



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Pre-Tender Market Engagement

Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman CPD12423175

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

Written Feedback: We are seeking final written feedback by 09:30am on 20 March 2023. Earlier responses are welcomed.

Any queries should be submitted by 09:30am on 16 March 2023.

Responses and queries should be submitted to:

CommercialTenders@levellingup.gov.uk

Supplier Engagement Events - Group drop-in sessions to be held on:

- ✦ 15:00 – 16:00 on 7 March 2023
- ✦ 10:30 – 11:30 on 9 March 2023
- ✦ 14:00 – 15:00 on 13 March 2023

Please email CommercialTenders@levellingup.gov.uk if you would like to attend the drop-in session.

Supplier Engagement Events shall provide the Department with an opportunity to give an overview of the requirement to Potential Suppliers, as well as addressing any questions from Potential Suppliers with regards to the policy, process, and any issues or concerns. Where the Department is unable to answer questions immediately within the session, we will endeavour to provide written answers in follow up to the sessions which will be made available to all Potential Suppliers participating in the sessions.

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Pre-Tender Market Engagement (PTME) seeks information in preparation for the potential procurement of a Supplier (from herein referred to as a “**Potential Supplier**”) to set-up and administer the Private Rented Sector (PRS) Landlord Ombudsman scheme (hereafter referred to as “**the Ombudsman**”).
- 1.2 The Ombudsman scheme will be mandatory for all private landlords in England. It will provide redress and dispute resolution to all private rented sector tenants by an independent person, in accordance with the terms of the arrangements with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (herein referred to as “**the Authority**”).
- 1.3 The purpose of this PTME is to gather information to:
 - ✦ help define the service specification for the Ombudsman;
 - ✦ help provide a better understanding of the feasibility of the requirement;
 - ✦ understand the best approach to introduce and implement the Ombudsman;
 - ✦ understand the capacity of the market to deliver and possible risks involved;
 - ✦ inform value for money considerations undertaken by the Authority;
 - ✦ provide the market with an opportunity to ask questions, raise queries and any issues to be addressed at an early stage;

- ✦ inform potential delivery timescales of the Ombudsman; ✦ inform our decision on the route to market.

- 1.4 No decision has been taken on the route to market for this opportunity. The Authority reserves the right to alter its route to market and may not proceed to tender this opportunity. The Authority reserves the right to make the final decision on the route to market following a review of the responses to this engagement which will consider feedback received in relation to paragraph 1.3.
- 1.5 This PTME is separate to any later procurement exercise. The Authority will not use this PTME to inform the suitability of any future potential supplier. However, we strongly advise anyone who has an interest in being considered as a potential supplier should engage with this PTME exercise.
- 1.6 Any information shared may be subject to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) and may be released unless an exemption or exception applies under the relevant legislation.

2 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 2.1 The Government's White Paper, 'A fairer private rented sector'¹, committed to introduce a new private rented sector (PRS) Ombudsman which all PRS landlords who rent out property in England will be required to sign up to, giving PRS tenants full access to redress. This will ensure that when residents make a complaint, landlords take action to put things right.
- 2.2 There are 4.4 million households in the PRS, a rise of 45% from 2008-09 when there were 3.1 million households. The PRS is now the second largest tenure in England, and is home to 19% of all households, compared to 14% in 2008-09, when it was smaller than the social rented sector. The PRS contains a wide range of different sub-markets, serving a wide range of different types of households across all incomes, including an increasing number of families. In 2020-21, 30% of households in the PRS included dependent children (1.3 million households). There are high rates of turnover in the PRS, with the number of house moves significantly higher than in the owner occupied and social rented sectors, both within the sector and between it and the other sectors
- 2.3 There are an estimated 2.3 million landlords in England. Most private landlords take their responsibilities seriously, provide housing of a reasonable standard, and treat their tenants fairly. However, it is wrong that, in the 21st century, a fifth of private tenants in England are spending a third of their income on housing that is non-decent. Category 1 hazards – those that present the highest risk of serious harm or death – exist in 14% of properties, posing an immediate risk to tenants' health and safety (English Housing Survey 2021-2022). These households are living in dangerously low-quality homes, in a state of disrepair, with cold, damp, and mould, and without functioning bathrooms and kitchens. Yet private landlords who rent out non-decent properties will receive an estimated £3 billion from the state in housing related welfare.

