

DPS/07/AUD/20/IB – Audit and Assurance Services Dynamic Purchasing System

Introduction and Instructions

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Introduction and Background

Good governance requires that public sector bodies are subjected to independent audit. There is also a statutory requirement for external audit. Governance requirements can also include counter-fraud services and other independent assurance such as:

- Assurance over non-financial information including but not limited to strategy, risk and corporate governance
- Assurance over KPIs including but not limited to environmental reporting, sustainability reporting and workforce reporting
- Compliance monitoring and risk management
- Grant funding assurance including but not limited to programme reviews and impact assessments
- Service auditor reports including but not limited to ISAE 3402 standards
- Special purpose reviews and investigations
- Tax compliance
- Third party risk management including supply chain assurance
- Well led governance reviews
- Workforce audit services including but not limited to temporary, fixed term or permanent staffing (clinical and non-clinical)

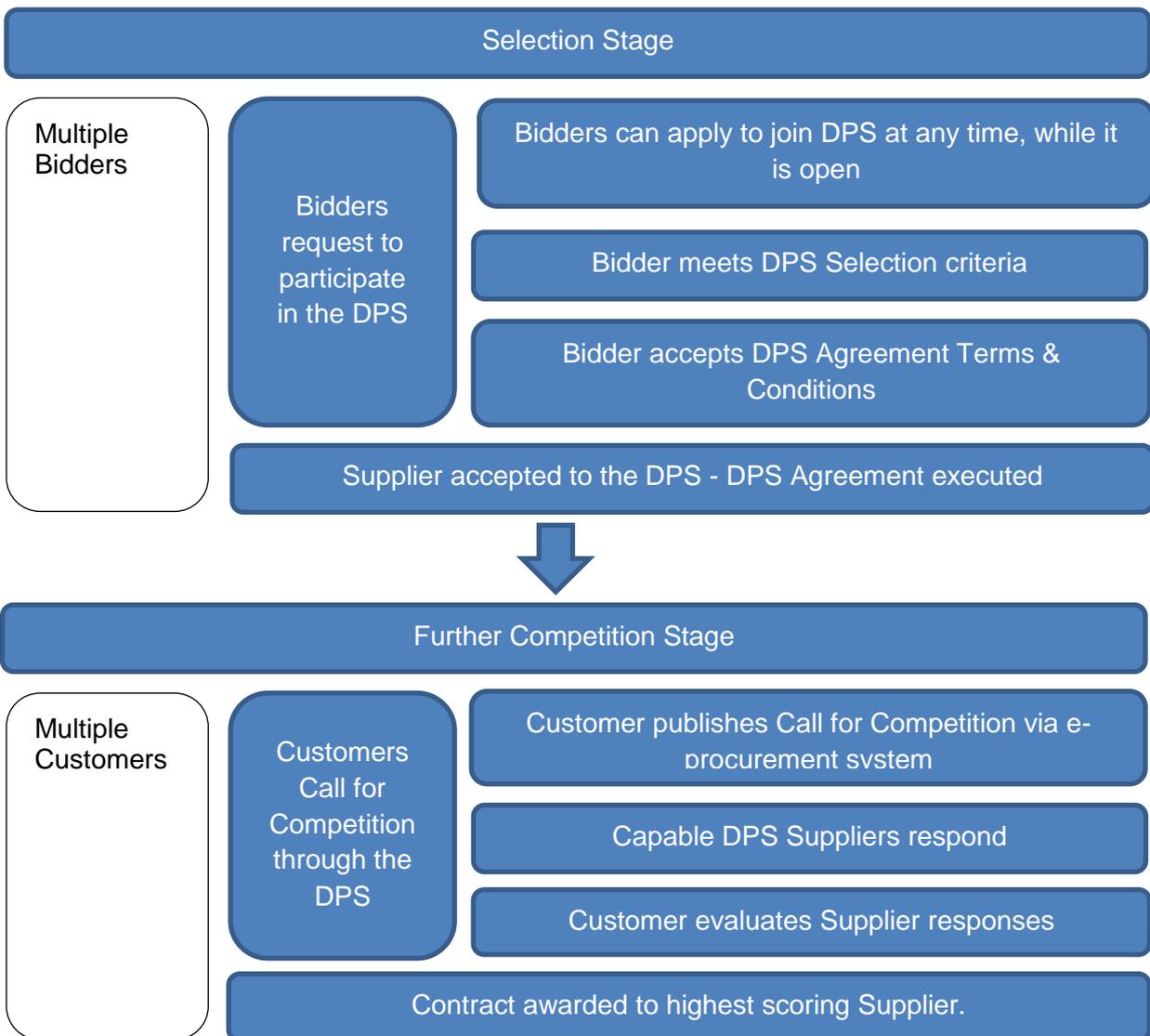
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, through its Commercial Procurement Services (CPS), invites applications to join a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Audit and Assurance Services as described in the document “DPS07 Outline Specification.”

