

**Expression of Interest for Provision of Support Vouchers (including Fuel, Clothing, Food) and Voucher Management Platform.**

**Introduction**

Together Housing Association Limited (THA) is a charitable housing association registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 and is the parent company to a number of subsidiaries. The main subsidiary being Together Housing Association (THA), which is where the social housing stock is owned and managed. THA manages over 38,000 properties, providing a comprehensive range of support services which affect over 80,000 people’s lives over a huge geographical area in the North of England. Employing approximately 1,500 staff, the Group’s corporate vision is to be ‘A groundbreaking Company, building homes, communities and futures. For future information please visit [www.togetherhousing.co.uk](http://www.togetherhousing.co.uk)

**Expression of Interest Purpose**

This Expression of Interest exercise is intended to:

* Engage with the market to understand the support capabilities for our requirement.
* Develop an understanding of suitably qualified and capable support providers for the Provision and Tracking/Management of Support Vouchers.
* Develop a wider understanding of available Procurement Routes and Routes to Market.
* Develop an understanding of what information that market would require from Together Housing for any Future Procurement exercise.

**Summary of Requirements**

This is a call for Expressions of Interest (“EOI”) pertaining to an intended procurement exercise by THA.

Together Housing operates the provision of “Support Vouchers” (including but not limited to Fuel Vouchers, Food Vouchers, Transport Vouchers, Clothing Vouchers) for Tenants and wider community members (henceforth “citizens”), to support with access to these provisions for Citizens who are in crisis need, or may otherwise be disadvantaged and/or experiencing limited access to such provisions.

Such Support Voucher provision has historically been delivered through multiple agreements with individual providers, tracked centrally by THA employees in a variety of methods. Review of such provision has identified a potential opportunity for both the consolidation of the Support Voucher provision, and the modernisation of Voucher allocation tracking through a consolidated Digital platform.

Together Housing are thus seeking to develop, modernise and expand upon its Support Voucher provision, through the identification and award of a single, consolidated contract for the Provision of Support Vouchers and a Consolidated Support Voucher management platform.

This expression of interest has thus been developed to engage with the market, to understand both the capability of the market to meet such requirements, and to provide further information (commercial/operational/etc) as to inform any future planned procurement activity in this regard.

Such Expression of Interest exercise is intended to inform Together Housing’s Planned Procurement Activity, and response in no way constitutes any form of agreement or assurance from Together Housing regarding the development of its procurement process or selection of Procurement “Route to market” for this provision.

Any contract arising from such procurement, if progressed, will likely be multi-year.

**Expression of Interest – Timeline and Requirements**

The timeline for responses of this Expression of Interest Exercise are as follows:

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| Issuing of the EOI  | 18th of April 2024 |
| Deadline for Responses  | 5pm (17:00 GMT) on Wednesday the 15th of May 2024 |

Prospective organisations who wish to express their interest must ensure that they have completed and returned the document, with all questions completed and responded to with the document, in advance of the EOI Closure deadline.

All responses to this EOI should be sent to THG.Procurement@togetherhousing.co.uk, with the email subject “THG VOUCHER EOI response”.

Responses received after this deadline may not be considered or accounted for by Together Housing.

Please be advised that any additional documentation, unless requested as part of the question set within this EOI document, shall not be considered or reviewed by Together Housing.

**Specification/Requirements**

Voucher Provision

Together Housing’s core requirement is for the provision of a consolidated purchasing channel, demonstrating best Value-for-Money, for the provision of Vouchers including (but not limited to) the following:

* **Food Vouchers** (redeemable for all major supermarkets) – Such vouchers should be product-restrictive (not redeemable for purchase of nicotine or alcoholic products)
* **Fuel Vouchers** (redeemable for all major utility suppliers)
* **Clothing Vouchers**
* **Transport Vouchers**
* **Cash vouchers**

The provision of such Vouchers by Together Housing is done through Grant funding, as part of the wider public sector/governmental support initiatives. As such, any contract arising from any future procurement exercise will likely be of a call-off nature, to a maximum expected value aligned to the grant-funded model.

As part of a successful consolidated provision for Support Vouchers, Together Housing expects of a suitably capable supplier:

* Best Value-for-Money for any administrative charges or margins on Voucher issue, so as to ensure maximum benefit in grant funding is focussed for Citizens.
* Capability to either issue all vouchers directly, or possess suitable arrangements for sub-contracting of certain Support Voucher categories
* Control over Voucher issue and cancellation by THA.
* Capability to supply between 1 and 500+ Vouchers per day, dependent on business need.
* Capability to issue Vouchers on varied timeframes for use (One-Off, Daily, Weekly, Monthly, etc.)
* Capable of providing and distributing Vouchers in various different forms and through varying communication channels, such as email, text, postal, etc.

