



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Invitation to Tender

Instructions to Potential Suppliers

Access to Work Holistic Assessment Contract

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Instructions to Potential Suppliers

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1. General Information

- 1.1 Please note that, unless otherwise indicated, references to the "Authority" or to "DWP" throughout these documents mean the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions acting as part of the Crown through his/her representatives in the Department for Work and Pensions. References to "Potential Supplier" mean any person or organisation responding or, where the context requires, potentially responding to this Invitation to Tender (ITT).
- 1.2 These instructions, together with the specification and all other information and documents to which they refer, are designed to ensure that all tenders are given equal and fair consideration. It is important, therefore, that you provide all the information required in the format and order specified.
- 1.3 Please read these instructions carefully because non-compliance may result in disqualification of your tender. You must ensure you have read the full invitation to tender package including the specification, background information and terms and conditions of contract.

2. Administration of the Procurement Process

- 2.1 The Authority is administering the procurement process electronically via the [DWP eProcurement Solution \(ePS\) Portal](#). No hard copy documents will be issued during the competition and all communications with the Authority (including final submission of tenders) will be conducted via the DWP eProcurement Portal.
- 2.2 To ensure all communications relating to this procurement are received the Potential Supplier must ensure that the point of contact it nominates in the DWP eProcurement Solution portal is up to date. The portal is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year unless notified otherwise by the DWP eProcurement Solution portal.
- 2.3 Support available to help you to understand and use the system includes:
- Freephone helpdesk (0800 368 4850), available Mon-Fri 8am to 6pm (UK time in English language only)
 - Helpdesk via email: help@bravosolution.co.uk
 - Help guides.
- 2.4 Potential Suppliers must ensure that their DWP eProcurement Solution registration directly relates to the part of the supplier organisation that submits the tender (some larger suppliers may have several subsidiaries so registration needs to apply to that part of organisation responsible for this particular requirement).
- 2.5 Where a consortium/Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is formed to submit a tender, the lead supplier is responsible for coordinating all the required information. See [specific guidance](#) and read the questions carefully.
- 2.6 Should you have any queries with accessing the portal, please contact DWP eProcurement Solution's dedicated supplier helpdesk by calling 0800 368 4850 or by emailing: help@bravosolution.co.uk.

Inputting Information

- 2.7 Use the online 'Help for Suppliers' function. The content is designed to explain the ePS Portal in business terms, allowing you to quickly understand the features and benefits of the software. Help for Suppliers content is presented by software module, and divided into process activities such as PQQs, ITTs and Auctions - just like the software itself.
- 2.8 Save progress regularly. For security reasons access to the portal will 'time out' if inactive (i.e. if you do not click 'save') for ~15 minutes. Failure to save regularly risks losing your work - this is part of strict government requirements to maintain security and tender integrity and cannot be changed. Note that typing does not mean you are active on the portal.
- 2.9 Please ensure that 'pop ups' are not blocked on your browser. Should you be inactive for ~15 minutes, the portal will notify you through a 'pop up'. It is vital that that you are able to see this in order to click the

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'Refresh' link in this 'pop up' so you are not disconnected from the portal and lose any unsaved information.