Commercial Procurement Services encourages the participation of smaller businesses (SMEs) in public sector procurement. As such the procurement process has been simplified to encourage greater participation. The proposed dynamic purchasing system will reduce the administrative burden of procurement processes for the goods and services described. This dynamic purchasing system will therefore support public procurement and private enterprise through its efficiency.

What is a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)?

A DPS is a public sector sourcing tool for common goods and services under regulation 34 (Dynamic Purchasing Systems) of the Public Contracts Regulations ([PCR 2015](#)). Bidders can apply to join at any point, meaning that suppliers are not locked out for the duration as they are with traditional framework agreements. The award of individual contracts can be quicker than under some other procedures; the minimum timescale for return of tenders is 10 days. Where the Customer is a sub-central body, this time limit can be reduced by mutual agreement between the contracting authority and all suppliers in the relevant DPS. The DPS has to be run as a completely electronic process.

An illustrated example of a DPS system process is shown below:



In this document, when we use “CPS”, “Authority” “we”, “us” or “our” we mean Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust;

When we use “you”, “your” or “bidders” we mean your organisation, or the organisation you represent, in this application.

We are a central purchasing body that procures goods and services for customers including NHS organisations and the wider public sector.

The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 regulate how we procure. This means that we and you have to follow processes that are fair, transparent and equitable for all bidders.

Background to Countess Of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Commercial Procurement Services

The Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is comprised of a 600 bed acute general hospital located on the outskirts of the City of Chester, an 86 bed community based hospital located in Ellesmere Port, a number of West Cheshire community based health clinics and a shared service Microbiology Laboratory in Wirral.

The Trust also hosts a Commercial Procurement Service which not only undertakes its own commercial activity but seeks to act to the wider public sector to promote and develop smaller innovative businesses and ideas. The Countess of Chester Hospital Commercial Procurement Services (CPS) is a centre of procurement expertise providing strategic and specialist procurement services and advice to NHS trusts, wider public sector and private sector clients. Operating within, but operationally independent of, an NHS Acute Foundation Trust Procurement department, our in-depth knowledge of the NHS and the healthcare market coupled with excellent track record of delivering high quality commercial and procurement projects enables us to effectively advise, assist and deliver a range of benefits including service improvements and cash releasing and cost avoidance savings. CPS Framework Agreements currently serve over 100 public sector organisations, and offer unique access points to goods and services which offer innovation and savings with no Customer access fees. Further information can be obtained from the website www.coch-cps.co.uk

The Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust as the DPS Manager will administer the dynamic purchasing system, provide guidance to client authorities. In the first instance of any dispute the DPS Manager will offer first line mediation.

Background to the Public Sector and NHS

The public sector in the United Kingdom (UK) is comprised of many organisations. These include: ministries or departments of central government such as the Cabinet Office, Department of Health (including the National Health Service (NHS)) and Ministry of Justice; devolved governments and their arms-length bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; local authorities, such as councils and social services; wider public bodies such as fire and rescue services, police authority services, educational authorities, universities and public broadcasting; and utilities agents, such as water authorities. UK public sector procurement bodies must comply with the Public Procurement Regulations, as derived from European Union (EU) treaty principles. These mandate a regulated contract and tender procedure for opportunities above a certain financial threshold, which varies depending on the type of organisation and type of procurement being undertaken.

The National Health Service (NHS) in the UK is representative of over 400 health organisations including Hospital Trusts, Mental Health Trusts, Ambulance Trusts, Foundation Trusts, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Commercial Support Units and Community Health Trusts. The landscape is one of constant evolution and change.