The introduction of a PRS Landlord Ombudsman

- 2.4 Ombudsmen protect consumer rights. They provide fair, impartial, and binding resolutions for many issues without resorting to court. This should be quicker, cheaper, less adversarial, and more proportionate than the court system. A single Ombudsman scheme will mean a streamlined service for tenants and landlords, avoiding the confusion and risk of perverse incentives resulting from competitive schemes. As well as resolving individual disputes, an Ombudsman can tackle the root cause of problems, address systemic issues, provide feedback and education to members and consumers, and offer support for vulnerable consumers.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-fairer-private-rented-sector>
Pre-Market Engagement

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- 2.5 Making membership of an Ombudsman scheme mandatory for landlords who use managing agents will mitigate the situation where a good agent is trying to remedy a complaint but is reliant on a landlord who is refusing to engage.
- 2.6 Redress is the norm in other consumer sectors, such as finance, legal, energy, and the communications industry, but the PRS is falling behind other housing tenures. Redress is also available for all social tenants on the full range of issues concerning their tenancies. Redress schemes also exist in leasehold for managing and estate agents, and provision for the New Homes Ombudsman scheme is included in the Building Safety Act 2022.
- 2.7 Private landlords can voluntarily join an existing redress scheme but, at the time of publishing, this covers approximately 80 to 90 private landlords out of an estimated 2.3million.
- 2.8 Private tenants can access redress where they have a complaint about their letting agent or managing agent. However, issues that are the responsibility of the landlord (such as conduct, repairs and conditions) are typically outside the remit of these schemes. We are committed to building on this work by mainstreaming early, effective, and efficient dispute resolution throughout the PRS. Furthermore, the English Private Landlord Survey 2021 found that 49% of landlords did not use an agent, 46% used an agent for letting services and 18% used an agent for management services. Agents play an important role in the PRS. They support landlords to understand and comply with their responsibilities and help tenants find a suitable property to rent.
- 2.9 The Government consulted on the introduction of mandatory landlord redress in February 2018 through its *Strengthening Consumer Redress in the Housing Market* consultation. The responses conveyed clear messages that redress should be more accessible and that the gaps that currently exist where consumers cannot access redress should be filled.
- 2.10 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is potentially seeking to appoint a supplier that can establish and run a new Private Rented Sector (PRS) Landlord Ombudsman scheme. The purpose of this pre-tender market engagement is to seek views from the market on the Ombudsman service provision, operation and delivery.
- 2.11 Dates, decisions on delivery model and procurement process are subject to change, and are subject to parliamentary approval of the legislation that would enshrine an Ombudsman in law.

3 OVERVIEW

Objectives

- 3.1 The overarching objective of the PRS Landlord Ombudsman is **to deliver the government's commitment to ensure the provision of redress and dispute resolution to all private rented sector tenants**. Thereby ensuring landlords are correctly meeting their obligations when renting to tenants, improving property standards, supporting security of tenure and reducing the risk of disputes escalating to court or resulting in the end of a tenancy prematurely.
- 3.2 The Authority has established four draft core objectives that the supplier would need to meet in order to deliver the Ombudsman scheme effectively. The Authority reserves the right to amend these objectives.

3.3 **Objective 1:** To establish and deliver an independent and impartial Ombudsman service providing high quality and efficient redress and dispute resolution for landlords and tenants in the Private Rented Sector by:

- ✦ meeting industry standards set out by the Ombudsman Association in delivering high quality complaint handling and redress by being efficient, consistent, fair and impartial in investigating complaints and produce binding resolutions which are satisfactory to both tenants and landlords.
- ✦ working with third party organisations including, but not limited to, existing redress providers, local authorities, and police and emergency services in providing redress and dispute resolution services effectively
- ✦ working with wider redress landscape and Ombudsman schemes such as Tenancy Deposit Protection schemes to create simplicity for consumers
- ✦ providing tenants and landlords with a route to resolve disputes, acting as an intermediate or alternative to a court process which is legally binding.
- ✦ interacting with new and existing reforms including Tenancy Deposit schemes, the court system, other housing redress provision, the Private Rented Property Portal, the new Decent Homes Standard and local authority/ other enforcement regimes ensuring consumers receive a clear, consistent and streamlined service.
- ✦ ensuring comms and guidance appropriately align and interact with the privately rented property portal and gov.uk guidance.
- ✦ having a demonstrable ability to forecast change and manage impact and risk early and effectively to adapt to any regulatory and contextual changes.

