**Invitation to Quote for the provision of**

**Autism Support, Advice and Social Prescribing Service**

BIDDER INSTRUCTIONS

*Version: Published 26 February 2021*

**Deadline for submitting Proposals:**

**12pm on Friday 12th March 2021**

**Invitation to Quote (ITQ)**

1. **Overview Summary**

North West London (NW London) CCGs are seeking an experienced provider to deliver a support, advice, and social prescribing service for autistic people aged 14+ years living in NW London. The service will provide direct face-to-face and virtual support to autistic people. It will also offer specialist training and advice to employers and health, social care, and education providers to improve autism awareness in communities and the wider system.

This type of service is traditionally commissioned at borough level; the NW London service will operate as a pilot during 2021/22 to test the benefits of delivering a service across a wider footprint. The NW London service aims to compliment and build on local capacity rather than replacing any locally commissioned provision during the pilot period.

One of the key features of this offer is that it will be shaped, tested, and evaluated by the people who use it. The specification (set out in Appendix C) therefore draws on the broad themes from previous engagement work with people with lived experience and their families, allowing flexibility and scope for the service to evolve. Rather than prescribing the model, we intend to commission a service which offers a menu of services and methods of delivery, including face-to-face and digital services, which can be adapted to individual and changing needs modified at pace to respond to the variable risks and restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. **Context and intended outcomes**

**2.1 Background**

*Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives: the strategy for autistic adults in England* (2010) sets out the Government’s overarching vision that:

*“All adults with autism are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them. They can get a diagnosis and access support if they need it and they can depend on mainstream public services to treat them fairly as individuals, helping them to make the most of their talents.”*

The *NHS Long Term Plan* published in 2019 reinforces this vision. The NW London response to this plan sets out the key interventions that are needed to achieve this ambition. These include:

* Availability of flexible specialist support and advice for autistic people;
* Increasing awareness and understanding of autism among frontline professionals;
* Improving access for autistic adults to the specialist and mainstream services and to the support they need to live independently within the community.

Investment in early intervention and prevention services has a recognised impact on mitigating the occurrence and severity of long-term mental health problems. The development of self-help and resilience approaches to mental health conditions reduces the likelihood of admittance to secondary care services.

Our plans for NW London are informed by feedback from autistic people who contributed to a peer-led review of our autism pathways. The need for a voluntary sector offer of support has been identified by autistic people as an area for development. This focus group told us that whilst they want access to specialist clinical support, they also want to be able to access advice and support to overcome everyday practical issues (e.g. housing, GP appointments, university, employment, relationships). They also want to have opportunities for peer support and support to navigate and engage with statutory services. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for flexible and peer-led individual and group-based support, especially for those who are not eligible for social care.

Approximately 1% of the NW London population – 21,000 people – have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A number of these individuals will also have learning disabilities.

* 1. **Intended Outcomes**

The overarching **aims for the service** are to:

* Improve the quality of life for autistic people in NW London;
* Promote the right to independence, relationships, employment, and education;
* Develop autism-aware communities and capable environments;
* Provide early intervention to avoid crisis, including support to reduce self-harm and suicide;
* Promote the safety and wellbeing of autistic people;
* Reduce health and wellbeing inequalities faced by autistic people.

The overarching **aims of the pilot** are to:

* Develop and test a service model based on social prescribing and strength based approaches;
* Gain a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of our local autistic population and the types of support which lead to positive outcomes;
* Assess the challenges and opportunities related to the delivery of this type of service across NW London versus delivery at borough level;
* Determine which elements of the service lend themselves to being delivered at scale and which are best delivered locally;
* Inform an options appraisal and business case for future investment.
  1. **Scope**

The service will be available to people who:

* Have received an autism diagnosis, or who are actively seeking a diagnosis;
* Do not have a learning disability;
* Are aged 14+ years;
* Live in NW London (London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster).

Should funding be available to extend the contract into 2022/23, NW London CCGs reserve the right to expand the scope of this requirement to include provision for people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

1. **Overall work and deliverables**

Full details of the service to be set up and delivered are set out within the Service Specification at Appendix C to this ITQ.

1. **Working within the CCGs and Reporting**

The successfully appointed Contractor will be required to:

* Meet with key stakeholders to present updates and share learning at key stages of the pilot;
* Provide quarterly reports, with monthly breakdowns of activity and performance;
* Submit bi-annual narrative reports summarising the successes and challenges of the pilot.

The SRO for the work will be: Diane Jones, Chief Nurse and Director of Quality NHS NW London Collaboration of CCGs.

The Contractor will report directly to: Sue Graham, Programme Manager, Learning Disabilities and Autism, NHS NW London Collaboration of CCGs.

The client stakeholder group will be members of the NW London Learning Disabilities and Autism Steering Group which includes commissioners from the eight CCGs and local authorities, representatives from NHS England and Improvement, and local providers.

