NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

Invitation to tender for provision of services for

NICE Listens

Requirements Specification

1. Background
   1. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance and advice on promoting high quality health, public health and social care.  
      Our role is to improve outcomes for people using the NHS and other public health and social care services. We do this by:

* Producing evidence-based guidance and advice for health, public health and social care practitioners.
* Developing quality standards and performance metrics for those providing and commissioning health, public health and social care services.
* Providing a range of information services for commissioners, practitioners and managers across the spectrum of health and social care.
  1. NICE and its advisory bodies base their conclusions on the best available evidence but they also have to make judgements. These fall into two categories. Scientific value judgements are concerned with interpreting the significance and relevance of the totality of the available scientific, technical and clinical data. Social value judgements take account of societal aspirations, preferences and ethical principles that ought to underpin the manner and extent of the care provided to NHS patients and users of social care services.
  2. The advisory groups who formulate the various forms of NICE guidance are well-qualified to make scientific judgements. However, they have no particular legitimacy to impose their own social value judgements on the NHS or social care.
  3. In the past the NICE Citizens Council provided a mechanism for in-depth, deliberative enquiry with a group of informed members of the public, to help inform the approach and judgements NICE takes. Reports from the Citizens Council have been used to inform the NICE Principles and are reflected in our evaluation methods and decision frameworks.
  4. NICE and the wider health and social care landscape are changing. In addition to the long-term impacts of COVID-19, transformative innovation is underway in healthcare services, technologies and regulatory science, and within NICE itself. These changes will throw up challenging moral, ethical and social value issues that NICE will need to address.
  5. In light of these challenges, NICE is introducing a new process for deliberative public engagement: NICE Listens. Whilst performing a similar function to our previous Citizen Council, it will offer a more flexible format which can be tailored to different topics and timescales. It will complement our existing mechanisms for public engagement but be used to address particularly challenging topics.
  6. Each time a topic is identified by NICE as being suitable for NICE Listens a similar process will occur:
     1. A suitable independent external contractor will be selected (as per NICE procurement processes) to support the recruitment for, set-up, facilitation and evaluation of a NICE Listens event. NICE staff will work with the successful contractor to design and develop the event.
     2. The contractor will recruit and support a representative sample of the public to attend the event. The size, format and duration of each event will vary depending on the topic. It is expected however, that participants will have the opportunity to hear, and cross-examine, expert speakers, review relevant case studies and vignettes, as well as engage in discussion and deliberation in both plenary and small group sessions to explore others' points of view, and consider trade-offs carefully. The contractor will facilitate the event.
     3. It is important to note that NICE does not expect the group to necessarily reach a consensus. Rather, it wishes to learn of the reasons behind the divergent conclusions that may be reached.
     4. To limit any possibility of NICE influencing the direction of the discussions or conclusions reached, NICE staff will not be involved in any facilitation of the event itself.
     5. The successful contractor will feedback on the group’s conclusions via a written report. This will be presented to the Institute’s Executive Team, Board and published on the NICE website. The findings will inform various aspects of NICE’s work.
  7. It is envisaged that each NICE Listens topic will form a standalone event and that for each new topic a new recruitment process for participants in NICE Listens will take place.

