



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

## **Request For Information**

### **National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Information Systems Function Procurement**

Department of Health and Social Care

May 2023



# Department of Health & Social Care

## 1.0 Introduction

The Department of Health and Social Care ('The Authority') is seeking information regarding a procurement opportunity they are intending to launch for a supplier to provide the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) with software licences and ongoing support & maintenance services.

This is a Request for Information (RFI) only. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes – it does not constitute an Invitation to Tender (ITT) or a promise to issue an ITT in the future. This RFI does not commit the Authority to contract for any supply or service whatsoever.

Further, the Authority is not at this time seeking proposals and will not accept unsolicited proposals. The Authority will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense, by responding to the RFI the responder accepts these terms. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future ITT, if any is issued. Responding or not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any potential future ITT, if any is issued.

The information provided in the RFI is subject to change and is not binding on the Authority. The Authority has not made a commitment to procure and release of this RFI should not be construed as such a commitment or as authorisation, to incur cost for which reimbursement would be required or sought.

It is not intended that this RFI process will be used to pre-qualify potential Respondents. The Authority simply wishes to gather general information about the services it wishes to obtain at this stage only. It is important, therefore, that Respondents should not prepare detailed proposals at this stage. Furthermore, a response or non-response will not guarantee inclusion or exclusion in any future procurement process.



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## 1.1 Procurement Timetable

The Authority's indicative timetable is provided below. This is subject to change.

Activity	Date
Market Engagement	May 2023
Invitation to Tender (ITT) Opportunity Published	July 2023
Tender Evaluations Complete and Preferred Suppliers Selected	September 2023
Contract Start Date	October 2023

## 1.2 Background to the NIHR (Context and Structure)

The National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) was established in 2006 following the publication of the Government's "Best Research for Best Health" strategy to "create a health research system in which the NHS supports outstanding individuals, working in world-class facilities, conducting leading-edge research focused on the needs of patients and the public". Since that time, it has transformed research in and for the NHS and helped to shape the health and social care research landscape more broadly. Working in partnership with the NHS, universities, local government, other research funders, patients, and the public, it funds, enables and delivers world-leading health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing and promotes economic growth. Primarily the NIHR is centred on England but collaborates closely with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. It is also a major funder of applied health research in low-income and middle-income countries, work that is principally funded through UK aid from the UK government.

The DHSC (Department of Health and Social Care) Outcome Delivery Plan recognises the NIHR as the nation's largest funder of health and care research with programmes, centres of excellence, and systems together representing the most integrated health research system in the world.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-of-health-and-social-care-outcome-delivery-plan/department-of-health-and-social-care-outcome-delivery-plan-2021-to-2022>

In 2021, the DHSC and the NIHR published a revised and updated version of Best Research for Best Health outlining the work the NIHR had delivered since it was established and the future ambitions and goals it is setting out to deliver.



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<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/about-us/best-research-for-best-health-the-next-chapter.pdf>

In order to deliver the key functions of the NIHR, the DHSC contracts directly with a number of NHS Trusts, universities, and life science organisations that host the functions that make up the NIHR Coordinating Centre and the NIHR Clinical Research Network (to be renamed the NIHR Research Delivery Network from 2024):

- The NIHR Coordinating Centre comprises of the following elements:
  - NIHR Academy, hosted by Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.
  - NIHR Evaluation, Trials and Studies (NETS), hosted by the University of Southampton.
  - Centre for Engagement and Dissemination (CED); Central Commissioning Facility (CCF); and the Office for Clinical Research Infrastructure (NOCRI), all hosted by LGC.
- NIHR Clinical Research Network Coordinating Centre (NIHR CRN), is hosted by the University of Leeds and Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. (This will become the NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN) from 2024 with the host to be awarded in 2023).
- These business units are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the NIHR. The Senior executive head of these business units sit on NIHR's Executive Board (CEB), which also includes the NIHR Communications Director, the NIHR Chief Digital Officer, and the NIHR Director for Public Voice. CEB is the decision-making body for certain NIHR-wide initiatives and projects. The members of CEB are part of the 'executive team' that is leading the NIHR at national level in conjunction with the Director and Senior Management Team of DHSC's Science Research and Evidence Directorate.