**5. Proposal Submission Requirements**

You are invited to prepare and submit a written proposal which will set out how you will deliver the specified requirements, whilst noting the contract award criteria within the table below which will be used to evaluate your proposal and to identify the Recommended Bidder (the scoring approach is set out further below in Section 9).

There is no word limit other than a 10-page maximum - however please be concise whilst providing the requested detail as set out below.

**Your proposal will need to include:**

- How you will bring relevant knowledge and experience to deliver benefit to your proposed solution for NW London if possible, using case studies and / or testimonials that can illustrate positive outcomes achieved.

- Your approach to involving autistic people in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of the pilot.

- What you assess to be the potential challenges in setting up and delivering this service across NW London, including the restrictions and risks of the Covid-19 pandemic and how you will plan to address these.

- A clear description of your proposed service model and how this will meet the specified requirements

- Your proposed staffing model and how this will support equitable coverage across NW London.

- How you will recruit a team with the right values, relevant experience and an up to date understanding of autism.

- An indicative delivery plan, setting out the timescales for mobilisation, roll out, review and evaluation you assess to be achievable.

- A financial model that provides a breakdown of the costs to setup and run this new service, including all staffing and non-staffing costs, and transparency of any planned level of margin/surplus.

- A cash-flow projection that is informed by your delivery plan, staffing model and financial model, to inform your proposed payment schedule.

- What added social value your organisation and/or service will create for NW London through this contract

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| **Contract Award Criteria** | **Weighting** |
| 1. Demonstrable ability to apply relevant experience and/or learning to develop and deliver a solution to meet the specified requirements across NW London. | 15 |
| 1. Having an appreciative understanding of the challenges of setting up and delivering a service across NW London and demonstrating the ability to successfully address these challenges. | 10 |
| 1. A clear service model having the ability to deliver the specified requirements of the NW London CCGs and flex to respond to the changing restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. | 20 |
| 1. The service includes a genuine and effective approach to co-production. | 10 |
| 1. The workforce model is sufficient and appropriate to ensure that staff have relevant experience in working with autistic people and proposed in a way that will offer resilience and flexibility to work across the NW London boroughs. | 15 |
| 1. The ramping up of the new service is appropriate, setting out when each element of the service model will commence, supported with a credible mobilisation plan that is bespoke to this service. | 15 |
| 1. There is a clear articulation of, and commitment to deliver added social value that will be derived from the involvement of the bidder organisation through this contract. | 5 |
| 1. The financial modelling to set up and run the service is affordable and there is confidence in how the investment is to be used to deliver good value for money and ensure service sustainability during this one-year pilot phase.   *Note: For a compliant bid, the bidder must achieve a minimum evaluation grade of “acceptable” for this financial criterial evaluation, i.e. achieving a minimum of 5 marks. A bid will not be compliant where the submitted financial model is not contained within the Contracting Authority’s stated budget (Section 8 below)* | 10 |
| **Total** | **100%** |

1. **Budget / pricing/ payment**

A budget of **£220,000** has been agreed to invest through this contract which is **inclusive of VAT**. As set out above in Section 7, a compliant bid must be affordable and therefore be contained within this budget. Your breakdown of costs must confirm if VAT is going to be applied to the contract price.

Your proposal should also include a proposed payment schedule which will be appropriate to support your cost projections to ramp up and deliver this service.

1. **Bid Submission**

Bidders must submit their proposal and include a completed ITQ Bidder Details & Declaration Form via electronic submission through the EU-Supply Portal by the above deadline within the Timetable below (section 8).

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to reject your bid if received after the stated deadline above or fails to comply with the bid submission requirements.

Please refrain from including general documentation including marketing information and only supply relevant material in support of your ITQ response.

To summarise, your bid submission will include:

* Detailed proposal **(max 10 pages)** addressing the submission requirements set out in Section 5 above and noting how the evaluation will grade your submission using the criteria also set out in Section 5 above.
* Completed “Bidder Details and Declaration” as included within Appendix B.

1. **Timetable**

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| **Milestone** | **Date** |
| Invitation to Quote issued | Friday 26th February 2021 |
| Latest date/time to submit clarification questions via EU-Supply | 12 noon, Monday 8th March 2021 |
| **Deadline for receipt of your Bid Submission (including completed Appendix B) – via EU-Supply** | **12 noon, Friday 12th March 2021** |
| Contract award decision notified to Bidders | Friday 19th March 2021 |
| Service Mobilisation / Contract Signature | w/c 22nd March 2021 |
| Support commencement | ASAP, with the service ramping up from April 2021 |
| Delivery duration | Expected to be circa 12 months from April 2021 through March 2022 |

1. **Evaluation of ITQ responses**

In evaluating your proposal have regard to the Award Criteria (Section 5), the Contracting Authority will grade each element using the following grade definitions, each resulting in a grade score, which will be weighted as per the Award Criteria.

