



## Pre-Tender Market Engagement

### National Body for Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Improvement Agencies Ref: CPD 004 124 192

**Authority:** Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities DLUHC (“the Authority”).

**Date Response required:** 17:00 (GMT) Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2023

## PURPOSE

1. This Pre-Tender Market Engagement (PTME) seeks information in preparation for the potential procurement of a Supplier (from herein referred to as a “**Potential Supplier**”) to provide a National Body for Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Improvement Agencies (‘the Contract’). The purpose of this PTME is to:
  - a) help define the requirement;
  - b) help provide a better understanding of the feasibility of the requirement;
  - c) understand the best delivery approach;
  - d) understand the capacity of the market to deliver and possible risks involved; and
  - e) provide the market with an opportunity to ask questions, raise queries and identify any issues to be addressed at an early stage.
2. The Authority shall maintain commercial confidentiality of information received during the PTME.

## INTRODUCTION

3. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a ring-fenced capital grant administered by local authorities in England. It helps to meet the cost of adapting a property for eligible people of all ages, including those on a low income with a disability or a care need. Adaptations can include widening doors, installing ramps, grab rails, stair lifts, level access showers, raised toilets, access to gardens and, in some instances, home extensions. Heating systems, insulation and Telecare can also be funded through the DFG, which help enable people to live safely and independently.
4. Government policy is that, wherever possible, disabled and older people should be able to live safely and independently at home and remain integrated into their communities and wider society, rather than be housed in expensive and resource intensive residential care, away from their communities. The DFG supports this aim by helping to pay some or all of the costs of adapting an eligible person’s home to allow them to live in it safely and independently.
5. Local housing authorities have a statutory duty to fund adaptations for people who satisfy eligibility criteria, a needs assessment and a means test. They also have powers to provide financial assistance for adaptations for those that do not qualify for funding under the duty.
6. Since 2015 the DFG has been funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF) in recognition of the crucial role which home adaptations can play in supporting the integration of housing,

health, and social care to enable more people to live independently and stay longer in their homes.

7. Government funding for the grant has more than doubled, rising from £220 million in 2015-16 to £623 million for 2023-24.
8. Since 2010 Government has invested £5.4bn billion into the Disabled Facilities Grant (2010-11 to 2023-24), delivering an estimated 490,000 home adaptations.
9. There has been a national body for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) since 2000. We are potentially seeking tenders for a new Contract for a national body to deliver the vital support to HIAs, local authorities and the wider sector, and to individuals requiring adaptations or other housing advice, to ensure DFGs are delivered efficiently and effectively across England.
10. HIAs deliver about 50% of DFGs and currently approximately 71% of local housing authorities across England have HIA coverage. HIAs provide services to eligible people of all ages and tenures. Some HIAs also provide services to self-funders. HIAs are very diverse, ranging from very small local concerns to large organisations; they cover widely varying geographical localities from rural to metropolitan inner cities. Some LAs also have their in-house HIAs. HIA services are commissioned primarily by district, unitary or county authorities, but also to a lesser extent, by registered social landlords and private sector bodies. Details of existing HIAs can be found at: <https://www.findmyhia.org.uk/>
11. Many agencies also run handyperson services to carry out small jobs around the home or operate specific schemes, for example to improve home safety and security, prevent falls in the home, improve energy efficiency or make homes suitable for people to return to after a stay in hospital e.g. through installation of a specialist bed or mattress. As with HIAs, some LAs run their own handyperson services. While handyperson services are generally not funded by the DFG capital budget, they provide an important service for people who require small adaptations or changes to their homes to make them more suitable or safer.
12. The Authority requires an organisation to act as a national body of DFGs and HIAs in England that can provide innovation, co-ordination and training, to support the efficient delivery of the DFG in England. The Potential Supplier shall also demonstrate leadership in the development of client-facing skills and delivery standards for individual agencies and provide an authoritative and reliable access point for service commissioners. The Potential Supplier shall promote standards and good practice and support the Government's ambition to integrate housing, health and social care, an important driver of the BCF.
13. The Potential Supplier shall provide on-going support to DFG delivery services, primarily through working with service providers and commissioners and through the delivery of regular training to the sector. The Potential Supplier shall provide advice, support, intelligence, data and data analysis about the sector to Government, to support the Authority's understanding of demand and delivery of the DFG.
14. Key stakeholders in DFG policy and delivery:
  - **Central Government:**
    - Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) – funds the DFG, and shares policy responsibility for the DFG with DLUHC.
    - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - shares policy responsibility for the DFG with DHSC. DLUHC is

responsible for distributing DFG funding to local authorities and manages the Contract for the national body for DFGs and HIAs.