## 2.0 Background to the Requirement

### 2.1 Background

Funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) focuses on the elements of the 'innovation pathway' from early 'translational' research (translating discoveries from the laboratory to the clinic) through clinical research and on to applied health and social care research. It is one of the largest public funders of research in the United Kingdom with a budget of approximately £1.3bn in 2023/24.



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The NIHR works in partnership with funders of discovery science and those elements of the system focused on adoption and diffusion of innovation. Centered on England, the NIHR collaborates with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland which co-fund many of our research programmes.

The NIHR delivers against a mission through six core work-streams:

- Funding high quality, timely research that benefits the NHS, public health, and social care
- Investing in world-class expertise, facilities, and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services
- Partnering with patients, service users, carers, and communities to improve the relevance, quality, and impact of our research
- Attracting, training, and supporting the best researchers to tackle complex health and social care challenges
- Collaborating with other public funders, charities, and industry to help shape a cohesive and globally competitive research system
- Funding applied global health research and training to meet the needs of the poorest people in low-income and middle-income countries.

NIHR's mission to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research is set out here: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/best-research-for-best-health-the-next-chapter/27778>

## 2.2 The Requirement

DHSC are looking for a supplier or number of suppliers to provide the NIHR with licencing and ongoing frontline support and maintenance services.

### Part A

The NIHR require annual licences for the following software:

Software	Licence Type	Qty required
Google Workspace	Enterprise Plus	8000
Salesforce		107



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LucidChart		1500
LucidSpark		1000
Atlassian		500
Kanbanchi		8000
AwesomeGapps		8000
DocuSign		11,670 Envelopes
CloudM		8000
JamBoard		7
Google Meet Device licences		38
ServiceNow		8 - 12

The Google Workspace environment and the additional services listed above are configured to provide corporate services to the NIHR staff and researchers located in a variety of organisations across the NHS, Academia and private companies. This collective is known as the NIHR Hub.

### Part B

In addition to the above licence requirements, the NIHR require the following:

1	Provision of a Service Desk to manage all NIHR user enquiries for a minimum of UK Office hours Monday to Friday [approx. 520 user enquiries per month with the majority handled under self-service.]
2	Support and develop the current Service Integration And Management (SIAM) service delivering the systems and services of the NIHR IS Function. Including the assessment of, planning in conjunction with DHSC and NIHR Officials for the implementation of any new project, system of service over the lifetime of the contract
3	To support, maintain and develop existing cloud-based corporate functions, architecture, systems and services within the NIHR using collaborative / cloud-based systems Google Workplace and Google Cloud Platform
4	Deliver hosting services at a large technological scale to the NIHR [Approx. 8000 users]
5	Provision of secure servers and data storage services to host a range of Services including websites and databases
6	Ensure there is the tested and proven facility to take and complete a full backup and recovery of data and systems without disruption to the wider user base
7	Ensure that all data held both on the “live” platform and in dev/backup will be protected in line with current Government security regulations and UK GDPR
8	To undertake regular assessment of, planning for and the procurement and management of appropriate 3rd party applications or services that enhance the offer to NIHR users
9	Experienced and suitably trained staff and other resources to ensure NIHR hardware is maintained, configured and updated according to industry standards; to assess and



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	assure the quality, integrity and resilience of the NIHR's data, systems, services and staff
10	Provision of appropriate training and development staff to support the roll out of new or modified services to the NIHR as and when necessary.

Please note all requirements are draft/indicative only at this stage and may be subject to change.