3.4 **Objective 2:** To provide tenants of privately rented properties access to free, accessible, effective, transparent and impartial landlord redress by:

- ✦ ensuring tenants understand their rights and responsibilities and landlords understand the rights, obligations and duties.
- ✦ meeting industry standards set out by the Ombudsman Association in their Service Standards Framework.
- ✦ having a system that is accessible, simple and efficient for all tenants, including those with vulnerabilities.
- ✦ understanding the tenant demographic and empower them to raise complaints about their landlord and/or tenancy when necessary.
- ✦ ensuring that there is consistent approach to redress and that tenants feel listened to and that they are treated fairly, regardless of their circumstances and background.
- ✦ delivering an effective and robust communications, advice, guidance and engagement strategy to support tenants, reaching a range of tenants including those with vulnerabilities.
- ✦ working directly with local enforcement authorities to provide the right outcomes for tenants.
- ✦ having a triage/signposting function for tenants to ensure they are directed or referred to the correct organisation which can appropriately address their issues.

3.5 **Objective 3:** To support landlords to deliver a professional service and meet their obligations and responsibilities to dutifully let PRS properties of a good standard by:

- ✦ providing information and support to landlords through wide reaching, consumer targeted, appropriate and accessible mechanisms to ensure they are clear around the expectations and responsibilities including on standards and repairs.
- ✦ having a clear communication strategy to inform landlords of the mandatory requirement to register with the PRS Landlord Ombudsman and the services it will provide.
- ✦ addressing knowledge gaps and providing relevant information about the private rented sector and the Ombudsman service.
- ✦ focusing the narrative on redress to be on early facilitated communication, mediation, negotiation and investigation with redress being the end point, rather than the start of complaint resolution which leads to faster resolution of standards and disrepair issues.

- ✦ allowing landlords to raise issues and seek advice and mediation from the PRS Ombudsman where the landlord would like to resolve the issue.

3.6 **Objective 4:** To have holistic oversight of dispute resolution in the private rented sector, identifying trends and issues to enable and support strategic intervention to tackle the root cause by:

- ✦ focusing on early facilitated communication & resolution and mediation, where appropriate
- ✦ identifying emerging issues and trends to inform action as an organisation, and with the Authority as required, to resolve systemic issues.
- ✦ working with the Authority to improve housing redress and regulation, including rationalisation, working with government as appropriate.
- ✦ using continuous learning of issues and complaints to improve its service and procedures.
- ✦ providing a consistent approach of arbitration and conciliation in the private rented sector, aligning with the Decent Home Standard and the Private Rented Property Portal.
- ✦ identifying the root cause of problems, address systemic issues, provide feedback and education to members and consumers, and offer support for vulnerable consumers.

Service Provision

- 3.7 The Ombudsman must, as a minimum, be able to provide conciliation and arbitration services to resolve tenants' complaints.
- 3.8 Subject to parliamentary approval of the legislation that would enshrine an Ombudsman in law, the Ombudsman will have broad powers in legislation to put things right for tenants when it is determined that a wrong has been caused through landlord negligence or (in)action. This includes the power to:
- ✦ compel a landlord to issue an apology,
 - ✦ provide information,
 - ✦ take or cease taking an action,
 - ✦ pay compensation up to £25,000 and/ or
 - ✦ take such other action in the interests of the complainant as the Ombudsman may specify.
- 3.9 The Authority expects a focus on quick and effective resolution of a complaint to bring about swift resolution.
- 3.10 We are keen to understand what potential suppliers consider an 'essential' service provision for an ombudsman scheme and what is considered additional redress services.
- 3.11 The Authority is also interested in how the supplier could drive improvement in the sector – offering advice, training and guidance to tenants and landlords as well as identifying patterns and trends across common complaints and working with the Authority and other stakeholder bodies to find solutions to recurring problems.
- 3.12 This engagement is intended to understand the requirements of the Ombudsman scheme better and how they could be met by the supplier this may include, but not be limited to, the headings below:

Implementation and roll out

- 3.13 The governments' objective is to deliver its commitment to ensure high-quality redress and dispute resolution to all landlords and tenants in the PRS. The overarching objective is set out in paragraph 3.1 and the core objectives are set out in more detail in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.6.