Consolidated Management Platform

As part of the modernisation and consolidation of Support Voucher provision, Together Housing is also seeking to identify suitably capable suppliers that can provide Support Voucher tracking, management, and reporting through a single consolidated Digital platform.

Such platform (either web-based or application based) will allow for the centralised management, requisition and allocation of all vouchers distributed under the contract, with ease of tracking for each voucher (including where the voucher is allocated, by whom and if used).

Such system should be capable of performing the following:

* Ability to source all Support Vouchers through single consolidated platform, with range of sourcing requirements from 0 to 500+ per day dependent on need.
* Assignment of unique reference numbers to each Support Voucher for ease of tracking and management.
* Ability to track full life cycle of a voucher through single unique record, including:
	+ Date of Requisition of the Support Voucher
	+ Purpose of the Support Voucher (e.g. fuel, clothing)
	+ Monetary Value assigned to the Voucher
	+ Name of individual who has requisitioned and assigned the Voucher
	+ Name of the individual to whom the Voucher has been assigned
	+ Date of assignment of the Voucher
	+ Remaining balance/Value spent on the Voucher
* Ability to cancel a Voucher (ideally without charge, or with credit for any future Voucher requisition)
* Ability to report on all Vouchers requisitioned and assigned through the portal, with available reporting on:
	+ Breakdown of requisition/spend on Vouchers by Voucher Purpose/Category
	+ Breakdown of requisition/spend on Vouchers by Funding source/project source.
	+ Breakdown of requisition/spend on Vouchers by Date
	+ Breakdown of Spend/remaining balance on Vouchers
	+ Breakdown of requisition/spend on Vouchers by Geographic location
* Ability to break down THA users by individual account, with sub-accounts for different funding streams and projects
* Ability to differentiate assessments and pre-required information fields based on funding or budget source (for example, for additional checks on grant funding versus internal funding).
* Automatic notification or alerts when certain funding streams or budget codes reach particular spend milestones.

**Together Housing Vouchers EOI – Questions for Response**

Please ensure that you have responded to all questions included within the section below as part of your response to this Expression of Interest exercise.

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| Question 1 | Please provide your organisation name and contact details (name, email and phone) for a relevant point of contact within your organisation  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 2 | Based on the current specification, would the market be capable of meeting, and open to seeking to bid for, this requirement if a subsequent procurement exercise were conducted?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 3 | What are the comparative advantages of consolidating all Voucher requirements into a single agreement, versus segmenting each requirement between different providers?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 4 | How can providers within the market ensure continuous commercial improvement and cost-reduction for Together Housing, through the life of a consolidated agreement?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 5 | Can all voucher categories be issued through each of the different pre-requisites included within the “voucher provision” section of the EOI? If so, how? (Direct issue, Cancellation, Varied Volume, Varied Timeframes, Varied distribution channels?) |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 6 | What would be the comparative commercial and cost implications of sourcing Vouchers through a single provider, versus segmenting across numerous providers?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 7 | Based on the description of the required Consolidated Management Platform, including the defined tracking, reporting and control mechanisms, would the market be capable of meeting these requirements? If so, how?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 8 | What are the comparative advantages of sourcing a portal or application for the sourcing of Vouchers from a variety of different providers (sub-contracted vouchers), versus sourcing both the portal and Vouchers from a single provider (Direct Vouchers)?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 9 | Is the market capable of delivering a portal or application that allows for the tracking AND reporting of Vouchers, in line with all criteria set out in the “Consolidated Management Platform” section of the EOI and including unique reference numbers per voucher?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 10 | What would the indicative cost implications be for a consolidated management platform for the tracking and issuing of Vouchers? For example, on either a “by user” or “single organisational license” basis? |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 11 | Is there any information missing or insufficiently defined within the current version of the specification? If so, what information is required or beneficial to a potential bidder to address this?  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 12 | What Public Sector Frameworks (if any) is your organisation registered on which facilitates a procurement of this nature? Please list all relevant frameworks, including the managing organisation, reference number and lot number where applicable.  |
| Answer |  |

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| Question 13 | Is there any other information that your organisation wishes to make Together Housing aware of in relation to this specification and EOI exercise?  |
| Answer |  |