Who can use the DPS as a Customer?

This DPS can be used by any Public Sector body in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Public sector bodies in the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles may also choose to use this DPS.

The Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust wishes to establish a dynamic purchasing system for use by all UK Public Sector bodies (and any future successors to these organisations). To provide bidders with information on potential users of the dynamic purchasing system the following organisations are considered the eligible Participating Authorities:

1. Any of the following Customers in the United Kingdom, and any of their successors:
 - a) Ministerial government departments;
 - b) Non ministerial government departments;
 - c) Executive agencies of government;
 - d) Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), including advisory NDPBs, executive NDPBs, and tribunal NDPBs;
 - e) Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASPBs);
 - f) Police forces;
 - g) Fire and rescue services;
 - h) Ambulance services;
 - i) Maritime and coastguard agency services;
 - j) NHS bodies;
 - k) Educational bodies or establishments including state schools (nursery schools, primary schools, middle or high schools, secondary schools, special schools), academies, colleges, Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), further education colleges and universities;
 - l) Hospices;
 - m) National Parks;
 - n) Housing associations, including registered social landlords;
 - o) Third sector and charities;
 - p) Citizens advice bodies;
 - q) Councils, including county councils, district councils, county borough councils, community councils, London borough councils, unitary councils, metropolitan councils, parish councils;
 - r) Public corporations;
 - s) Public financial bodies or institutions;
 - t) Public pension funds;
 - u) Central banks; and
 - v) Civil service bodies, including public sector buying organisations.
2. Those bodies listed and maintained by the Government on their website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations> or any replacement or updated web-link.
3. Those bodies listed and maintained by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/uksectoraccounts/datasets/publicsectorclassificationguide> or any replacement or updated web-link.
4. Those bodies which are within the scope of the definition of “Contracting Authority” in

regulation 2(1) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, regulation 2(1) of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 (PCR) and/or Schedule 1 PCR.

5. Any corporation established, or a group of individuals appointed to act together, for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character, and
 - (i) financed wholly or mainly by another contracting authority listed in this document;
 - (ii) subject to management supervision by another contracting authority listed above in this document; or
 - (iii) more than half of the board of directors or members of which, or, in the case of a group of individuals, more than half of those individuals, are appointed by another contracting authority listed above in this document;
 - (iv) an association of or formed by one or more of the Contracting Authorities listed above in this document.

6. The voluntary sector, charities and/or other entities and private organisations and which are not UK public sector bodies may also use the Dynamic Purchasing System if the Authority is satisfied that:
 - (i) such entity is calling-off services directly, solely and exclusively in order to satisfy contractual obligations to one or more public sector bodies, all of which are entitled to use the Dynamic Purchasing System Contracts on their own account.
 - (ii) such entity is acting as a managing agent or procuring on behalf of the public sector delivering services of a public nature.

For the avoidance of doubt, any successor bodies of any of the above entities shall be entitled to place Orders and shall be deemed Participating Authorities for the purposes of this Dynamic Purchasing System.

For information, the list of potential users is also provided separately as the document titled “5. DPS07 – List of eligible users”.

Who can apply to join the DPS as a Supplier?

Anyone can submit a request to participate (submit a bid) in response to the published Find a Tender contract notice.

You can submit a request to participate as a single legal entity. Alternatively, you can work together with other legal entities to form a Group of Economic Operators. If you do, we ask the Group of Economic Operators to choose a lead member who will submit the bid on behalf of the Group of Economic Operators and you will have to identify what each of the parties is contributing to the bid. You can do this in your **Selection Questionnaire**.

Note on Groups of Economic Operators and Sub-Contractors

We do not require all Sub-Contractors to be disclosed. You need only disclose those Sub-Contractors who directly contribute to your ability to meet your obligations under the DPS Agreement (including under any Contract Agreement following a Call for Competition). There is no need to specify Sub-Contractors providing general services to the supplier (such as

window cleaners etc.) that indirectly enable the supplier to perform the DPS Agreement. Please read the definition of Sub-Contractor in the DPS Agreement.