1. Selected Topic
   1. Health inequalities, defined as avoidable and unfair differences in health status between groups of people, has been selected as the topic for the first NICE Listens event; this is for several reasons:
      1. The Health and Social Care act 2012 states that “policy makers and commissioners must ‘have regard to the need to reduce inequalities between the people of England with respect to the benefits that they can obtain from the health service”. Despite this legislation, health inequalities have increased over recent years.
      2. Reducing health inequalities is enshrined in [NICE’s principles](https://www.nice.org.uk/about/who-we-are/our-principles) and has been further expanded upon in the 2021 [NICE 5-year strategy](https://www.nice.org.uk/about/who-we-are/corporate-publications/the-nice-strategy-2021-to-2026). However, it has been 15 years since NICE considered health inequalities via the Citizen Council ([NICE Citizens Council report, 2006](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK401723/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK401723.pdf)).
      3. In 2020 the UK government established the new [Office for Health Promotion](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-office-for-health-promotion-to-drive-improvement-of-nations-health) with the aim of improving and ‘levelling up’ the health of the nation. This highlights the government’s desire to see an improvement in health for everybody, though to achieve this there will be different requirements and need for resource for different groups of people.
      4. There can be a trade-off between maximising health gains for the whole population with equalising health gains across society and improving the health of the most disadvantaged. In addition, with limited resources there will be aspects of prioritisation, even within the health inequalities identified, both in terms of the of the groups affected, and the causes of the inequalities. These trade-off questions can be hard to understand, and research has shown that providing people with more background information and exposing people to rival opinions can change their response.
   2. NICE wishes to use the NICE Listens process to address the following three questions related to health inequalities:
      1. **How would the public like NICE to act in regard to health inequalities?**
      2. **What value do the public place on different types of health inequalities? Are some more important for NICE to consider than others?**
      3. **What other factors should inform committee deliberation when they are considering health inequalities?**
   3. The wording and scope of the questions is open change and NICE expects to further define the questions with the successful contractor once they are appointed.
2. Timelines
   1. It is expected that the successful contractor will be commissioned by the end of August 2021 (subject to no delays in the procurement process).
   2. The NICE Listens Health Inequalities event shall be delivered in Autumn/Winter 2021 (likely early November 2021), with the report and results completed and available by the end of the year.
3. Event Format
   1. While the planned timetable of relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions would allow such an event to take place indoors from Summer 2021, the guidance on social distancing is subject to review. Therefore, we invite bidders to propose a suitable format, which may be face-to-face, online or using a mixed methods approach, laying out how the approach will address and mitigate for potential COVID-19 restrictions including social distancing, if relevant.
   2. We envisage that to cover all the topics required the event will need at least two days (though this may be spread across several sessions). The number, length and timing (i.e. time between each session occurring) of sessions associated with this NICE Listens event must be clearly laid out in your tender.
   3. All methods should be justified and an explanation provided as to how the event will be made accessible and how engagement will be maintained across days (if applicable).
4. Duties of the contractor

Recruiting a representative sample of the English population

* 1. The successful contractor shall recruit a group of people to take part in the event. The group should be from the general public and be representative of the adult population of England (those aged 18+). Please note that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not part of the scope of this topic, though this may be subject to change for future NICE Listens projects.
  2. Given the nature of the topic, it will be vital to have a sample that can cover the breadth of the issues regarding health inequalities and is representative of the groups and communities that are most affected by health inequalities. Age range, sex and gender, socio-economic status, disability status, sexual orientation, geographical location and ethnicity should all be considered when recruiting.
  3. The relevant information to recruit a representative sample for the NICE Listens event shall be collected, stored, and processed by the successful contractor and it will be their duty to ensure this is done according to relevant data protection laws including the General Data Protection Regulations.
  4. Best practice recruitment methods for high quality deliberative engagement shall be employed to ensure that such a sample can be recruited.
  5. The group size shall be tailored to the needs of the topic. As a guide, this is likely to be a minimum group size of 24, in line with the smaller past Citizens Council meetings. Use of larger groups (a maximum of 45 people) for high-profile topics that may have a substantial impact on NICE, may be considered. Please state and justify the proposed group size you think is suitable in your bid.
  6. The successful contractor will be responsible for supporting and answering any queries from those recruited.

