**Third Party Support for the delivery of COVID Secure Spot Checks**

**Background**

In May, the PM announced in Parliament that HSE would be undertaking COVID-19 compliance spot checks. As a result, HSE has put in place new processes to establish compliance via pro-active telephone-based spot checks. We now wish to implement the same process for physical inspections, using third party field resources. This, combined with telephone checks, will allow us to significantly increase the number of spot checks undertaken, allowing us to support LA’s, respond rapidly to local outbreaks, focus on high-risk sectors, and scale up our proactive work.

**Requirements**

HSE is seeking multiple partners to provide a GB wide outsourced field force that will undertake large volumes of COVID secure workplace checks. We are not relying on a single supplier to have full geographic coverage, but we would require a reasonable footprint, for example beyond one region, and a high level of flexibility. We would expect to contract to the end of March 2021, but the same level of service throughout this period cannot be guaranteed.

Checks will be at business premises and each check will require a COVID compliance assessment of the workplace in line with government guidance. We require physical attendance at the premises to engage with the duty holder and complete a standard questionnaire, including the notation of observations whilst on site. Providers will not be required to undertake any other health and safety checks. The visit will focus purely on COVID secure compliance covering areas such as risk assessments, appropriate signage, social distancing, cleaning regimes and so forth. All completed forms and outcomes will be returned to HSE daily. HSE will provide all cases requiring a visit, and the forms and scripts required to complete the checks. It should be noted that the form and scripts are likely to change on a relatively regularly basis as governance guidelines change and local areas apply different restrictions. The forms are changed control and are not complex so we do not expect this to be an onerous activity, however suppliers must be aware of the need to be flexible and responsive in this changing environment and making appropriate considerations within their commercial propositions.

HSE will provide cases/business to the supplier for visit. We will work with the supplier to ensure that we provide enough cases, with enough notice, so that the supplier can effectively plan and deliver high levels of productivity. However, there will be a need for flexibility, as we may need to call on the supplier to support us in our response to local outbreaks or changing risk profiles. These inspections will be undertaken initially on HSE regulated businesses, but we expect that to quickly extend to LA regulated businesses, working in partnership with Councils. We will use HSE technical and specialist resources to focus on more complex work, including those businesses identified as potentially non-complaint via telephone checks and these third-party inspections.

We will cleanse and check the businesses/cases in advance of issue, but it is inevitable that some of the businesses will no longer be in operation. We have specific processes in place so that this can be recorded but suppliers need to take this into account in their delivery and commercial models. For reference, we are experiencing a 15% failure rate on telephone checks. This of course may not be the case for physical inspections.

HSE will track cases and report on status and outcomes and will work with the supplier to ensure that cases are dealt with in a timely manner. We would expect the supplier to able to further report on cases in flight and provide position statements on request.

Suppliers visiting officers will be acting on behalf of HSE and we will issue letters of authorisation on that basis. We need suppliers to assure us that they have appropriately skilled and trained employees in place to undertake this work on our behalf and have undertaken risk assessments to ensure the safety of those employees when they are working on this contract.

Whilst HSE will provide all guidance and forms/scripts/proformas, we expect suppliers to provide their staff with devices and equipment, and have the means to gather the required data and outcomes in a way which enables the case level information to be provided back to HSE in the pre-defined format, on a daily basis.

We are not able to define volume requirements at this stage and we would not expect to contract against the delivery of pre-defined volumes. We need suppliers to demonstrate their capability, explain what resources with what geographical spread are available, and we will make assumptions regarding volumes on that basis. We acknowledge that these assumptions would need to be tested and therefore we are proposing a phased implementation over a month, starting with reduced volumes, and then ramping up to full capacity once the process has been tested and assumptions are validated/refined. Proposals should describe the resourcing model that will be applied to this work. We are not necessarily seeking dedicated resources but where resources may be applied to non-HSE work, we would not expect that activity to be undertaken at the same time as HSE work with the same business/duty holder.

**Implementation**

We will need partners who are able to implement quickly. We are seeking to start inspections before the end of September, though this is subject to funding approval. We would expect implementation to take approximately 2 weeks. We expect implementation to include the following activities:

* Provision of processes and proformas (data scheme and current forms have been issued)
* Letter of authorisation
* Training and induction, including the provision of training materials and guidance
* Provision of HSE branded hi-vis vests (that must only be used whilst undertaking HSE business)
* Set-up of supplier IT systems and processes
* Set-up of data transfers via Citrix FileShare
* Set-up up of suppliers and reporting functionality in HSE’s environment
* End to end testing
* Planning for Phase 1 live testing with lowers volumes for circa. 2-week period to test in live environment and validate assumptions
* Set-up of contract management and operational governance

We would expect to work with suppliers to develop a joint implementation plan immediately after contract signature.

A Storey

Sept 2020 (revised)