We recognise that arrangements in relation to Groups of Economic Operators and to Sub-Contracting may be subject to future change, and may not be finalised until a later date. However, any changes to those arrangements may affect your ability to deliver the Services. You must therefore tell us about any changes to the proposed Group of Economic Operators or to your Sub-Contractors. If you do not, you may be excluded from participating in this competition.

If you are successfully appointed to the DPS and are awarded a DPS Agreement, any changes to arrangements in relation to your Group of Economic Operators and/or Sub-Contracting which are made following the award will be dealt with in accordance with clause 12 (Transfer and Sub-contracting) of the DPS Agreement.

How to apply for a place on the DPS

Your application must be entered through the **NHS Sourcing portal** at: <https://www.nhssourcing.co.uk>

We can only accept applications that we receive through this route.

You must submit your response in English.

Bid Pack

The DPS bid pack includes the following documents:

- i) **Introduction and Instructions (this document):**
- ii) **Outline Specification** – an overview of the services that will be required.
- iii) **The Template DPS Agreement** – This shows the terms and conditions of the DPS Agreement and the terms and conditions of any Contract that may be called off through the DPS. You will need to agree to electronically sign up to all of these terms and conditions which are non-negotiable.
- iv) **The Selection Questionnaire (SQ)** – There is a separate SQ for each Lot of the DPS. The SQ will be your application to join the DPS and you will need to complete a separate SQ for each Lot in which you want to be considered.
- v) **List of Eligible Users** (for information only) – An indication of who might call off contracts from the DPS.
- vi) **Management Information (MI) Reporting Template** – The document that you will use to report to us if you are appointed to the DPS.

vii) **Template Supplier Capability Assessment** – The document that Customers may use if they choose to carry out this stage in a Further Competition.

viii) **Financial assessment template** (for information only) – Please refer to the section on our assessment of economic and financial standing below for an explanation of how this template may be used.

Make sure you read all the guidance, information and instructions that we provide – they are there to help you to complete your request to participate.

If there is anything that you don't understand, we explain in 'how to request to participate' when and how you can ask questions.

Your application must be completed by the organisation that will be responsible for providing the services, if appointed on to the DPS.

Any supporting evidence will be requested using the NHS Sourcing portal and/or the NHS Sourcing portal messaging facility.

Do not upload any attachments we haven't asked for.

Make sure you answer every applicable question within the SQ.

If you are unsure about how to complete any part of the SQ, you can raise a question via the NHS Sourcing portal messaging facility.

When and how to ask questions

If you have any questions you need to ask them as soon as possible after the publication of the Find a Tender Contract Notice. This will give you the chance to check that you understand everything before you submit your request to participate via the link detailed above.

You need to send your questions through the NHS Sourcing portal messaging system. We will not answer questions sent by any other route. Try to ensure that any questions are specific and clear.

The NHS Sourcing portal facilitates all messages sent between CPS and you in relation to this DPS. It is your responsibility to access messages during this procurement process. The NHS Sourcing portal sends automated email alerts when new information has been posted but you should check to make sure that your email system hasn't sent these messages to a spam folder. Please ensure that you access and review messages through the NHS Sourcing portal on a regular basis. This will ensure you have sight of all relevant information and have access to all messages that we have sent to you.

We will usually publish every question and its response to all applicants to ensure that everybody has equal access to information. If you feel that a particular question should not be published, you must tell us why when you ask the question. We will decide whether or not to publish the question and response or return a response to you in confidence via the NHS Sourcing portal messaging system.

Remember that you can ask us questions about the DPS Agreement and contract terms but please do not try to 'negotiate' the terms as this is not permitted within the Public Contract Regulations (PCR). All DPS appointments will be made under identical terms.

SQ sections

Section 1- Potential supplier information

This section tells us about your organisation's details. Your application must be completed by the organisation that will be responsible for providing the services, if appointed on to the DPS.

Section 2 - Grounds for mandatory exclusion

In certain circumstances we are required by law to exclude bidders from participating. If you cannot answer 'No' to every statement in Part 2 (Grounds for mandatory exclusion) of the Selection Questionnaire then your request to participate shall be excluded from further participation in the SQ (except where disproportionately small amounts of tax or social security obligations are involved).

