



Request for Information – Biological and Environmental Sampling

Supplier Name	
Contact Name	
Contact Email Address	
Contact Tel Number	

| Instructions:

1. The purpose of this document is to enhance the Authority's understanding of the marketplace and its options for sourcing for a potential future requirement.
2. The issuance of this RFI does not constitute a sourcing exercise nor will the Authority pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFI.
3. Any information received in response to this RFI will assist the Authority procurement team to:
 - a. understand the ability of the marketplace to fulfil its requirements;
 - b. refine the scope of the requirements to best align to the marketplace; and
 - c. inform the Authority's chosen route to market to best enable competition.
4. The key dates for this RFI are as follows:
 - **RFI Published: Thursday 1st September 2022**
 - **RFI Response Deadline: 2pm, 15th September 2022**
5. If a response is not received by the RFI response deadline this will have no impact on your ability to tender for the opportunity in the future.

| Description of Scope of Requirements:

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation's health secure.

The Rapid Investigation Team (RIT) has a national remit across England to support the rapid investigation and response to disease outbreaks at their source, with the aim of limiting its impact and preventing further spread/harm. On-site outbreak investigation, including the collection of biological and environmental samples along with contextual qualitative and quantitative data are also within the RIT's remit.

Further detail of the pathogens that may require investigation and sampling are included within the Bacteriology reference department user manual¹: Virus reference department user manual², and Food Water and Environmental Microbiology reference manual³;

The RIT requires rapid biological and environmental sampling services (including domiciliary community sampling) that are readily available to support outbreak and incident investigation and response. These services are outsourced to relieve the pressure on internal clinical resources and to provide a more rapid and convenient service to the individuals identified as requiring sample collection across England.

The collection of biological samples is considered a public task under UKHSA's responsibility in responding to public health emergencies and does not require ethical approval from the Health Research Authority or other regulatory authority.

The aim of this request for information is to understand the markets' ability to meet the Authority's needs of this service and deliverables; to ensure that there is consistent and affordable provision of high quality, safe and compliant Sampling Services in England to support the response to communicable and non-communicable disease control.

¹ [Bacteriology Reference Department user manual \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642111/Bacteriology-Reference-Department-user-manual.pdf)

² [Virus reference department \(VRD\): user manual - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642111/Virus-reference-department-user-manual.pdf)

³ [Guidance on Public Health response: Involvement of PHE Food Water and Environmental Microbiology laboratory staff in the investigation of outbreaks of food or waterborne disease \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642111/Guidance-on-Public-Health-response-Involvement-of-PHE-Food-Water-and-Environmental-Microbiology-laboratory-staff-in-the-investigation-of-outbreaks-of-food-or-waterborne-disease.pdf)

| Questions:

Please set out the full suite of biological sampling services which your organisation offers and confirm that they cover all categories of pathogens as set out in the lists referenced above.	
Please set out the full suite of environmental sampling services which your organisation offers as set out in the list referenced above.	
Please confirm whether your organisation is registered with the Care Quality Commission.	
Please confirm whether your organisation operates in compliance with the International Air Transport Association Infectious Substance Shipping Regulations and UN3373.	
Please detail any government frameworks of which you are participant and where the scope of that framework addresses the aforementioned services.	
Please confirm any geographic limitations which you have for the provision of these services to provide a national coverage within England.	
Please could you confirm if you are able to provide services 7 days a week 0800-2000hrs?	
Please state whether you could also provide services outside of the operating hours in the previous question, where so required, in an emergency.	
Please confirm whether your service includes the provision of sampling kits, equipment, PPE, transportation and clinical waste disposal? If it does not, please confirm whether you'd be willing to provide anything presently excluded.	

Please confirm how you would price the provision of these services and provide any information relevant to your pricing structure.

Please provide any other information you believe would assist the Authority in achieving the objectives of this RFI.