- 2.10 Please allow sufficient time to submit the response. We recommend allowing time for a final check to be undertaken prior to the submission deadline. It will not be possible to upload any further information after the submission deadline. IT problems within Potential Suppliers' systems will not be considered reasonable grounds for late submission. Do not leave your response until the last minutes/hours before the deadline. If you experience connection problems you may miss the deadline. Late tenders cannot be accepted. Always upload generic information early to avoid last minute time pressure.
- 2.11 Please submit your response when completed. Failure to do this will result in your bid not being visible to the buyer. The 'submit response' button is at the top centre of the screen.
- 2.12 If the Buyer makes any changes to the settings and questions area of a live/running tender, Potential Suppliers must re-publish their response - this is to ensure that changes are brought to your attention - you may receive a message prompt from the Buyer - generally this will not mean re-entering information.
- 2.13 Whilst the portal allows for large individual attachment sizes (max 50mb at a time), we recommend that you keep attachments to a manageable size to ensure ease & speed of access. Only attach documents that the Buyer has requested and make sure that you attach them in the correct area.
- 2.14 If you have any software queries refer to 'Help for Suppliers' in the first instance, if you still have an issue email or telephone the BravoSolution helpdesk with a tender reference, a clear description of the problem and your contact details (ensure that you leave plenty of time for issues to be resolved prior to any deadlines).
- 2.15 Do not use the 'Back' or 'Forward' buttons on your browser, you could potentially lose your work. Please use the links on the eTendering portal to navigate through the tenders.
- 2.16 To understand icons, use your mouse to 'hover' over the icon and view the 'ToolTip'. Please note that text responses are deliberately capped at 2000 characters (~350 words). If the Authority requires a longer response they will add an additional text box or an 'Attachment' question. Also note that Numeric fields will not accept text, spaces, symbols etc. Note the red asterisk indicates a mandatory field - this must be completed in order to submit your response to the buyer.
- 2.17 If you are delegating your response please ensure that your colleagues are aware of this information and are IT literate.

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- 2.18 Please treat your eTendering portal logins securely - if you believe that you have lost your password - please log onto the website and click onto "Forgotten your password?" and follow the instructions.
- 2.19 The Qualification Envelope (supplier selection and exclusion questions) holds information provided when the Potential Supplier registered on the DWP eProcurement Solution. The answers provided in that profile will automatically be used to pre-populate some parts of the qualification envelope. Potential Suppliers may update these answers and the new information will be saved against the organisation profile.
- 2.20 Where a question requires the upload of a document then that document must be completed in the format specified within the question. Files submitted in any other format will not be accepted. All acronyms and abbreviations, if used, must be fully explained.
- 2.21 Within the DWP eProcurement Portal Potential Suppliers are able to submit, modify and resubmit responses at any time prior to the submission deadline. Responses cannot be modified by Potential Suppliers after the submission deadline. Potential Suppliers must ensure they have only submitted a single response through the DWP eProcurement Portal.

3. Tender Submission Process

Background

- 3.1 The DWP eProcurement Portal relies on the completion of 3 envelopes which will contain all of the information the Authority requires to enable full evaluation to take place. All information should be uploaded as per instructions into the relevant envelopes on the DWP eProcurement Portal.
- Qualification Envelope – Is used for gathering information to qualify Potential Suppliers for further evaluation
 - Technical Envelope – Is used for gathering information to allow for full evaluation of the technical side of the proposal
 - Commercial Envelope – Is used to gather the Pricing Proposal

Tender Completion

- 3.2 The information or text contained within the ITT (including its Annexes) and your response, any variation of them and any formal interchange of correspondence or information will be incorporated into any subsequent contract/framework agreement that the Authority may enter into as a result of this ITT.
- 3.3 Responses must not exceed the pre-set margins and space allocation. In some cases the Authority may put a word limit on your response to some or all questions. These limits are provided in the Invitation to Tender document and any response in excess of these allocations will be disregarded and will not be taken into account. Please ensure that you

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answer every tender question fully, references to previous answers will not be accepted.

- 3.4 Therefore, bullets, tables, graphs and charts in support of your responses are all permitted. Responses must be presented using the English Language and using a black typeface. This includes instances where information may be tabulated as part of the response. The only exception permitted is for illustrative screen shots, graphs and charts, which should be presented within the allocated word limit for the question they are relevant to and must not be embedded separately as this information will be disregarded.
- 3.5 Tenders should be completed using standard software e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel or PDF. **Files submitted in Microsoft Project format and PDF will not be accepted.**
- 3.6 All acronyms and abbreviations, if used, must be fully explained.