Section 3- Grounds for discretionary exclusion

We are entitled (in our sole discretion) to exclude a bidder from further participation if any of the statements in response to Part 2 (Discretionary grounds for exclusion) of the Selection Questionnaire apply. If you cannot answer 'No' to every statement it is possible that you will be excluded from this request to participate.

'Self Cleaning' (Covering both mandatory and discretionary exclusion):

If you have answered 'Yes' to any question in Section 2 or Section 3 of the SQ but you can provide sufficient evidence that remedial action has taken place subsequently that effectively "self cleans" the situation, we may decide that you shall not be excluded from this request to participate. As a minimum, you will have to demonstrate that you have:

- (a) paid or undertaken to pay compensation in respect of any damage caused by any criminal offence or misconduct;
- (b) clarified the facts and circumstances in a comprehensive manner by actively collaborating with the investigating authorities; and
- (c) taken concrete technical, organisational and personnel measures that are appropriate to prevent further criminal offences or misconduct.

The measures you have taken will be considered taking into account the gravity and particular circumstances of the criminal offence or misconduct.

The detailed grounds for mandatory and discretionary exclusion of an organisation are set out on this [web page](#), which should be referred to before completing these questions in the SQ.

Section 4- Economic and Financial Standing

We will undertake an assessment of your economic and financial standing using the DUNS number (as provided by Dun and Bradstreet) for your organisation which you input in Section 1 of the SQ.

We will look at your “Risk of business failure” score in the report provided by the credit reference agency (Dun and Bradstreet). If the score provided by the credit reference agency is 51 or more, then you will achieve a “Pass” for Section 4 of the SQ.

If you indicate as part of the SQ that a financial guarantor will be provided, as you do not initially meet the required credit reference agency score as described above, we will perform an assessment of the proposed financial guarantor’s economic and financial standing.

If any of the following circumstances arise:

- a. the score provided by the credit reference agency is less than 51 and/or;
- b. no standard credit reference agency score is available for your organisation,

then we may ask you to provide a copy of your audited accounts for the most recent two years and/or one or more of the following in respect of your organisation or the proposed financial guarantor (as the case may be):

- a statement of your turnover, profit and loss account/income statement, balance sheet/statement of financial position and statement of cash flow for the most recent year of trading;
- a statement of your cash flow forecast for the current year and a bank letter outlining the current cash and credit position; and/or
- an alternative means of demonstrating financial status.

We will use this information as detailed above, in addition to a detailed credit reference agency report (where available) to assess whether your organisation’s or your proposed financial guarantor’s risk is acceptable. This will be performed using the financial assessment template that can be viewed as part of the Bid Pack, which covers a range of financial risk indicators.

If we then determine that the financial risk is acceptable, then you will achieve a “Pass” for Section 4 of the SQ.

If we determine that your financial risk is determined as being unacceptable, then we may (in our sole discretion) request that you nominate a financial guarantor. If you nominate a financial guarantor, we will undertake the steps as detailed above in respect of the proposed financial guarantor.

If, after evaluating all the information requested and provided, the level of financial risk is still deemed unacceptable, or where the requested information has not been provided, **then you will be rejected from further involvement in the procurement.** If your circumstances change, you may re-apply to join the DPS, at which time your application will be re-assessed as described above.

If you are bidding as Lead Contact for a Group of Economic Operators, the assessment of economic and financial standing will be carried out in respect of each member of the Group of Economic Operators. If one or more members of the Group of Economic Operators is determined as having an unacceptable risk level following this assessment, then the relevant member(s) will be required to obtain a financial guarantee from another organisation, such as a parent company or an external organisation prepared to underwrite the financial status of the relevant member(s). We will undertake the steps as detailed above in respect of the proposed financial guarantor. If a financial guarantor cannot be provided and the level of risk remains unacceptable, then the Group of Economic Operators will be excluded from further involvement in this Procurement.

Section 5

This section tells us about your wider group, if you are part of one. Leave this section blank if you are not applying as part of a wider group.

Section 6 - Technical and Professional Ability

We want to make sure that you have experience of supplying the type of products or performing the type of services covered by this DPS. This section lets you tell us about up to 3 contracts that you have run. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check these references for themselves.