- **Local Government:**

- County councils – the social care authorities, responsible for planning social care services, and who receive funding for the DFG from DLUHC and are responsible for distributing the funding to district councils within their area.
- District, metro, and unitary councils (including London boroughs) – have a statutory duty to provide adaptations to eligible people. They process and approve DFG applications and provide the funding for the works.

- **NHS:**

- Better Care Fund – requires Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and local authorities to make joint plans and pool budgets for the purposes of integrated care. Plans are owned by the local Health and Wellbeing Board. Funding streams within the BCF include the DFG.
- Integrated Care Boards – are statutory NHS organisations responsible for developing a plan for meeting the health needs of the population, managing the NHS budget and arranging for the provision of health services in the ICS area. They are responsible for planning care in their area in accordance with the Better Care Fund policy framework and planning requirements.

- **Other stakeholders:**

- Home Improvement Agencies – contracted or created by local authorities to provide adaptations to eligible people. They can also provide adaptations to self-funders who are not eligible for the grant.

## HIGH LEVEL OUTLINE PROJECT OUTCOMES REQUIRED

15. The over-arching objective of the new Contract is to assist in delivering Government's commitment to help older and disabled people to live independently and safely at home, by providing a centre of expertise for DFGs and HIAs. The Contract will also support the Government's ambition to better integrate housing, health and social care services.

16. Key Objectives /core requirements of the Contract are:

- Provide continuity of vital capacity development and day to day advice and support to LAs, HIAs and the wider adaptations sector around local DFG delivery, including to help LAs meet their statutory duty to provide adaptations to eligible people under sections 19 to 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 ('the 1996 Act') and support around complex queries;
- Continue to support and promote the sector to effectively contribute to the integration of health, housing and social care, including through support to set up local housing assistance policies;
- Provide advice, support, intelligence and data and data analysis to Government on a regular basis as well as on an ad-hoc basis when requested, for example in order to develop DFG and other home adaptations policies and prepare for fiscal events;

- Represent the sector in dealing with Government and other stakeholders, including local authorities, HIAs, housing, social care and health agencies and governing bodies;
- Provide information and advice, online and by telephone/email, to the public on housing options and the Disabled Facilities Grant, including on alternative forms of funding for adaptations for people who do not qualify for the grant.

## OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

### **Deliverables/Outputs and Performance Measures**

17. All activities funded under the potential Contract, as well as those funded by other means as appropriate, will be reported to the Authority on an agreed monthly, quarterly and annual basis.
18. An annual work plan will be devised and agreed with the Authority each year of the Contract. The work plan will be subject to change by agreement between the Potential Supplier and the Authority as priorities change or new priorities emerge.
19. Deliverables are around the provision of capacity development and day-to-day support for HIAs, including Technical Officers, HIA service commissioners, local authorities and wider stakeholders. This also includes support to improve quality around DFG delivery, for handyperson services, for the development of HIA local links and influencing strategy as well as other requirements.
20. The current Supplier interacts with at least 70% of the sector (local authorities and HIAs) annually, providing support on the deliverables below.

### **Technical Officer Support**

21. The Potential Supplier will devise and operate bespoke training courses and provide materials of relevance and use to HIA and Technical Officers, HIA service commissioners, and local authorities.

### **Support for Commissioners**

22. The Potential Supplier shall provide support for commissioners undertaking procurement for HIAs and local authorities. The Potential Supplier will indicate what steps are being taken to improve services such as reducing DFG waiting times and detail what additional services they intend to provide to support effective and timely commissioning.

### **Support for Local Authorities**

23. The Potential Supplier will provide support and advice to local authorities on effective delivery of DFGs to maximise the use of the grant and help enable eligible people to live safely and independently at home.
24. The Potential Supplier will provide advice and support to local authorities, and, where required, advice to local health services and social care services to help enable the integration of health, housing and social care.