Before the event

* 1. Working closely with NICE staff, to actively participate in the process of designing the event including:
     1. Attending preparatory meetings online or via the telephone with NICE staff;
     2. Gaining a detailed understanding of NICE’s topic and questions through discussion with experts within NICE;
     3. Work with NICE to support the process of scoping and refining the questions to be discussed during NICE Listens;
     4. Work with NICE to design a stimulating and discursive agenda and overall format for the NICE Listens event. The event shall be designed to ensure presentations and deliberative activities take place in a logical sequence, and support the ultimate aim of producing a written report as the main output;
     5. Engage and brief up to 8 expert speakers (who are able to communicate the issues in a format understandable to a lay audience) to attend the meeting. NICE will provide advice on known potential speakers. Briefing documents are typically 1500 words in length;
     6. Produce suitable briefing documents for public members, ensuring all relevant materials required before the event, are sent in good time and in a format that is accessible to each individual e.g. printed, electronic, audio, braille;
     7. Review the presentation materials prepared by expert speakers to ensure they are understandable, engaging and appropriate to their original brief, that content is not duplicated between speakers and that the presentations complement and fit with one another;
     8. Design an appropriate evaluation plan that will allow collection of both process and impact data, including tasks to be administered periodically during the meeting to track opinions, attitudes and beliefs;
     9. Design and prepare materials for all plenary and small group activities for the event, including case studies and vignettes, ensuring these promote inclusivity, and elicit deliberation and outputs that are relevant to the topic and question for the meeting;
     10. Identifying, raising and helping to mitigate any potential problems or risks associated with the event in advance.
  2. **If the event takes place virtually:**
     1. To determine the online platform that will be used and to ensure that event participants can access and use the platform prior to the event.
     2. To understand and support any specific accessibility requirements of all event participants in advance of the event.
     3. To support any special or access requirements, such as providing training and support to those with limited IT knowledge, troubleshooting and resolving any ongoing technological issues before the meeting or ensuring the platform has captioning functionality.
  3. **If the event takes place face to face:**
     1. To understand and support any specific accessibility requirements of all event participants in advance of the event.
     2. To source and coordinate the booking and set-up of a suitable, accessible, COVID-19 safe venue in a location agreed with NICE.
     3. To co-ordinate all accommodation and travel to and from the venue for all event participants, including expert witnesses as required before, during and after the event.
     4. To co-ordinate daily refreshments for the event participants including management of dietary preferences and allergies. Please state in the bid which meals are being provided.
     5. Generally, to provide support to event participants, letting NICE know immediately of any issues that might affect the success of the meeting.

During the events (this includes all sessions that make up the full event)

* 1. Chair and facilitate the event, particularly ensuring that:
     1. ground rules are set and adhered to regarding expected etiquette and behaviour of event participants and speakers;
     2. the event runs to time;
     3. all participants have an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion;
     4. sufficient staff of appropriate levels of experience are provided to facilitate the plenary sessions and small group discussions;
     5. discussions and presentations remain focused on the meeting topic and meet the aims and objectives of the meeting;
     6. the event is monitored and recorded sufficiently to ensure all discussions and findings can be captured in the final written report, including monitoring how event participants’ views change during the meeting using suitable means e.g. tracking questionnaires;
     7. NICE staff are appropriately supported to observe the meeting;
     8. any difficulties experienced by event participants are dealt with as promptly and effectively as possible including those regarding accommodation, travel or refreshments (if face to face) or technological issues (if virtual).
  2. Generally provide support to all attending, letting NICE know immediately of any issues that might affect the success of the meeting.
  3. If there are multiple sessions involved in the event, to keep NICE informed of the event progress.

After the meeting

* 1. To attend a de-brief meeting with NICE within a few days of the end of event. This will be approximately 1-2 hours in duration and take place via video conference.
  2. To provide payment to each NICE Listens member for their attendance at the event at the following rates:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Time | Rate |
| Day (4 hours or longer) | £150 |
| Half day (less than 4 hours) | £75 |
| Hourly | £25 |

* 1. These payments are aligned with the current NICE payment recommendations for lay members involved in our work. If you plan to use different rates, please make this clear in your bid with clear justification.
  2. To reimburse event participants for any expenses incurred within the terms of NICE’s reimbursement policy within one month of the meeting.
  3. To provide a detailed evaluation of the event, including collection of feedback from the event participants.
  4. To lead on the evaluation and write up of findings from the event to deliver the NICE Listens report, including:
     1. Collecting and analysing the tracking findings and evaluation data;
     2. Consulting event participants on the draft report;
     3. Sending two rounds of drafts for NICE feedback;
     4. Refining the report after feedback from NICE on the drafts;
     5. Finalizing and producing the completed report.
  5. To send the final report to the NICE by the agreed date.
  6. To update event participants on the progress of the report and send a copy to them once sign-off and approval has been given.
  7. If required, to present the report to the Board of NICE at a public Board meeting.
  8. To support NICE with any reasonable requests for information to produce additional outputs and/or communication materials.