If you don't have at least one example of a contract for the type of products or services covered by this DPS, you can use section 6.3 of the SQ to tell us about your ability. It is important to include enough detail to give us, and potential users of the DPS, confidence that you will be capable of supplying products or performing services.

Section 7 - Modern Slavery Act 2015

All relevant organisations have to develop a slavery and human trafficking statement each year. The slavery and human trafficking statement should set out what steps organisations have taken to ensure modern slavery is not taking place in their business or supply chains. These statements have to be linked to from the organisation's website home page.

Section 8 - Additional Questions

Lot 1

8.1 Insurance

This section asks you to confirm that you have at least the minimum level of insurance required for the DPS. If you don't already have the minimum insurances required, you must commit to getting these levels of insurance before you can be appointed to the DPS. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check your insurance certificates for themselves. Customers may ask for higher levels of insurance for their contracts. This will be detailed in their call for competition documents.

8.2 Core Services

This section asks you to confirm that you are capable of delivering all of the Lot 1 Core Services listed in the Outline Specification. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of your compliance, which you must provide on request.

Suppliers that do not confirm capability of delivering all of the Lot 1 Core Services will receive a “Fail” for this Lot of the DPS.

8.3 Compliance

This section asks you to confirm that you are compliant with the applicable Standards for this Lot.

8.4 Membership of a Recognised Supervisory Body

This section asks you to confirm that you are properly governed. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of membership, which you must provide on request.

8.5 Professional Qualifications

This section asks you to confirm that your lead personnel are properly qualified to deliver Lot 1 services. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of qualifications, which you must provide on request.

Lot 2

8.1 Insurance

This section asks you to confirm that you have at least the minimum level of insurance required for the DPS. If you don't already have the minimum insurances required, you must commit to getting these levels of insurance before you can be appointed to the DPS. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check your insurance certificates for themselves. Customers may ask for higher levels of insurance for their contracts. This will be detailed in their call for competition documents.

8.2 Core Services

This section asks you to confirm that you are capable of delivering all of the Lot 2 Core Services listed in the Outline Specification. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of your compliance, which you must provide on request.

Suppliers that do not confirm capability of delivering all of the Lot 2 Core Services will receive a “Fail” for this Lot of the DPS.

8.3 Membership of a Recognised Supervisory Body

This section asks you to confirm that you are properly governed. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of membership, which you must provide on request.

8.4 Professional Qualifications

This section asks you to confirm that your lead personnel are properly qualified to deliver Lot 2 services. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of qualifications, which you must provide on request.

8.5 Disclosure of Sanctions

This section requires you to disclose any sanctions imposed on you by the Financial Reporting Council in the last two years, and what remedial action you have taken. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of remedial action, which you must provide on request.

Suppliers that have not taken appropriate remedial action(s), or that have been sanctioned more than twice for the same breach in the previous 2 years will receive a “Fail” for this Lot of the DPS.

Lot 3

8.1 Insurance

This section asks you to confirm that you have at least the minimum level of insurance required for the DPS. If you don't already have the minimum insurances required, you must commit to getting these levels of insurance before you can be appointed to the DPS. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check your insurance certificates for themselves. Customers may ask for higher levels of insurance for their contracts. This will be detailed in their call for competition documents.

8.2 Core Services

This section asks you to confirm that you are capable of delivering all of the Lot 3 Core Services listed in the Outline Specification. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of your compliance, which you must provide on request.

Suppliers that do not confirm capability of delivering all of the Lot 3 Core Services will receive a “Fail” for this Lot of the DPS.

8.3 Membership of a Recognised Supervisory Body

This section asks you to confirm that you are properly governed. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of membership, which you must provide on request.

8.4 Professional Qualifications

This section asks you to confirm that your lead personnel are properly qualified to deliver Lot 3 services. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of qualifications, which you must provide on request.

8.5 Government Functional Standard

This section asks you to confirm that you are compliant with the applicable Standards for this Lot.

Lot 4

8.1 Insurance

This section asks you to confirm that you have at least the minimum level of insurance required for the DPS. If you don't already have the minimum insurances required, you must commit to getting these levels of insurance before you can be appointed to the DPS. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check your insurance certificates for themselves. Customers may ask for higher levels of insurance for their contracts. This will be detailed in their call for competition documents.

