing varroa​ and
    2. Disorders, diseases and pests of honey bee brood​

available here: <https://menterabusnes.cymru/healthy-bees-academy/>​

The Supplier will design, develop and deliver training modules for intermediate beekeeping students. The criteria to be considered an Intermediate Beekeeper is set out in the *Student Eligibility* section below.

# Student Eligibility

Training modules must be offered to intermediate level beekeepers in England and Wales. intermediate level beekeepers are defined as:

* + 1. being registered on BeeBase (students will be required to provide their BeeBase registration number); and
    2. having at least 3-5 hive-years’ experience (i.e. taking account of length of experience and number of hives managed); or
    3. who have passed the British Beekeepers Association, or Welsh Beekeepers Association Basic Assessment Basic Assessment.

If students have not completed the four modules of the online course from Mentera, the Supplier encourage students to undertake the course.

Link to Mentera Course: [Healthy Bees Academy - Mentera](https://mentera.cymru/healthy-bees-academy/)

Other criteria for designating beekeepers as ‘intermediate level’ may be considered, and details of proposed criteria must be included with clear justification in tenders

# The Supplier’s Staff

The Supplier trainers staff must provide evidence regarding the level of experience of their proposed trainers, both in beekeeping and in training delivery who are developing and delivering training modules.

The Suppliers trainers must have:

* + 1. completed all four models of the online https://menterabusnes.cymru/healthy-bees-academy/. This is to ensure that the Supplier’s staff delivering the training are aware of the syllabus of the courses
    2. X Hive Years [what experience, qualifications etc.] [TBC following market engagement]

# Charging of a Refundable Deposit

The Supplier may request students to pay a refundable deposit for the purpose of preventing non-attendance by students.

# Lot Structure

This requirement is divided into three lots, with each lot covering a specific geographical region. The Supplier should note there are additional requirements for services delivered in Wales, see s*ection 11* below, there is no difference between expected course content in each region.

Lot 1 Coverage: North of England and Midlands.

Lot 2 Coverage: South of England.

Lot 3 Coverage: Wales

The Supplier must detail their chosen locations where hive side training will take place. Consideration will be given to the spatial distribution of courses across England and Wales and the commutable distance for students.

# Requirements for all lots

The Supplier must be able to satisfy all the requirement of this section 9.

The Supplier must have a suitable locations to deliver the training. Each location must have at least 10 colonies **and** 2 colonies for every 2 students, each student must look at no fewer than two hives as part of the training.

Each training location must have suitable access either by public transport or private vehicles and ensure students are not discriminated against as outlined in <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>.

This training must not require a laboratory environment or microscopes.

To ensure best biosecurity practice, the Supplier must supply long cuff nitrile disposable gloves in a range of sizes for participating students.

During the enrolment process students must be informed they need to provide their own clean, laundered bee suits. Students failing to follow this instruction must be prevented from participating in the course by the Supplier.

It must be made clear to potential students when advertising and delivering any of the courses that the course has been funded by government under the Healthy Bees Plan 2030.

The Supplier must stipulate the number of beekeepers that will be trained for the available budget

No fewer than two trainers must deliver training at any one time and the student to trainer ratio for the hive-side courses must not fall below 10 students to one trainer.

Whilst the Supplier may not charge for the training, with the exception of the requesting students pay a refundable deposit for the purpose of preventing non-attendance. The Supplier may however introduce students to other course(s) which the Supplier offers or goods such as queen bees or beekeeping equipment which are for sale.

For the purpose of quality assurance, the Supplier must be able to supply the Authority with a list of students contact details including: their name, phone number and/or email address. The Supplier must ensure a [data sharing contract/privacy notice TBC] in place to enable this data sharing.

The Supplier must conduct a student satisfaction surveys at the end of the module. The results of this survey must be collated and shared with APHA in the final report, see section 10 below. Additionally, APHA would like to ask a selection of students about what elements of the training have been used in practice after some time has lapsed. In conducting the student satisfaction survey, the Supplier must request students’ consent for further APHA, Authority or Welsh Government follow-up feedback. To facilitate further feedback, the Supplier must collate basic contact details (name and either an email or phone number) so students may be contacted in the future.

The Supplier must keep a risk log to track any risks such as low student attendance. The Supplier must bring all risk to the attention of the Authority in a timely manner. The Supplier must endure the Authority is sighted on all risk by sharing the risk log as and when it is updated.

# Timescale

The intended term of the Contract is only to cover the 2025 beekeeping season April 2025 - September 2025. The Contract term is expected to expire on 30th November 2025.

The Supplier must be able meet the timeline requirements stated below, assuming Contract award takes place in early May:

* + 1. By the end of May: The Supplier staff delivering the hive side training must have completed all four models of the online <https://menterabusnes.cymru/healthy-bees-academy/>. This is to ensure that the Supplier’s staff delivering the training ​ are aware of the syllabus of the course.
    2. By Mid-June: attend a hive-side kick-off meeting with APHA and other suppliers.
    3. By end of June: advertise and develop the details of the courses to be delivered.
    4. From July – September: Deliver hive-side courses during as soon as is practically possible in 2025.

The Supplier must provide two reports to APHA, at the midpoint of the beekeeping season and an end of year report in December 2025.

The mid-point report must include:

* + 1. description of planned marketing of the courses;
    2. locations and number of students booked to attend a course;
    3. the locations and number of people who completed hive side training, paying particular focus to feedback on the learning objectives of the course.

The end-point reports must include:

* + 1. the locations and number of people who completed hive side training, paying particular focus to feedback on the learning objectives of the course;
    2. the results from the student stabilisation survey described in section 9.12 above
    3. review of risk mitigation and challenges which have occurred during delivery of the Contract, including suggested changes and improvements for future training.

# Specific Additional Requirements for Lot 3 (Services Delivered in Wales)

There are additional requirements when delivering hive-side training in Wales.

* + 1. Course promotion must be bilingual, and it must be clear that the course is suitable for Welsh speakers.
    2. The course must be given in Welsh when requested in advance by students.

Provide the following milestones and information in quarterly reports:

* + 1. Report the number of enrolled students who requested that the course is delivered in Welsh
    2. Report how many Welsh speakers attended hive-side training.

# Budget

**[TBC]**