No bidder interview stage is planned or will form part of any weighted scoring; however, the Contracting Authority does reserve the right to interview any bidder before finalising its evaluation and contract award decision making.

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| **Grade Label** | **Definition of Scored Questions** | **Grade score** |
| Superior | Response contains an extensive level of relevant detail and evidence which provides excellent confidence in the Bidder’s understanding and capability. | 4 |
| Comprehensive | Response contains a good level of relevant detail and evidence which provides a strong level of confidence in the Bidder’s understanding and capability. | 3 |
| Acceptable | Response contains sufficient relevant detail and evidence which provides an acceptable level of confidence in the Bidder’s understanding and capability. | 2 |
| Limited | Response contains only limited relevant detail and evidence which provides only limited confidence in the Bidder’s understanding and capability. | 1 |
| Deficient | Response to the question is deficient and fails to provide any form of confidence in the Bidder’s understanding and capability. | 0 |

**10. Identification of the Recommended Bidder**

Following completion of the evaluation and where relevant clarification questions, the Contracting Authority will identify the Recommended Bidder and proceed to Contract Award.

The Recommended Bidder will be the Bidder achieving the highest overall Value for Money Evaluation Score which will be calculated to be the bidder which:

* Has submitted a compliant bid, including being affordable within the stated budget;
* Has achieved the highest weighted evaluation scores in relation to the Contract Award Criteria set out with Section 5.

**11. Contract Award and Due Diligence**

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to undertake due diligence as it considers appropriate at any point throughout and/or after the ITQ process to seek the necessary reassurances in regard to the Bidder’s bid response and overall ability to deliver the requirements of the Contracting Authority.

As part of its due diligence, the Contracting Authority may wish to more fully assess and consider the information provided by the Bidder to determine the extent to which a Bidder presents any risks which the Contracting Authority may deem to be unacceptable, in its sole discretion, to the delivery of the Services. This may include access to third party financial health assessment (e.g. Dunn and Bradstreet) to understand potential financial standing risks. Where such risk is identified, the Contracting Authority may invite the Bidder to agree how the risk can be mitigated to an extent considered by the Contracting Authority to be sufficient. Where mitigation cannot be agreed to the satisfaction of the Contracting Authority, such satisfaction being at the sole discretion of the Contracting Authority, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award a Contract to one of the other Bidders, such award to be decided on the basis of ranking of the highest scoring Bids. Alternatively, it may decide to re-run part or all of the ITQ process or cancel the ITQ process completely.

Bidders should note that the Contracting Authority may require additional documents or information from the Bidders as part of a due diligence process prior to deciding upon the Recommended Bidder and/or contract signature.

A timely response for any due diligence is required from the Recommended Bidder in order to facilitate timely progression towards contract signature. In the event that the required information is not provided by the Bidder, or the information provided is not satisfactory or it comes to light that information supplied and relied on to arrive at the decision regarding the choice of Recommended Bidder is incorrect, the Contracting Authority reserves the right in its absolute discretion not to enter into a Contract. Under such circumstances, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to award a Contract to one of the other Bidders, such award to be decided on the basis of ranking of the highest scoring Bids. Alternatively, it may decide to re-run part or all of the ITQ process or cancel the ITQ process completely.

Without prejudice to any other actions which the Contracting Authority may wish to take, findings from the due diligence undertaken may identify the need for specific Conditions Precedents to the Contract.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to negotiate any changes with the Recommended Bidder prior to entering into a contract in order to achieve best value for money and optimal assurance of delivering safe, high quality service to service users.

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to not award any contract for whatever reason following this ITQ procurement process and reserves the right to award a contract for the same or similar services through any alternative process whether advertised or not.

**12. The Contract Terms & Conditions**

NHS Central London CCG will act as lead Contracting Authority and will contract with the successfully appointed Provider using the NHS Standard Contract (Shorter Form) which will need to be entered into between the Parties before the end of March 2021.

A copy of the terms and conditions are available at:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-shorter-form-contract-2020-21-particulars-service-conditions-general-conditions/>

This contract is subject to change as may be mandated by NHS England from time to time.

Please note that from 1st April 2021, a new North West London CCG will be established, replacing the eight current CCGs including NHS Central London CCG. As such, changes will need to be made to the contract to recognise a change in control transferring from NHS Central London CCG to the new NW London CCG.

**13. Confidentiality**

You must treat all information supplied by the Contracting Authority in connection with this ITQ as confidential. Information may be disclosed by you insofar as is necessary for the preparation, submission, and evaluation of quotes.

The Contracting Authority as a public body is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI). If you consider that any information supplied as part of the ITQ response is either commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, this should be highlighted and the reasons for its sensitivity given.

**Appendix A - Important Notices for Bidders**

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**Appendix B – Bidder Details & Declarations**

**TO BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED WITH PROPOSAL**

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**Appendix C – Specification of Requirements**