8.2 Core Services

This section asks you to confirm that you are capable of delivering one or more of the Lot 4 Core Services listed in the Outline Specification. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of your compliance, which you must provide on request.

Suppliers that do not confirm capability of delivering one or more Core Service, or whose "Other" services indicated in their SQ response do not fit within the reasonable scope of Lot 4 Services will receive a "Fail" for this Lot of the DPS.

8.3 Professional Qualifications

This section asks you to confirm that, where you have stated capability of delivering a Lot 4 service, the lead personnel are properly qualified to deliver that service. Customers who want to call off contracts from the DPS may want to check evidence of qualifications, which you must provide on request.

How SQ responses will be assessed

After you have completed your SQ, your DPS application will be assessed. This will be done as follows.

We will complete compliance checks of your SQ to ensure you have provided everything that we have requested as part of the selection criteria.

We will review all of your SQ responses.

We will undertake checks where applicable to validate and verify your responses.

We may ask for clarification of any information you provide. Don't forget to check for messages in the NHS Sourcing messaging facility.

We will score the sections of the SQ where we have asked for specific information about your ability to meet the **Outline Specification**.

If we are satisfied with the responses provided and you have achieved at least the minimum standard required, we will appoint you to the DPS.

We may reject your bid or exclude you from the DPS at the selection stage for any of the following reasons:

- i) If you receive a “Fail” for any of the selection questions.
- ii) Where any of the information you have provided proves to be false or misleading.
- iii) Where you have broken any of the competition rules (as detailed in this document), or not followed the instructions given.

We will tell you if your bid has been rejected or if your organisation has been excluded from the DPS at this time through the NHS Sourcing portal messaging facility. You will be able to re-apply at any time during the life of the DPS.

Note for Suppliers applying to join the DPS while it is open

The Public Contracts Regulations set a maximum time of 10 days for us to assess DPS applications made while the DPS is open. This can be extended to 15 days if this is necessary to validate and verify your responses. If you do not respond promptly to a clarification request and this causes us to go over the maximum allowable time, we will reject your application at that time. You will be able to re-apply at any time during the life of the DPS.

The DPS Agreement sign-off:

If you are a successful and therefore ‘appointed’ on to the DPS, the DPS Agreement will be electronically signed and managed by CPS and you.

The DPS Agreement Terms and Conditions that you agreed to comply with at the beginning of the SQ will require your final sign off. The process for final sign off is described below.

- We will send you an electronic summary of your DPS Agreement through the NHS Sourcing portal messaging facility.
- The summary of your DPS Agreement will include a section for you to confirm your acceptance of your DPS Agreement.
- To ensure a legally binding DPS Agreement between CPS and you is complete, you must select ‘Yes’ in the required box on the summary page that you are sent and return the summary through the NHS Sourcing portal messaging facility prior to appointment.

Failure to select ‘Yes’ at this stage will prevent you from securing your appointment on to the DPS as there will be no legally binding DPS Agreement between CPS and you.

Once you have returned your completed DPS summary to us through the NHS Sourcing portal, we will send you an electronic copy of your full DPS agreement.

Call for Competition:

Customers may award contracts by inviting all suppliers to bid in accordance with regulation 54, with the minimum timescale for return of tenders being ten (10) days. They will do this in line with the DPS Agreement Section 4 - How Goods and Services Will be Bought (Call for Competition Process), Clause 4.10 (Call for Competition Procedure).

Timelines for the request to participate

These are our intended timelines. We will try to achieve these but, for a range of reasons, dates can change as the competition progresses. We will tell you if and when timelines change:

Publication of the Find a Tender Contract Notice	5 February 2021
Start Date - Open DPS to bidders to request to participate	5 February 2021 (subject to actual publication of Find a Tender Contract Notice)
DPS Open to Contracting Authorities for call for competition	22 March 2021
DPS Open for further bidder applications to join	22 March 2021

Making the competition work

We run our competitions so that they are fair and transparent for all bidders. This section (Making the competition work) sets out the conditions of participation for this competition. It needs to be read together with the template DPS Agreement and with the Outline Specification.