Tender Submission Procedure

- 3.7 The ITT and any attachments have been specifically designed to be compatible with DWP e-tendering and e-evaluation requirements and must not, under any circumstance, be altered.
- 3.8 All Tenders must be submitted to DWP using DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal. Tenders submitted by any other means will not be accepted.
- 3.9 A Tender may be completed and submitted at any time before the tender submission deadline, using DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal. Instructions explaining how to submit and complete the Tender to DWP are located within the e-Sourcing Portal.
- 3.10 The Potential Supplier is responsible for ensuring that its Tender has been successfully completed and all information is uploaded to DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal prior to the tender submission deadline.
- 3.11 Please allow sufficient time to submit your Tender. It is recommended that the Potential Supplier allows time for a final check to be undertaken, prior to the submission deadline. It will not be possible for you to upload any further information after the tender submission deadline. IT problems within your own system will not be considered reasonable grounds for late submission. Late tenders will not be considered.
- 3.12 A Potential Supplier may modify and resubmit its Tender at any time, prior to the tender submission deadline. Tenders cannot be modified by Potential Suppliers after the tender submission deadline. Upon the tender submission deadline, the Potential Supplier must ensure that it has only submitted a single Tender through DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal.

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- 3.13 Financial information should be submitted in the format requested (usually MS Excel). Documents which have related financial information should be submitted in GBP (£). Instructions on DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal will clearly identify the format and where these documents should be uploaded.

Labelling your Tender Forms (File Names)

- 3.14 Potential Suppliers will be invited to submit responses to online questions and upload a suite of documentation that reflects the requirements of the ITT. It is vitally important that, when using DWP e-Procurement Solution Portal, Potential Suppliers correctly name any documents and attachments that are required to be uploaded as a response to questions within each of the envelopes.

Qualification Envelope

- 3.15 This envelope contains questions the Potential Supplier may have already answered in setting up their Organisation Profile and the answers to those questions will be used to pre-populate your response.
- 3.16 Potential Suppliers may change these answers so they differ from those saved in their Organisation Profile and save those new answers on their response. These answers will be applied back to their Organisation Profile when the ITT is evaluated by the Buyer.
- 3.17 Potential Suppliers may also supply different answers to these questions in other ITT's they submit. In this case the response saved to your Organisation Profile will always be the response which was most recently evaluated by the Buyer.
- 3.18 Where Potential Suppliers do not want to change any information they will be given a prompt to confirm that everything recorded is current and correct.
- 3.19 Where there is a requirement to upload documents within the envelope, the suggested format is as follows. Please note this is an example and your submission should reflect what is requested in ITT.

ITT Response required	How your response should be uploaded
Financial and Economic Standing (Regulation 58)	Contract title (i.e. supply of widgets), Financial & Economic Standing 2010/2011 accounts (before uploading your accounts you should label them 'Annex D') Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd) 2011/2012 accounts Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd)

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Technical Envelope

3.20 This envelope contains specific questions to which a response is required. It is this information which will enable DWP to carry out a qualitative evaluation of the proposal. Where there is a requirement to upload attachments to questions within this envelope the suggested format is as follows.

ITT Response required	How your response should be uploaded
Draft Security Plan Annex E – Draft Security Plan	Contract title (i.e. supply of widgets) Annex E - Draft Security Plan Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd)

Commercial Envelope

3.21 This envelope is where the Pricing Proposal should be uploaded. This information should be uploaded as follows.

ITT Response required	How your response should be uploaded
Pricing Proposal Commercial Envelope, Annex S – Pricing Proposal	Contract title (i.e. supply of widgets), Annex S – Pricing Proposal Company Name (i.e. ABC Ltd)

Procurement Timetable

3.22 Set out below is the proposed procurement timetable. This is intended as a **guide** and, whilst the Authority does not intend to depart significantly from it, there may be occasions, especially around obtaining Ministerial Approval, where the timetable will be subject to minor change.