25. The Potential Supplier will encourage and support local authorities to develop and update local Housing Assistance Policies, through training and regular engagement, and by shining a light on best-practice and how it can be replicated across England.

### **Improving Quality**

26. The Potential Supplier shall use data provided by local authorities on DFG performance to target support aimed at reduction in DFG waiting times, improvement of services to clients, and streamlining the process for DFG applications through local authorities.
27. The Potential Supplier shall develop, implement and drive forward a quality mark system. Reasonable costs of accreditation can be charged to agencies. The system shall be subject to agreement and scrutiny by the Authority. The quality assurance scheme must be fit for purpose for agencies that deliver tailored services to elderly and vulnerable people and must meet all statutory requirements as a minimum.

### **Handyperson Services**

28. The Potential Supplier will promote the use of local handyperson services which provide low-level, low-cost interventions, such as grab rails and minor home repairs and maintenance. The Potential Supplier will work with local authorities to create handyperson services, ensuring good quality and effective services are delivered that support the needs of local people.

### **Funding for adaptations and support for the general public**

29. The Potential Supplier shall provide advice and information to the public and the adaptations sector – including providers and commissioners – on DFG applications and delivery and wider, non-DFG funding opportunities for people who do not qualify for the grant, identify good practice, and support information sharing within the sector to maximise funding opportunities for adaptations. Advice for the general public should be provided via a website, as well as by telephone and email. The current Supplier receives an average of 25,000 visits per month to the [adaptmyhome.org.uk](http://adaptmyhome.org.uk) website (see below).

### **Other Requirements**

30. The Potential Supplier will develop and implement a strategy to support HIAs and the home adaptations sector to drive forward integration between housing, health and care services. The Potential Supplier will also develop and implement a strategy to lead the sector in taking forward the integration of housing, health and social care. The final strategy will be agreed with the Authority.
31. The Potential Supplier will identify and develop priorities relating to emerging policies. The Potential Supplier will provide feedback to Government on the home adaptations sector as well as the sector's engagement with the Better Care Fund, highlighting good practice and barriers to engagement. This shall include monitoring and reporting on HIA sector involvement with Health and Wellbeing Boards; progress to be included in quarterly monitoring reports.
32. The Potential Supplier will support the Authority and other Government departments as required by analysing annual DELTA survey responses, providing expert advice and information in preparation for fiscal events, and inform Government officials of emerging trends or issues in the adaptations sector and ways in which can be addressed.

### **Communications**

33. The Potential Supplier will be required to:

- a) Develop and maintain a high quality, easily accessible website for both the home adaptations sector and general public. The current Supplier's website can be found at: <https://wwwFOUNDATIONS.uk.com/> ;
  - It is anticipated that any website(s) shall require application of a security.txt file to the site(s) detailing how visitors can report a vulnerability. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have published guidance on vulnerability disclosure: [NCSC Vulnerability Disclosure Toolkit V2](#).<sup>1</sup>
  - Furthermore, as a condition of being awarded the Contract, it is expected that a cyber assurance process will need to be successfully completed in respect of the Potential Supplier and any application or website they will develop and deliver as part of the Contract. This assurance process shall initially take the form of a questionnaire, to be completed by the Potential Supplier and reviewed by the Authority's Cyber Security team.
- b) Routinely update the website to ensure up to date information and advice are provided;
- c) The website is to include, in a prominent place, a facility whereby the public can locate the nearest home improvement agency/handyperson scheme e.g. a post code tracker. The current Supplier's website which provides this information – [findmyhia.org.uk](http://findmyhia.org.uk) - receives an average of 7,000 visits per month;
- d) The website is also to include information for the general public on the Disabled Facilities Grant and self-assessment tools for adaptation requirements and the means test. Currently the website providing this information can be found at: <https://adaptmyhome.org.uk/>;
- e) Produce newsletters, e-bulletins and e-briefings for HIAs, Occupational Therapists, Technical Officers, commissioning local authorities and members of the public at least once a quarter, or more frequently as needed. Ease of use for communications directed at the public is essential;
- f) Develop the use of contemporary communication techniques including social media to increase awareness of the DFG and home adaptations best-practice;
- g) Run roadshows across England to bring the sector together, share best practice and highlight emerging issues and ways these can be resolved;
- h) Hold an annual National Healthy Housing Awards to recognise excellence across the sector in England.