- 3.14 Although no decision has been taken on the route to market for this opportunity, if it is tendered, we are looking to begin rolling out of the Ombudsman as soon as possible following any procurement exercise.
- 3.15 We are interested in hearing views from experts in the field on the most effective way to roll out this scheme, in particularly how quickly a potential supplier can mobilise, how long this would take to become fully functioning and what roll out would look like in practice.
- 3.16 We are keen for the Ombudsman to be rolled out and introduced in a smooth, efficient and effective way, additionally we want it the roll out to monitor its impact on the sector and have the ability to adapt roll out if required.
- 3.17 When considering this item, we are interested in understanding what an essential service would be, what is required to roll out the essential service and how long it would take to roll out to all PRS landlord and tenants in England.
- 3.18 We can expect a large number of enquires and complaints reaching the Ombudsman through data available in the English Housing Survey. We would be keen to understand how suppliers have considers the number of complaints they expected to receive within the recommended roll out.
- 3.19 In addition to providing your expertise on roll out, we also expect the Ombudsman to monitor its delivery of the scheme and would like responses that to include how potential suppliers may monitor and evaluate the delivery to inform potential improvements.

Minimum and Additional Service

- 3.20 We assume that for an Ombudsman to operate it would have a minimum service level for landlord and tenants to use its services. We are interested to know from potential suppliers what a minimum service would be and look like.
- 3.21 The Authority is also exploring what other services the Ombudsman may provide beyond it's the core remit of tenant compliant resolution and sector support, including the prospect of landlord-initiated mediation services, training etc.

Membership Fees

- 3.22 All PRS landlords letting a residential property on a periodic tenancy or a tenancy of less than seven years (with exceptions) are expected to be covered by the Ombudsman scheme.
- 3.23 The Ombudsman scheme will be expected to fund its operation through fees paid by landlords. The service must always be free to tenants. It is up to the supplier to stipulate the amount and structure of these fees. However, these fees must represent value for money and the Authority retains overall ability to veto them if they do not agree.
- 3.24 The Authority recognises that there are a range of landlords with varying property portfolio sizes.
- 3.25 We are therefore keen to understand what the fee structure could look like for different landlords and if there are any other alternative ways in which the Ombudsman scheme could be funded.

Set-up Cost

- 3.26 Our assumption is that the overall operation of the Ombudsman would be covered by membership fees (but we are open to alternative suggestions). The Authority recognises that setup costs are involved when setting up an Ombudsman however the government is not obliged to fund them. We

would like to hear how these start-up costs may be funded by a potential supplier and if and how the costs would be recouped.

- 3.27 The Authority is also interested in understanding what the potential supplier would consider as a start-up cost such as staffing, recruitment, training, IT, facilities etc. The Authority would welcome as much detail as possible including estimates on various costs and alternative options where relevant.
- 3.28 The Authority would be interested to know if different roll out options could impact the startup costs, and how. Alongside start-up cost we would like to know in as much detail as possible how much suppliers estimate it would cost to run the Ombudsman scheme.

Key Performance Indicators

- 3.29 There is an expectation that the potential supplier is approved by Chartered Trading Standard Institute and therefore adheres to ADR regulations 2015² which stipulates a 90-day rule for non-complex cases. We expect that there will be a wide variety of cases approaching the Ombudsman with differing levels of complexity. However, we do expect the potential supplier to, at a minimum, resolve 100% of non-complex cases in 90-days, if not sooner.
- 3.30 We are keen to understand how the potential supplier would ensure and measure:
- ✦ The tenants feel listened to and that they are treated fairly, regardless of circumstances and background;
 - ✦ That there is a consistent outcome for both landlords and tenants through equality of access and parity in outcomes;
 - ✦ That tenants and landlords get the right outcomes; and ✦ That support is also provided to landlords.
- 3.31 We are also keen to get your views on what other KPIs would be appropriate to monitor.

Monitoring & Evaluation

- 3.32 How the Authority monitors and evaluate the Ombudsman could be dependent on the supplier that has been appointed and the type of organisation it is. However, we interested to understand from potential suppliers how the Authority gives the ombudsman independence whilst ensuring accountability to meet the Authority's aims.
- 3.33 When considering this thought we are keen to understand what potential suppliers believe the role of the Authority should be and what levers can be used in ensuring accountability.