### 3.0 Guidance for completion

- (i) To maximise the success of this subsequent procurement process we request that suppliers are open and honest in their responses.
- (ii) Participation in this Market Consultation is voluntary. It is not required to provide an answer to every question if particular questions are not relevant.
- (iii) The Department wishes to encourage participation at this stage in order to ensure a wide number of responses. The market engagement processes described in this document do not form part of the formal procurement process and suppliers are not being evaluated based on responses to this exercise. When the formal procurement process commences all supplier bids will be evaluated on a fair basis and based on their Tender submission only.
- (iv) The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) applies to the Department. You should be aware of the Department's obligations and responsibilities under the FOIA to disclose, on written request, recorded information held. Information provided by you in connection with this procurement exercise, or with any Contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, may therefore have to be disclosed in response to such a request, unless the Department decides that one of the statutory exemptions under the FOIA applies. The Department may also include certain information in the publication scheme which it maintains under the FOIA.
- (v) In certain circumstances, and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the Department may consider it appropriate to ask you for your views as to the release of any information before a decision on how to respond to a request is made. In dealing with requests for information under the FOIA, the Department must comply with a strict timetable and the Department would, therefore, expect a timely response to any consultation within two working days.



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- (vi) You may provide information which is confidential in nature and which you may wish to be held in confidence. You must give a clear indication which type of material is to be considered confidential and why it is considered to be so, along with the time period for which it will remain confidential in nature. The use of blanket protective markings such as "commercial in confidence" will no longer be appropriate. In addition, marking any material as confidential or equivalent should not be taken to mean that the Department accepts any duty of confidentiality by virtue of such marking. Please note that even where you have indicated that information is confidential the Department may be required to disclose it under the FOIA if a request is received.
- (vii) The Department cannot accept that trivial information or information which by its very nature cannot be regarded as confidential should be subject to any obligation of confidence.
- (viii) In certain circumstances where information has not been provided in confidence, the Department may still wish to consult with you about the application of any other exemption such as that relating to disclosure that will prejudice the commercial interests of any party.
- (ix) The decision as to which information will be disclosed is reserved to the Department notwithstanding any consultation with you.
- (x) Whilst the Department expects to proceed to procurement in due course, there is no obligation to do so as a consequence of this early market engagement activity.
- (xi) The publication of any documents at this stage is intended to provide potential bidders with the opportunity to view and comment on draft requirements and the current procurement approach. The Department does not intend to be bound by any information at this stage. The Department makes no commitment to accept recommendations or suggestions. Once published, the Invitation to Tender will contain the final requirements in relation to this service. All previous versions, including any documents published at this stage should be disregarded.

### 4.0 Requested Information

Please provide responses to all or some of the following questions:

1. Please complete the table below to advise which of the software licences you would be able to provide. Please respond 'Yes' or 'No' to each of the software listed below.





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<b>Software</b>	<b>Able to provide licences (Yes/No)</b>
Google Workspace	
Salesforce	
LucidChart	
LucidSpark	
Atlassian	
Kanbanchi	
DocuSign	
CloudM	
JamBoard	
ServiceNow	

2. Based on the requirements contained within Section 2.2, are you able to deliver Part A and Part B together? If no, would you be able to deliver Part A or Part B if they were separate opportunities?
3. Based on the requirements contained within Section 2.2, please can you provide a price estimate for Part A and/or Part B on a 12-month basis?
4. Under the current contract, the NIHR receives discounted Google Workspace licences based on an academic discount. Is this a discount that you would be able to offer? If yes, would this discount be limited to using a specific commercial framework agreement?
5. Please list the commercial framework agreements you could provide our requirements through
6. If you were awarded this contract to deliver, what would the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be that you would measure and monitor for the Part B requirements within Section 2.2?
7. Are there any further comments you would like to make at this stage?

### 5.0 Responses

Interested parties are requested to respond to this RFI in the following format:

- Arial size 12
- Responses must be submitted using Microsoft Word or PDF.



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- There is no word limit for responses or individual questions however we request that Suppliers provide relevant information only and do not provide generic sales or marketing content.

Responses are due no later than **4pm on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023** and shall be submitted via email to: [nihrsupplierengagement@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:nihrsupplierengagement@dhsc.gov.uk)

Section 1 of your response should be administrative information and include:

- Organisations' name
- Organisations' address
- Contact name
- Telephone number for contact
- E-mail address for contact.

Section 2 of your response should include answers to the questions in Section 4 of this document

Please make clear any commercially sensitive information you are sharing with the Authority.

### 6.0 Clarifications

If you require clarification on any part of this RFI please email [nihrsupplierengagement@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:nihrsupplierengagement@dhsc.gov.uk).