### **Social value**

34. The Potential Supplier will be required to demonstrate delivery of additional Social Value in accordance with Theme 3 – Fighting Climate Change, as set out in the Government's [Social Value Model](#)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/files/NCSC-Vulnerability-disclosure-Toolkit-v2.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/940828/Social-Value-Model-Quick-Reference-Table-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/940828/Social-Value-Model-Quick-Reference-Table-Edn-1.1-3-Dec-20.pdf)



## KEY DATES & TENDERING PROCESS

35. If it is decided this Contract is required, it is anticipated that a procurement competition will commence in December 2023, with full delivery of associated services to commence in calendar Q3 2024, following a Contract mobilisation period (where required). These indicative dates are for information purposes only. The Authority reserves the right to amend these dates at any time, and Potential Suppliers rely on them entirely at their own risk.
36. The Contract is expected to be for a period of 30 months, with the option to extend for up to 2 years in 1 year increments (i.e. 2.5 + 1 + 1 years). This excludes provision of a preceding mobilisation / transition period (i.e. from Contract signature to commencement of full service delivery), which is anticipated to be up to 3 months where required.
37. The indicative total value of the Contract, including all extension options (i.e. for 54 months) is estimated at £5M incl. VAT. Please note that this figure is for information purposes only and the Authority shall expect to receive optimum value-for-money proposals as part of any subsequent procurement competition.
38. It is currently anticipated that any procurement competition will be conducted in accordance with the [Public Contracts Regulations 2015](#)<sup>3</sup>, using the Open Procedure.
39. The Contract will be on the basis of the Government's [Mid-Tier Contract terms](#)<sup>4</sup>, and it is anticipated that the following optional schedules shall be utilised:

- Sch 8 - Implementation Plan and Testing
- Sch 10 - Service Levels
- Sch 11 – Continuous Improvement
- Sch 14 - Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery
- Sch 16 – Security
- Sch 19 - Cyber Essentials Scheme
- Sch 23 - Guarantee (where deemed necessary)
- Sch 24 – Financial Difficulties
- Sch 27 - Key Subcontractors
- Sch 29 – Key Supplier Staff
- Sch 30 - Exit Management

40. Accordingly, Potential Suppliers attention is also drawn to the following clauses / obligations that the Authority expects to apply:

- a) **Financial Transparency Objectives** – the Supplier shall be obliged to provide Financial Reports that support Open Book Contract Management, as per Clause 6.3 of the Core Terms. Amongst other things, this is intended to:
- i. provide the Authority with a clear analysis of the Costs, Overhead recoveries (where relevant), time spent by Supplier Staff in providing the Contract services and the Supplier Profit Margin;
  - ii. help identify opportunities for efficiencies and improvements; and
  - iii. demonstrate that the Contract is achieving value for money for the taxpayer relative to current market prices.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/273/contents/made>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-mid-tier-contract>

- b) **Virtual Library** – the Supplier shall be required to provide and maintain a Virtual Library, to include where applicable:
- i. a detailed register of all Supplier Assets, Sub-Contracts and other relevant agreements required in connection with the Deliverables;
  - ii. a schedule of the IPRs which the Authority reasonably requires to benefit from the Deliverables;
  - iii. any plans required to be delivered by the Supplier pursuant to, e.g. Schedules 14 (Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery), 16 (Security), 24 (Financial Difficulties), and 30 (Exit Management).
  - iv. technical infrastructure and operating procedures through which the Supplier provides the Deliverables.
- c) **Staff Transfer** – It is anticipated that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) will apply, in accordance with Parts B and E of Schedule 7 (Staff Transfer), and the Authority shall endeavour to share further details during the procurement competition. For the avoidance of doubt Potential Suppliers are advised to consider potential implications of the (TUPE) and it shall ultimately be the responsibility of the successful Potential Supplier to determine if TUPE does apply.
- d) **IPR** – In accordance with Option 2 of Schedule 36 (Intellectual Property Rights) it is expected that the Authority shall acquire / retain ownership of any New IPR, and the Supplier shall be able to use any New IPR developed for the purposes of delivering the Contract, subject always to the Authority's approval.