What you can expect from us:

We will not share any information from your request to participate bid, which you have identified as being confidential or commercially sensitive, with third parties, apart from other Public Sector bodies (and their related bodies) where this is necessary to make the DPS work. In certain circumstances, we may share this information with other organisations but only in line with the Public Contracts Regulations, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or any other law as applicable.

What we expect from you:

Make sure you have read and understood the request to participate and corresponding participation bid pack before you complete the SQ.

Please make sure you have read through all the information available to you. This includes any of the responses provided by us to any of your questions raised.

You must comply with the rules in this participation bid pack and any other instructions given by us. You must also ensure (where applicable) members of your Group of Economic Operators or sub-contractors comply also.

You have not fixed or adjusted any element of the response by agreement or arrangement with any other person.

You only respond to call for further competition that your organisation can realistically deliver.

Involvement in multiple bids

If you are connected with another bid for this procurement, we may make further enquiries. For example, where:

- you submit a bid in your own name or as member of a Group of Economic Operators connected with a separate bid; or
- you submit a bid in your own name which is similar to a separate bid from another bidder within your group of companies.

This is so we can be sure that your involvement does not cause:

- potential or actual conflicts of interest;
- supplier capacity problems; or
- restrictions or distortions in competition.

We may require you to amend or withdraw all or part of your request to participate if, in our reasonable opinion, any of the above issues have arisen or may arise.

Contracting Arrangements

Only you, your nominated sub-contractors or Group of Economic Operators (as set out in your SQ) can provide services through this DPS Agreement.

Contracting Arrangements for Group of Economic Operators

We may require a Group of Economic Operators to form a specific legal entity when signing a DPS Agreement as per the PCR. We may also require a member of the Group of Economic Operators to sign a DPS Agreement guarantee on behalf of the legal entity.

Bidder conduct and conflicts of interest

You must not attempt to influence the Request to Participate process. For example, you must not directly or indirectly at any time:

- Collude with others over the content and submission of bids. However, you may work in good faith with a proposed supplier, Group of Economic Operators member or provider of finance in the event that a guarantor is required.
- Canvass our staff or advisors in relation to this competition.
- Attempt to obtain information from any of our staff or advisors about another bidder or bid.

You must ensure that no conflicts of interest exist between you and us. If you do not tell us about a known conflict, we may exclude you from the competition. We may also exclude you if a conflict cannot be dealt with in any other way.

Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

You must keep the contents of this bid pack confidential (including the fact that you have received it). This obligation shall not apply insofar as:

- enabling you to submit a bid; or
- compliance with a legal obligation.

Publicity

You must not publicise the services or the award of any individual contract unless we have given express written consent. For example, you are not allowed to make statements to the media regarding any bid or its contents

Our rights:

We reserve the right to:

- Waive or change the requirements of this bid pack from time to time without notice.
- Verify information, seek clarification or require evidence or further information in respect of your bid.
- Exclude you if:
 - you submit a non-compliant bid
 - your bid contains false or misleading information
 - you fail to tell us of any change in the contracting arrangements between your request to participate and appointment onto the DPS. Or, if you do tell us, allowing the change in the contracting arrangements would result in a breach of law
 - for any other reason set out elsewhere in this bid pack
 - for any reason set out in the Public Contract Regulations 2015
- Terminate the DPS Agreement at any time.
- Make any changes to the timetable, structure or content of the competition.

General:

Bid costs

We will not pay your bid costs for any reason e.g. if we terminate or amend the competition.

Warnings and disclaimers

We will not be liable:

- where parts of the bid pack are not accurate, adequate or complete; or
- for any written or verbal communications.

You must carry out your own due diligence and rely on your own enquiries.

This bid pack is not a commitment by us to enter into a contract.

Intellectual Property Rights

The bid pack remains our property. You must use the bid pack only for this competition.

You allow us to copy, amend and reproduce your bid so we can:

- run the competition;
- comply with law and guidance;
- carry out our business.

Our advisors, sub-contractors and other government bodies can use your bid for the same purposes.

TUPE Transfer of undertakings (Protection of Employment):

We consider that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ("TUPE") may apply at the Call for Competition stage.

It is your responsibility to take your own advice and consider whether TUPE is likely to apply in the particular circumstances of the contract and to act accordingly, you are therefore encouraged to carry out your own due diligence exercise.