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Expressions of Interest (EOI)

**Housing Ombudsman Website**

**Design/Development & Support**

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| Creation date: | November 2017 |
| Contract Reference: | HOS Website |

**Website Design/Development & Support**

**Background**

The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) is issuing this overview in support of a forthcoming procurement exercise to obtain technical capability to develop a new website for the organisation.

Having a fit for purpose website is essential to fulfilling our statutory role as set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme approved by the Secretary of State under the Housing Act 1996. There are two elements of our statutory role which are to:

* resolve disputes involving Members of the Scheme and
* support effective landlord-tenant dispute resolution by others.

Membership of the Scheme is compulsory for landlords who are registered providers and local housing authorities. There are also some voluntary members who are private, ‘for profit’ landlords. We have 2,471 landlords and 4.8million properties in our jurisdiction and we must make our service accessible for residents who have disputes with their landlord. Our website is a key part of that. Residents need to know what service we provide in resolving disputes and how to contact us and make complaints. This needs to be in an accessible, user friendly format otherwise it creates a barrier to using our service for potentially the most vulnerable in society.

For the second part of our statutory role, we need to support landlords in their dispute resolution role and the website plays a key part in providing the tools and guidance they need to improve their own complaint handling processes and to support learning from outcomes.

The website is also key to increasing our public accountability and transparency.

Our current web structure/technology is a block to effectively developing our website to achieve these without incurring significant development costs. More detail on this is set out in the Website Requirements document attached To see our current site please visit [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/).

**The requirement – an overview:**

We are therefore seeking an experienced web development company who has:

* successfully developed websites within the public sector (experience of providing this service within the not for profit sector would be useful)
* developed sites with clients where in-house technical expertise is unavailable
* experience of government security classifications and data assurance
* cyber security capability to manage IT threats where customers submit online web forms.

**Scope of engagement:**

The successful supplier will:

* Develop a website in an iterative build model based on our issued requirements (see attachment Website Requirements Version 1)
* Migrate identified documents from current site to new site
* Provide ongoing maintenance and support for the site, with developed capability to allow in-house content management
* Provide a secure hosted platform.

# Capabilities required of the supplier:

The successful supplier will be expected to:

* Develop the solution using open source software eg Drupal
* Deploy functionality in a manner that minimises security risk
* Create engaging and functional web flows.

**Future procurement & contractual information:**

The contract duration is for three years with support for the site provided by the supplier once the solution has gone live. It should be noted that HOS has a limited budget for website development at no more than £25,000 (excluding VAT). Support costs will be funded separately. If you are interested in bidding for the proposed procurement please email Rdcruz@housing-ombudsman.or.uk no later than **17:00 Thursday 30 November.**

Please note that while HOS is likely to issue tender documents in the near future to interested suppliers who have responded to this EOI, it has no obligation to do so as a result of the issuance of this notice.

Suppliers should also be aware that they must be registerd on <https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/emptoris> prior to any formal tender launch for this requirement. When responding to this EOI please provide details of your company name as registered on the Emptoris Portal.



**Website Requirements**

**Overview**

The Housing Ombudsman's current website, which has been in place since 2013, can be viewed at [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

The service is set up by law to look at complaints about the housing organisations that are registered with us. The service is free, independent and impartial. Our website, which is aimed at a varied audience, needs to provide easily accessible information in a helpful manner.

It is essential that our service is accessible for residents who have disputes with their landlord and our website is a key part of that. Residents need to know what service we provide in resolving disputes and how to contact us and make complaints. This needs to be in an accessible, user friendly format otherwise it creates a barrier to using our service.

A second part of our statutory role is to support landlords in their dispute resolution role. The website plays a key part in providing the tools and guidance they need to improve their complaint handling processes and to support learning from outcomes.

The website is also essential for increasing our public accountability and transparency with other audiences including advice agencies, housing professional bodies, resident organisations, government and parliament.

**Current website**

The current website is not fit for purpose as evidenced by feedback. Feedback from our web users via the online page rating has highlighted problems with accessibility. Users have commented that it is difficult to find the information they’re looking for, particularly the complaint form, and that the scrolling steps on the home page are difficult for many users and navigating the website is confusing.

The online complaint form does not enable users to upload documents or images for new cases or for existing cases.

Feedback from landlords shows that they expect to find more information on our website to support them in their dispute resolution role and have said that the current site is not very intuitive and not easy to follow. They would like access to more online support and guidance such as case studies and learning tools.