41. Any procurement process is expected to be conducted via the Authority's **Atamis e-tendering portal**<sup>5</sup> and Potential Suppliers are encouraged to register on the portal as soon as possible in readiness for launch of a procurement.

## RESPONSE

42. Potential Suppliers are encouraged to respond to the questions below. In order to facilitate effective consideration of your feedback, please ensure responses are clearly structured, succinct (max 10 pages overall) and do not contain superfluous sales materials.
43. Please ensure your email and response includes '**Ref: CP004124192 – National Body for Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Improvement Agencies**' in the title.
44. Please respond by email to **commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk** with the responses to the following questions by **17:00 GMT, Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2023 (the "Response Deadline")**.

**Q1** Would you/your organisation be interested in bidding for this project? If not, please provide your reasons, including detail of any perceived commercial or operational barriers to bidding that you believe the Authority could potentially try to address.

**Q2** Does the indicative procurement timetable present any particular challenges, and / or are there any specific timetable considerations you believe the Authority should take into account?

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<sup>5</sup> [https://atamis-5407.my.site.com/ProSpend\\_eSourcing\\_Community\\_Registration?locale=uk](https://atamis-5407.my.site.com/ProSpend_eSourcing_Community_Registration?locale=uk)



- Q3** Are there any particular aspects (operational / logistical / commercial / financial) regarding mobilisation of the Contract / transition to new Contract arrangements that you believe the Authority needs to consider?
- Q4** Are there any particular aspects of the proposed Contract terms and conditions that you believe the Authority needs to consider?
- Q5** Are there any considerations regarding costs and associated charging approaches that the Authority should be aware of? What do you consider to be the principal cost drivers for these services, and are there opportunities to maximise value for money through the charging structure?
- Q6** Are the scope of services and objectives for the Contract clear, and what further information would you like to see included in any Invitation to Tender (ITT), in order to facilitate submitting a high quality, value for money tender.
- Q7** Are the Social Value Themes, Policy Outcomes and Criteria suggested above suitable for this requirement, and which reporting metrics do you consider the most appropriate?
- Q8** The Potential Supplier will be required to provide information and advice, online and by telephone/email, to the public on housing options and the Disabled Facilities Grant, including on alternative forms of funding for adaptations for people who do not qualify for the grant. Are there specific outputs or deliverables you consider should be included in the Contract so that disabled individuals and their families are supported to ensure they receive the adaptations or housing advice they need on time and in a way that supports their individual, cultural, physical and mental wellbeing needs, including those who are not eligible for a DFG? What KPIs would you consider appropriate to monitor performance on support for individuals?
- Q9** Are there aspects of support required by local authorities, the wider sector, or individuals that you consider should be excluded from the Contract? Do you consider exclusions should be based on complexity, the time required to provide the support or other factors?

## QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

45. Potential Suppliers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this PTME document at any time prior to the Response Deadline. Questions must be submitted by email to **commercialtenders@levellingup.gov.uk** only.
46. To ensure that all Potential Suppliers have equal access to information regarding this PTME exercise, responses to questions raised by Potential Suppliers will be published in a “Questions and Answers” document, which will also be circulated by email, with updates appearing at regular intervals (approximately two to three working days).
47. Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
48. If a Potential Supplier wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being revealed, then the Potential Supplier must state this in their email and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If the Authority does not

consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the Potential Supplier will be invited to decide whether:

- a) the question/clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
- b) it wishes to withdraw the question/clarification.

## GENERAL CONDITIONS

49. This PTME will help the Authority to refine the requirements and to understand the potential level of interest in the delivering requirements. It will also aid Potential Supplier's understanding of the requirements in advance of any formal competitive tender exercise.
50. The Authority reserves the right to change any information contained within this PTME at any time, and Potential Suppliers rely upon it entirely at their own risk.
51. The Authority reserves the right not to proceed with a competitive tender exercise after this PTME or to award any contract.
52. Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response to this PTME must be borne by the Potential Supplier.
53. No down-selection of Potential Suppliers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this PTME.
54. The Authority expects that all responses to this PTME will be provided by Potential Suppliers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
55. No information provided by a Potential Supplier in response to this PTME will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the Potential Supplier, in any subsequent formal procurement process.