1. Budget
   1. The total maximum budget for the health inequalities project is £50,000.
   2. This is the full budget for the project and must cover **all** staff and project costs associated with designing, running and reporting back on the NICE Listens event.
   3. The maximum budget of £50,000 is to run the NICE Listens events on health inequalities. It is likely that there will be similar future projects focusing on different topics. If you would be in a position to do further work please state this in your offer. Further work is not guaranteed and the initial contract will be for the health inequalities work only.
2. Format of offer
   1. How your offer should be laid out:
      1. Your offer should take into account the brief as detailed above. It must answer the following twelve sections in the order in which they stand below. Section 1 of your offer must answer section 1 below 1, section 2 should answer section 2, and so on. If you make any enquiries about this section of the tender specification, please refer to them as ‘Format of Offer Sections e.g. ‘I have a question about Format of Offer Section 7a’, to differentiate it from the paragraph numbers used throughout this document.

Overview of Organisation

1. Provide some brief information about your organisation, for example information about ownership of the organisation and affiliations to other organisations, how long the organisation has been operational, and a summary of your core business activity.

Knowledge and understanding of key concepts

1. Outline your understanding of what social value judgements are, how these can be used to inform decision making in NICE’s guidance development process and what challenges you think NICE faces in identifying social value judgements.
2. Outline your understanding and knowledge of the identification and reduction of health inequalities, and the role of NICE in this.

Experience, skills and expertise

1. Outline your previous experience conducting deliberative public engagement, or similar, highlighting any previous work in the areas of health, health inequalities, policy and/or engaging the public on controversial or sensitive topics.
2. Outline your previous experience of using online platforms and tools to run deliberative public engagement activities or similar. Please provide information on which IT platforms were used, the size and scope of the events, how you facilitated discussions and interactivity, and how you managed any the risk of exclusion of participants, e.g. managing lack of IT knowledge.
3. Provide two examples of previous work that demonstrate your experience and ability to deliver the requirements of this project to a high standard. Audio-visual examples are welcome, a hyperlink is acceptable.
4. Provide the name and role / job titles of the individuals who will be involved in delivering this contract, setting out what areas of work each will be responsible for and their relevant skills and experience, in particular:
5. for the individual with lead responsibility for the project: their skills and experience of project management and the design and delivery of public participation/deliberative public engagement activity.
6. for those who will prepare for the meeting: their skills and experience of agenda planning; explaining complex or technical subject matter to lay audiences both verbally and in written form; designing and delivering innovative participatory exercises to prompt deliberation and elicit people’s beliefs, behaviours and motivations.
7. for those who will facilitate the meeting: their skills and experience of chairing meetings; managing conflict to ensure fair and constructive discussion; and using qualitative research techniques, e.g. focus groups, interviews, observation.
8. for those who will write the report: their skills and experience of analysing predominantly qualitative findings into concise, readable formats; writing reports for previous deliberative public engagement events, or similar; and writing reports to inform policy.
9. for all staff: their skills and experience of meeting the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 and ensuring that outputs, including written materials, presentation design and content, interactive / deliberative exercises are fully accessible for all protected characteristic groups.
10. Please also explain how you would source additional support (within the existing contract value) if it were required.

Proposed methodology

1. Outline and justify your approach to delivering this project, in particular:
   1. your timeframe for conducting the work assuming a start date of 23rd August 2021, we suggest including this as a Gantt chart or similar.
   2. your approach to recruitment of a representative sample, including proposed sample size.
   3. your proposed format for the meeting, face-to-face, virtual, mixed or other.
   4. your approach to designing the agenda and identifying and selecting appropriate speakers.
   5. your approach to planning and preparing the interactive and deliberative elements of the event.
   6. your approach to facilitating and maintaining engagement including the number of facilitators you will use.
   7. your approach for evaluating and reporting on the meeting.