Activity	Date
Publication of the Contract Notice	03/11/2016
Publication of the ITT	03/11/2016
Clarification window opens	08/11/2016
Clarification window closes	02/12/2016
Deadline for return of tenders	09/12/2016 10:00 Hours GMT
Evaluate tenders (including post tender clarification)	09/12/16 - 20/01/2017
Internal Governance Note: The following steps and associated dates are subject to change depending on the time taken to get approval	23/01/2017 - 22/03/2017
Intention to Award notification issued to successful	22/03/2017

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and unsuccessful tenderers	
Voluntary standstill period	23/03/2017- 03/04/2017
Contract Award	04/04/2017
Contract implementation period	05/04/2017 – 04/06/2017
Go Live	05/06/2017

Deadline for Submission of Tenders

- 3.23 All tenders must be received by the Authority by the tender submission deadline which is shown in the procurement timetable.
- 3.24 To ensure that all Potential Suppliers are treated fairly tenders received after the tender submission deadline will be rejected by the Authority.
- 3.25 A Potential Supplier may withdraw from this procurement by choosing not to submit a tender by the tender submission deadline. It would be useful to the Authority if you can advise us in advance that you will not be submitting a proposal and if possible, the reasons behind your decision.

Additional Materials, Documents and Attachments

- 3.26 No additional documentation should be submitted with a tender unless specifically requested by the Authority.
- 3.27 Information that forms part of general company literature or promotional brochures will not form part of the evaluation process and should not be submitted.
- 3.28 The tender should not contain any inserted, pasted or embedded pictures or documents (image files, Adobe Acrobat documents or other Word documents) unless specifically requested by the Authority.
- 3.29 Any additional documents requested by the Authority must be clearly referenced within the body of the tender using a unique, un-ambiguous and relevant file name. They must be saved using MS Word (in Web Page, filtered format only), MS Excel, MS Power Point, Adobe Acrobat or jpeg formats. No other file formats should be used.

4. Conditions Applying to this Tender

Route to Market

- 4.1 This procurement falls under Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“Regulations”) under the Health, Social and Related Services category) and therefore the “light touch regime” shall apply to this procurement, which means that the procurement is not subject to the full application of the Regulations and will be conducted in accordance with Regulations 74 to 76 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 using a procedure similar to the open procedure and incorporating a voluntary standstill period.

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- 4.2 It is the Authority's intention that this procurement exercise will comply with the overriding EU Procurement Directive principles for open and transparent competition to ensure value for money.

Authority's Terms and Conditions

- 4.3 The successful tenderers will be required to enter into the contract on the basis of the terms and conditions issued with this ITT. Potential Suppliers are not permitted to submit their own terms and conditions.

Costs and Expenses

- 4.4 Potential Suppliers are not entitled to claim from the Authority any costs or expenses which may be incurred in preparing and/or submitting a tender.
- 4.5 This applies whether or not the supplier or any other organisation is successful and also applies to any additional cost a Potential Supplier may incur if the Authority modifies or amends its requirements or if the Authority cancels this procurement for whatever reason.

Confidentiality

- 4.6 All information supplied by the Authority to Potential Suppliers must be treated in confidence (unless already in the public domain) and must not be disclosed to third parties other than as is necessary for the purposes of preparing a response and for obtaining sureties or quotations for the purpose of submitting this tender. All information supplied by Potential Suppliers to the Authority will similarly be treated in confidence except:
- I. For the disclosure of such information with regard to the outcome of the procurement process as may be required to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union in accordance with EU Directives or elsewhere in accordance with the requirements of UK government policy on the disclosure of information relating to government contracts
 - II. That as part of the debriefing process we will inform any eliminated tenderer, who has made an admissible tender, of the characteristics and relative advantages of the successful tender(s), as well as, where appropriate, the qualitative evaluation score(s) achieved by and name(s) of the successful tenderer(s)
 - III. In pursuance of the Authority's statutory obligations under the [Freedom of Information Act](#) 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations or the UK Government's requirements on transparency or in accordance with any other legal requirement. Even where it is indicated that information supplied is commercially sensitive the Authority may be required to disclose it. Material marked 'confidential' or similar does not mean the Authority accepts any duty of confidence

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IV. References may be sought from banks, existing or past clients, or other referees submitted by the tenderer. The Authority confirms that it will keep confidential any information obtained from referees other than to Crown Commercial Service and/or any contracting authorities as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

4.7 The Authority is subject to general control and reporting within Government and reports to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement - including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

4.8 For the purposes mentioned above, the Authority may disclose within Government any of the Potential Supplier's documentation/information (including any that the Potential Supplier considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive, such as specific bid information) submitted by the Potential Supplier to the Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government except as specified in paragraph 4.6 above.