The site has a fixed structure and gives us very little control in-house to make changes, other than adding/amending text on static pages, without incurring costs from our web developer. It uses an out of date version of Umbraco.

The current home page is very specifically targeted at one audience group, namely residents. We want to continually improve access to our service which includes a more accessible website that is relevant to all of the target audiences shown below.

**Target audiences**

In redeveloping our website, the target audiences are:

* Residents - tenants and leaseholders of housing associations and local authority housing. As at 31/3/17 there were 4.8 million housing units covered by the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.
* Member landlords – compulsory members (housing associations and local housing authorities) plus some private landlords who are voluntary members. As at 31/3/17 there were 2,471 landlords in membership.
* Designated persons – tenant panels, MPs and local councillors – who have a role in dealing with disputes between landlords and their residents, and in referring complaints that have not been resolved through the landlord’s procedure to the Housing Ombudsman.
* External organisations including advice agencies such as Shelter, housing professional bodies, resident organisations and government.

**New website**

We want to rebuild the current site to make it fit for purpose, by working with a supplier who can provide an up-to- date interactive website, based on our existing branding, that appeals to the landlords, tenants/leaseholders and other audiences who interact with our services.

Our objectives are to:

* Improve understanding of our role – at all stages of our dispute resolution process – and how to access our service
* Increase use of online forms and to provide more efficient handling internally
* Improve the range and quality of tools and guidance for landlords on our website and make them more visible leading to increased use by landlords
* Increase our transparency and accountability with more information/data on performance and policies.

**System requirements**

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| --- | --- |
| CMS | Open source software; Wordpress or Drupal, source code optimised for minimal lagtime |
| Multiple device compatibility | Mobile / tablet friendly responsive design |
| Look and feel | Clean modern and accessible design. Meeting latest accessibility requirements |
| Webforms | Webform submissions (which will contain personal data) to be directly submitted via Workpro (case management system) API or emailed.No data to be stored on the web server. |
| Webform attachments | To accept all standard document formats  |
| Automated response messaging | Webform submission acknowledgements |
| User authentication  | Capability to authenticate user ID |
| Calendar events | Capability to present events calendar with links to external booking information  |
| In-house content management  | System to be designed permitting inhouse content amendment and update |
| Digital media | Capability to present embedded video and audio |
| Search capability | SEO enhanced - keywordWith fully indexed search facilities including date/subject filters where required |
| Migration of current content | Seamless migration of existing organisational content (such as annual reports, business plans) with no downtime |
| Webchat  | Capability to include webchat functionality if required |
| Spam and Bot protection | "Capture" or alternative functionality to be deployed  |
| Browsers | Needs to be fully functional on all browsers |
| Website usage | Ability to analyse site usage using Google Analytics or similar  |
| Security | Supplier to articulate how GDPR personal data protection should be met  |
| Look up lists | Webform look-up list information to be uploaded using Workpro API. |

**Hosting requirements**

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| Supplier hosted | To be hosted on large secure platform |
| Video  | To be hosted on video hosting platform  |
| Uptime SLA | Minimum of 99.5% availability |

**Service requirements**

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| Frequency of back up  | Weekly? |
| Time to fix  | Supplier to stipulate |
| Support hours | Supplier to stipulate |
| Supplier supported amendments | Supplier to stipulate change day rate |
| Regular maintenance and patching arrangements | Supplier to stipulate |

**Website sizing – potential website sitemap**

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| --- | --- |
| Objects | Description |
| Home page | * News/images/links/services/webforms/social media feeds
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| Webforms | * Mandatory input fields/validation/submission confirmation
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| Case studies | * Images/PDFs/jpgs. Searchable section including advanced search
 |
| News | * Press releases, news archive
 |
| Information pages | * Fact sheets/complaints data/search functions/print capability
 |
| Calendar | * Booking dates and contacts for external booking sites
 |
| Learning tools and guidance | * Guidance/reports/links to e-learning/webinars/ podcasts
 |
| Videos/podcasts | * Categories/libraries/feedback comments
 |
| Newsletters/Blogs | * Easy additions and most recent presented automatically. Enable individual users to sign up to receive
 |
| My account? | * If user authenticated?
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| Recruitment | * Including online applications
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| Directory  | * Searchable membership directory linked to Workpro
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**Training**

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| Implementation | Supplier to train inhouse site administrators  |
| Ongoing  | Supplier to provide day rate for any further training that may be required on a call off basis |