Quality assurance

1. Detail your quality assurance processes that will ensure the delivery of the project in a timely manner. Please describe your internal monitoring, reporting and sign-off procedures for the work and the outputs.
2. Please identify the risks you consider to be associated with this project and explain how you would mitigate each risk. Please include here how you will adapt your proposed methodology if COVID-19 restrictions prevent meeting face-to-face.

Policies, Certifications and Financial Statements

1. As required by Public Sector regulations and in line with best practice, please provide one copy each of your organisation’s policies relating to the following:
   1. Health and Safety
   2. Environmental
   3. Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the Work Place
   4. Modern Slavery Act Compliance

We recognise that some SMEs (small, medium enterprises) (less than 50 people for a small enterprise and less than 250 for a medium enterprise) may not have formal policies available but still operate their businesses in a manner that is conducive to the above. If you are an SME and do not have formal policies in place, please submit with your response, a written statement on how your company operates in light of the above areas of legislation and best practice***.***

In addition, please provide the following:

* 1. The last three years of audited accounts for your organisation. If your organisation is an SME and you do not have audited accounts, please provide 3 years of balance sheets.
  2. A declaration (if applicable) of all current projects with clients or partners that your department/ group/organisation is currently working with which could be seen as being detrimental or ethically opposed to the health aims promoted by NICE.
  3. If your organisation (whole organisation including parent, group or subsidiary) has a turnover of £36 million pounds or greater then please provide a Modern Slavery Act Transparency Statement: this should set out the steps you have taken to ensure there is no modern slavery in your own organisation/business and that of your supply chain. If your organisation has taken no steps to ensure there is no modern slavery in your own organisation, then your statement should say so. [Please note: a parent org/ group statement is acceptable, this is compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.]

11.1 References

Supply the names and contact details of two recent clients who would be willing to provide a confidential reference in support of the proposal, where either the same or very similar work to that being requested here, has been undertaken within the last 3 years.

Costs

1. Please provide details of your budget breakdown using the format given below, including:
   1. The role / job titles of the individuals you will supply.
   2. How many person-days you expect to use per project for each individual?
   3. Day rates for each individual.
   4. Non staff costs, to include, but not limited to:
   * venue and refreshment costs (if relevant);
   * incentives for participants’ time as per rates stated in paragraph 5.14 of this specification. Please justify any change to these rates;
   * all reasonable expenses incurred by participants including travel, accommodation and refreshments;
   * all reasonable expenses incurred by speakers including travel, accommodation and refreshments. Please note: we do not expect the speakers to be paid a fee for attending;
   * costs for appropriate accessibility services e.g. sign language interpreters;
   * all administrative costs associated with the project e.g. postage, telephone calls, data packages;
   * all equipment costs.

Please state any assumptions used when providing these costs.

Costs are to be provided in the following format:

Staff costs

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Role / job title | No. days per project | Day rate | Total per project ex VAT  £000 |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| (add extra lines if necessary) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total staff costs | | |  |

Non-staff costs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item | Description | Total ex VAT  £000 |
| *Example: Incentives for event participants* | *Incentives at £150 per day for 2 days for 30 people* | *£9000* |
|  |  |  |
| (add extra lines if necessary) |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Total Non-staff costs ex VAT | |  |
| Total Staff costs | |  |
| Total Project costs | |  |

All offers are to be quoted in GBP, be inclusive of all travel time, travel costs and other expenses, and be exclusive of value added tax. Failure to provide costs as above may result in your whole tender being rejected.