Contract Period

4.9 The contract will be for the period commencing on **05th June 2017** to **04th June 2021**, with provision to extend the contract for a further maximum period of two (2) years or unless terminated earlier by the Authority in accordance with the terms of the contract.

Amendments to the Tender Process or Tender Documents by the Authority

4.10 The Authority reserves the right to vary the tender process and/or amend the tender documents (including this ITT Instructions to Potential Suppliers document) at any time prior to the deadline for receipt of tenders. Any such amendment will be numbered, dated and issued by the Authority via the DWP eProcurement Portal. Where amendments are significant, the Authority may at its discretion extend the deadline for receipt of tenders.

4.11 The Authority reserves the right to discontinue this tendering process at any time and not to award a contract.

Potential Supplier Clarification

4.12 Potential Suppliers have the opportunity to ask questions about the ITT and request clarification about the requirement. All questions raised must be submitted via the [DWP eProcurement Solution Portal and within the specified clarification period](#).

4.13 The clarification responses will be published on the DWP eProcurement Portal and will be updated regularly. It will be the responsibility of the Potential Supplier to monitor the portal for the latest activity.

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- 4.14 The last date for the submission of questions along with the date of the publication of the final clarification responses on the DWP eProcurement Portal is shown in the [procurement timetable](#). This allows sufficient time for Potential Suppliers to impact this information before finalising their tenders for submission.
- 4.15 If a question is deemed by a Potential Supplier to be commercially confidential, then they should indicate that they believe this is the case. The Authority will consider this and if in agreement, will exercise due discretion in handling the question and limiting the circulation of the clarification response(s) to your organisation.
- 4.16 Questions not deemed to be commercially confidential will be considered by the Authority to be of significance to all Potential Suppliers. All questions and clarification responses will be made anonymous and made available to all Potential Suppliers via the [DWP eProcurement Solution Portal](#). If the Authority intends to follow this course of action it will inform you before sharing the question and clarification response.

Acceptance and Return of Tenders

- 4.17 By issuing the ITT the Authority is not bound in any way and does not have to accept any tender.
- 4.18 The tender, comprising the information set out in the ITT must be completed and submitted in its entirety to the DWP eProcurement Portal by the stipulated deadline.
- 4.19 Tenders will undergo an initial compliance check to ensure that all information requested has been received. Tenders will be rejected if the complete information requested is not included as part of the tender documentation.

Period for which Tenders shall Remain Valid

- 4.20 Tenders shall remain valid and capable of acceptance for 180 days from the day immediately following the closing date for receipt of tenders.

Variant Proposals

- 4.21 Variant proposals will not be accepted.

Welsh Language

- 4.22 Where appropriate Potential Suppliers should be aware that if the contract delivers a service to members of the public in Wales then the Potential Supplier must comply with and fully understand their contractual obligations regarding the DWP Welsh Language Scheme. Full details can be found in the Welsh Language Scheme Contract Schedule and further details found by accessing '[A guide for DWP Contractors when delivering services to DWP customers in Wales](#)' .

5. Supplier Selection and Exclusion – The Qualification Envelope

Principles

5.1 The supplier selection and exclusion questions assess the suitability of a Potential Supplier to deliver the Authority's requirement. If you are successful at this stage of the procurement process, your bid will be evaluated in the subsequent award stage of the process.

5.2 Potential Suppliers should note that, in order to ensure compliance with Regulation 57 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Authority may take account of information in the public domain in addition to information provided in the bid. The Authority will contact the Potential Supplier to clarify such information.

Verification of Information Provided

5.3 Whilst reserving the right to request information at any time throughout the procurement process, the Authority will allow Potential Suppliers to self-certify whether there are any mandatory / discretionary grounds for excluding their organisation.