4 OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

- 4.1 The key deliverables, to be informed by this engagement exercise, are expected to be:
- 4.1.1 **To establish, deliver and maintain** an independent and impartial PRS Landlord Ombudsman Scheme, free to PRS tenants.
 - 4.1.2 **To provide high quality, timely and accurate** determinations for tenant's complaints
 - 4.1.3 **To work with other bodies** in the sector to ensure a joined-up approach across redress to result in a clear and streamlined approach for end users

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/542/contents/made>
Pre-Market Engagement

- 4.1.4 **To ensure value for money** for landlords, provide services to landlords which support effective complaint handling between tenants and landlords and reduce the need for escalation e.g., training and guidance
- 4.1.5 **To provide ongoing monitoring and data collection** to make service and organisational improvements and recommend changes to the Authority.
- 4.1.6 Continuously forecast change and manage impact and risk early and effectively.
- 4.1.7 **To manage change effectively** and keep up to speed with the changing landscape adapting organisational processes and structures as required.
- 4.1.8 **To monitor and evaluate** the Ombudsman scheme must include provision for frequent informal and formal meetings and include the provision for making of reports on the operation of the scheme. This must be at least annually alongside financial reporting requirements. The Ombudsman scheme may want to publish reports in relation to its activity on a regular or ad hoc basis.
- 4.1.9 **To agree operational performance indicators** with the Authority.

5 KEY DATES & TENDERING PROCESS

- 5.1 If it is decided this service will be tendered, it is anticipated that any procurement and/or process may start in 2024, with the contract to commence as soon as possible after. This is indicative date and for information purposes only and are subject to change. The Authority reserves the right to amend these dates at any time, and Potential Suppliers rely on them entirely at their own risk.
- 5.2 Dates, decisions on delivery model and procurement process are subject to change, and are subject to parliamentary approval of the legislation that would enshrine an Ombudsman in law. As stated above, the Authority reserves the right to amend or change these dates and Suppliers rely on them at their own risk.

6 RESPONSE

- 6.1 **Please respond by email to:**

CommercialTenders@levellingup.gov.uk>

With the following by 09:30am on 20 March 2023 (the “Response Deadline”) to express an interest in attending one of our round table events for suppliers.

- 6.2 When indicating your interest in attending the supplier event please outline (if any) conflicts of interests and provide feedback you may have on the authority’s requirements or questions you may have for the authority at this stage.

A. General supplier questions

- 1. Would you/your organisation be interested in establishing and maintaining the statutory PRS Ombudsman scheme and why?
- 2. Would there be any conflicts of interest if your organisation delivered this scheme?
- 3. What evidence can you provide that the current market can deliver this project?

4. What time would you consider necessary to deliver this project?
5. Is the requirement for the new PRS Landlord Ombudsman clear? If not, where is further clarity required?
6. If your organisation has any proposed amendments, what would they be and why?
7. What, if anything, has the Authority missed or overlooked in setting out their requirement? (We're keen to hear your proposals on the proposed project outcomes set out in section 3).
8. If already a redress provider, how would you balance your existing responsibilities with the new service?
9. What form and structure should the Ombudsman take to make it as adaptable and innovative as possible?
10. What data/ evidence can you provide on the effectiveness of the existing market?

B. Objectives

1. Do you have any views on the objectives for the Ombudsman (Section 3)

C. Minimum and Additional Services

1. Please outline what you consider to be 'essential' service provision for an Ombudsman scheme
2. What potential services could the Ombudsman also provide beyond those listed as 'essential'?
3. What, if any, additional services would you provide to landlord and tenants?
4. Would there be an additional cost for additional services, if so, what would you estimate it to be? How would this be funded?
5. To what extent would you consider landlord-initiated mediation to be appropriate for a PRS Landlord Ombudsman to deliver?

D. Implementation and roll out questions

With paragraph 3.7 in mind, we are particularly keen to understand:

1. What would effective implementation and rollout of the Ombudsman look like? Why would this be the most effective way?
2. How would implementation and rollout be effectively monitored?
3. What factors would need to be taken into consideration when determining implementation timescales? e.g., recruitment, training etc. Which are the most critical or challenging?
4. What support an organisation might need from the authority in terms of rollout?
5. How quickly can you mobilise and what factors would need to be taken into consideration?
6. How long would it take to become a fully functioning Ombudsman for all PRS landlords and tenants in England?
7. What factors need to be considered to begin rolling out a minimum service?