1. Tender instructions
   1. All offers must be written in English.
   2. All offers must be submitted in accordance with the documentation provided in the covering email. This must not be amended in any way.
   3. All Expression of Interests (EOIs) must be submitted electronically by email to [gillian.watson@nice.org.uk](mailto:gillian.watson@nice.org.uk) by 5pm on 16 June 2021.
   4. All offers must be submitted electronically by email to: [contract.bids@nice.org.uk](mailto:contract.bids@nice.org.uk) with the title NICE Listens by 12 noon on 6 July 2021.
   5. The Form of Offer must be submitted together with the tender submission.
   6. Failure to comply with these instructions may result in your offer being rejected.
2. Timescales for this Tender
   1. Before the offers are submitted, those wishing to tender must submit an EOI stating their wish to submit a full offer. Those wishing to tender may also have specific questions and queries regarding the process, the policy or the arrangements with NICE. Under our procurement arrangements NICE has to ensure that all applicants receive equal treatment and we will share all information requests and responses with all applicants. Consequently all EOIs, questions and queries regarding this invitation to offer must be submitted by email to gillian.watson@nice.org.uk, no later than 5pm on 16 June 2021.
   2. The questions and answers will then be collated and distributed by email to all the potential tenderers by 5pm on 21 June 2021 Please note that that there will be no telephone or informal or other kind of discussion between potential tenderers and officers or directors of NICE after this initial document is dispatched.
   3. The closing date for the submission of tenders is 12 noon on 6 July 2021.
   4. If appropriate, shortlisted bidders will be informed by 20 July 2021 and invited to an interview on 2 August 2021. Those not shortlisted will not be contacted at this stage.
   5. All bidders will be informed of the award decision by 5pm on 4 August 2021
   6. The contractor should be prepared to start work by 23 August 2021.
   7. All dates in this tender are subject to change.
   8. The key dates are summarised in the table below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Action | Date |
| Deadline all EOIs and for questions and queries. | 16 June 2021, 5PM |
| Answers to questions sent to all bidders | 21 June 2021 |
| Tender submission deadline | 6 July 2021, 12 Noon |
| Shortlisted bidders informed | 20 July 2021 |
| Interviews of shortlisted bidders | 2 August 2021 |
| All bidders informed of tender outcome | 4 August 2021, 5PM |
| Alcatel 10 day standstill period | 5-15 August 2021 |
| Issue tender award letter to successful bidder and letters to unsuccessful bidders | 16 August 2021 |
| Start date of contract | 23 August 2021 |

1. Selection criteria and scoring
   1. The following criteria will be used to assess the tenders received:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Selection criterion** | **Weighting** |
| Organisational stability – to include policies as listed in 6.3 and 3 years accounts | Pass/fail |
| References | Pass/fail |
| Knowledge and understanding of key concepts | 7.5% |
| Experience, skills and expertise | 22.5% |
| Proposed methodology | 15% |
| Quality assurance | 5% |
| Cost and value for money | 50% |

Scoring

* 1. In light of the government’s drive for transparency, NICE is providing the formula that will be used for the cost evaluation aspect and the scoring guide.
  2. The cost will be evaluated using the following formula:

Lowest bidder’s price / bidder’s price x 50% (the weighting).

* 1. Each evaluator will independently evaluate each tender submitted and use the following guide to score each criterion. The scores of all the evaluators for each criterion are averaged, then the criterion weighting above is applied to give an adjusted score.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Score |  |
| -5 | The point is omitted |
| 0 | The point is not explained/ repeat of specification |
| 1 | The point is not acceptable |
| 2 | The point is possibly acceptable |
| 3 | The point is acceptable |
| 4 | The point is well made and acceptable |
| 5 | The point exceeds expectations/excellent |

1. Additional information

Declaration of interests

* 1. NICE has a wide range of stakeholders with an interest and involvement in its work. It is important for potential bidders to indicate, as part of their response, if and where they anticipate areas of conflict with their existing work base, and how they would handle issues of conflict of interest and confidentiality should they arise.
  2. NICE’s code of practice on declaring and dealing with conflicts of interest must be adhered to by the contractor

Payment

* 1. Contractors will be expected to invoice quarterly in arrears.

Non-compliance

* 1. NICE expressly reserves the right to reject any proposal that:
  2. Does not follow the instruction to tender guidance.
  3. Is incomplete, has not provided answers to the questions or has not provided a reasonable explanation as to why any answer to any question has been omitted.
  4. Has not responded to any mandatory elements (i.e. the tender is non-compliant).
  5. Has not provided the requested documents.

Miscellaneous

* 1. NICE does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any offer and reserves the right to accept an offer either in whole or in part, each item being for this purpose treated as offered separately
  2. NICE reserves the right to amend the specification at any time prior to the stated deadline.
  3. All tender documents will remain the property of NICE and will not be altered or amended in any way.