Supplier Information

5.4 This section is used to gather the necessary details to understand the nature of the organisation and legal entity participating in the procurement exercise. This section is not scored.

Bidding Model

5.5 This section is used to gather information to allow the Authority to understand the nature of the Potential Supplier's proposed supply chain.

Sub-contractors

5.6 Where the Potential Supplier proposes to use one or more sub-contractors to deliver some or all of the contract requirements full details of each sub-contractor must be provided, including members of the supply chain, the percentage of work being delivered by each sub-contractor and the key contract deliverables each sub-contractor will be responsible for.

5.7 The Authority recognises that arrangements in relation to sub-contracting may be subject to future change, and may not be finalised until a later date. However, Potential Suppliers should be aware that where information provided to the Authority indicates that sub-contractors are to play a significant role in delivering key contract requirements, any changes to those sub-contracting arrangements may affect the ability of the Potential Supplier to meet the requirement. Potential Suppliers should therefore notify the Authority immediately of any change in the proposed sub-contractor arrangements. The Authority reserves the right to deselect the Potential Supplier prior to any award of contract, based on an assessment of the updated information.

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- 5.8 A Potential Supplier's tender must clearly identify in response to any question, when it is relying on a sub-contractor, the name of the particular sub-contractor and explain the sub-contractor's capability and experience as the context of the question requires.
- 5.9 The Authority does not require all sub-contractors be disclosed. It only requires a Potential Supplier to disclose those sub-contractors who directly contribute to the Potential Supplier's ability to meet its obligations under the contract. There is no need to specify those sub-contractors providing general services to the Potential Supplier (such as window cleaners, lawyers, desktop software providers etc) that indirectly enable the Potential Supplier to perform the contract. For example if the Authority requires a Potential Supplier to hold a particular licence – then the Potential Supplier may indicate that 'XYZ Co' holds the licence and indicate that services covered by the scope of this licence will only be performed by its sub-contractor 'XYZ Co'.

Consortia arrangements

- 5.10 All members of the consortium will be required to provide the information required in **all** sections of the selection and exclusion questions. The consortium lead completes the questions on the eProcurement Portal with regard to their own organisation. They are responsible for coordinating and submitting one Annex C – Supplier Selection for Consortium Members for each member of the consortium and one Annex D – Consortium Arrangements.
- 5.11 Where you are proposing to create a separate legal entity, such as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), you should provide details of the actual or proposed percentage shareholding of the constituent members within the new legal entity in a separate Appendix.
- 5.12 The Authority recognises that arrangements in relation to consortia may be subject to future change. Potential Suppliers should therefore respond on the basis of the arrangements as currently envisaged. Potential Suppliers are reminded that the Authority must be immediately notified of any changes, or proposed changes, in relation to the bidding model so that a further assessment can be carried out by applying the selection criteria to the new information provided. The Authority reserves the right to deselect the Potential Supplier prior to any award of contract, based on an assessment of the updated information.

Contact Details

- 5.13 You must provide full details of a contact for the Authority to use in relation to this procurement. The contact should be able to answer questions regarding the bid and act on behalf of the Potential Supplier. This section is not scored.

Grounds for Mandatory Exclusion

- 5.15 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This section is used to establish whether there is any reason that the Potential Supplier

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should not be allowed to continue to participate in the procurement. If you answer 'yes' to one of these questions, indicating that your organisation meets one of the grounds for mandatory exclusion, you will not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can demonstrate adequate ['self-cleaning'](#).

Non-payment of Taxes

- 5.16 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This is an additional ground for mandatory exclusion. If you answer 'yes' to this question you will not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can demonstrate adequate ['self-cleaning'](#).

Grounds for Discretionary Exclusion – Part 1

- 5.17 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who answers 'yes' to one of these questions. You may not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can demonstrate adequate ['self-cleaning'](#).

Conflicts of Interest

- 5.18 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This is an additional ground for discretionary exclusion. You must identify any potential conflict of interest and provide full details on Annex B including how the conflict of interest might be effectively remedied. If the Authority considers the integrity of the competition is compromised by a conflict of interest you will not be allowed to participate further. The Authority will contact you to discuss further where a potential conflict of interest is identified.