8. Could the number of complaints impact the way in which the Ombudsman is rolled out? If so, how?
9. How would you monitor and evaluate the delivery of the Ombudsman scheme whilst implementing the Ombudsman scheme?
10. How would you ensure that the Ombudsman continuously makes improvements once set up?
11. What do you anticipate will be the key challenges in setting up and delivering the Ombudsman?
12. If an individual is appointed to be the PRS landlord Ombudsman, what skills and experience should they have?

E. Membership Fees

With paragraph 3.8 in mind, we are particularly keen to understand:

1. Are there any other ways the Ombudsman could consider funding its core or additional activities?
2. How could potential suppliers structure the membership fees (e.g., per landlord, per housing unit, per complaint)?

F. Cost

With paragraph 3.9 in mind, we are particularly keen to understand:

1. What would you estimate start-up cost of the Ombudsman to be? Would the current market be able to cover these costs without government support?
2. What are the primary factors in the start-up costs?
3. Could the way in which the Ombudsman is rolled out impact the start-up costs?
4. In addition to start-up cost, what would you estimate as the broad potential running costs of the Ombudsman? In your calculations, please consider the following:
 - a. How many enquires, complaints and decisions you expect the Ombudsman to receive/ make;
 - b. How many of these enquires and complaints you expect to refer to alternative bodies (particularly the local authority) and the reason why;
 - c. The cost per enquiry, complaint, and decision you expect the Ombudsman to receive/ make.
5. Are there any other factors that have been included in this methodology that the Authority has not considered?

G. Key Performance Indicators

With paragraph 3.10 in mind, we are particularly keen to understand:

1. What are your thoughts on resolving 100% of non-complex cases in 90-days as per ADR regulations³?

³ The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015/542, regulation 6

2. How would you ensure that tenants feel listened to and that they are treated regardless of circumstances and background – How would you measure this?
3. How would you ensure that there is consistent approach towards landlords and tenants – How would this be monitored?
4. How would you ensure that you are achieving the right outcomes for tenants? - How would you measure this?
5. How would you also support landlords? How would you monitor the success of this?
6. Are there any other KPIs that would be appropriate to monitor and why?
7. What KP's would your organisation suggest and why?

H. Monitoring & Evaluation

1. What should be the consequences if KPIs are missed?

7 QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- 7.1 Potential Suppliers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this PTME document **at any time prior to 9.30am on Thursday 16th March**. Questions must be submitted by email to: CommercialTenders@levellingup.gov.uk
- 7.2 To ensure that all Potential Suppliers have equal access to information regarding this PTME exercise, responses to questions raised by Potential Suppliers will be published in a "Questions and Answers" document, which will also be circulated by email, with updates appearing at regular intervals (approximately two to three working days).
- 7.3 Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
- 7.4 If a Potential Supplier wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being revealed, then the Potential Supplier must state this in their email and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If the Authority does not consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the Potential Supplier will be invited to decide whether:
 - the question/clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
 - it wishes to withdraw the question/clarification.

8 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 8.1 This PTME will help the Authority to refine the requirements and to understand the potential level of interest in the delivering requirements. It will also aid Potential Supplier's understanding of the requirements in advance of any formal competitive tender exercise.
- 8.2 The Authority reserves the right to change any information contained within this PTME at any time, and Potential Suppliers rely upon it entirely at their own risk.
- 8.3 The Authority reserves the right not to proceed with a competitive tender exercise after this PTME or to award any contract.
- 8.4 Any and all costs associated with the production of such a response to this PTME must be borne by the Potential Supplier.

- 8.5 Information contained within this document is confidential and must not be revealed to any third party without prior written consent from the Authority.
- 8.6 No down-selection of Potential Suppliers will take place as a consequence of any responses or interactions relating to this PTME.
- 8.7 The Authority expects that all responses to this PTME will be provided by Potential Suppliers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
- 8.8 No information provided by a Potential Supplier in response to this PTME will be carried forward, used or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the Potential Supplier, in any subsequent formal procurement process.