Self-Cleaning

- 5.19 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This section allows Potential Suppliers to provide further information where they have answered 'yes' to any of the grounds for mandatory rejection, including non-payment of taxes, or grounds for discretionary rejection.
- 5.20 Potential Suppliers should use Annex E to this ITT to explain in detail how they have addressed the issue(s) (identified by a 'yes' answer). The Authority will consider whether the 'self-cleaning' adequately addresses the risk to reliability exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Grounds for Discretionary Exclusion – Part 2

- 5.21 Refer to the additional notes provided on the ePS Portal. This section covers the Potential Supplier's history of tax compliance. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who answers 'yes' to one of these questions. The Potential Supplier has the opportunity to provide details of mitigating factors. The Authority will consider whether the mitigation adequately addresses the risk exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Economic and Financial Standing

- 5.22 The Potential Supplier should provide the information requested to demonstrate its economic/financial standing.

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5.23 Potential Suppliers should provide one of the following;

- A copy of the audited accounts for the most recent two (2) years;
- A Statement of Turnover, profit and loss account, current liabilities and assets and cash flow for the most recent year of trading;
- A statement of cash flow forecast for the current year and a bank letter outlining the current cash and credit position;
- Alternative means of demonstrating financial status if any of the above are not available (e.g. Forecast of turnover for the current year and a statement of funding provided by the owners and / or the bank, charity accruals or an alternative means of demonstrating financial status)

5.24 The Financial Standing will be based on the information provided and subject to financial risk assessment. Further information can be found in the Financial Evaluation Methodology which forms part of this ITT.

Insurance

5.25 This section allows you to self-certify that you have or will have adequate insurance as required by the Authority for the delivery of the contract as specified in Section 1.5 (Insurance). You will not be allowed to participate further in the procurement unless you can meet the insurance requirements.

Compliance with Equality Legislation

5.26 This section covers the Potential Supplier's history of compliance with equality legislation. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who has been found to have acted in a discriminatory way in the past three (3) years. The Potential Supplier has the opportunity to provide details of mitigating factors. The Authority will consider whether the mitigation adequately addresses the risk exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Environmental Management

5.27 This section covers the Potential Supplier's history of compliance with environmental legislation. The Authority can choose to exclude a Potential Supplier who has been found to have breached environmental legislation in the past three (3) years. The Potential Supplier has the opportunity to provide details of mitigating factors. The Authority will consider whether the mitigation adequately addresses the risk exposed by the 'yes' answer.

Health and Safety

5.28 This section allows the Potential Suppliers to self-certify that they have an adequate health and safety policy. UK employers with less than five (5) employees are not required by law to have a health and safety policy and will not be excluded for this reason.

Confirmation and Declaration

- 5.29 The final section of Supplier Selection and Exclusion – the **Qualification Envelope**, is a declaration against the information provided. This must be completed by a person with authority to act on behalf of the Potential Supplier. This section also serves as a checkpoint for Potential Suppliers to confirm that they have provided all the information, including additional Annexes, required so far.

6. Tender Evaluation – The Technical Envelope

Principles

- 6.1 The tender evaluation questions assess the Potential Supplier’s proposal to deliver the authority’s requirement. This information enables the Authority to carry out a qualitative evaluation of the tender.
- 6.2 The information provided in the tender proposal will be evaluated against the pre-determined Award Criteria as stated in this Invitation to Tender document.
- 6.3 The DWP ePS Portal asks Potential Suppliers to submit responses which directly correspond with the Award Criteria. The overarching Award Criteria will be made up of sub-criteria by which the Award Criteria will be evaluated.

Qualitative Scoring Methodology

- 6.4 The contract will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender with a split of 60% quality and 40% price. The qualitative responses to technical questions will be scored using the scoring scheme below and the [weightings](#) set out in paragraph 6.14.

Score	Rating	Description
25	Outstanding	An outstanding proposal which demonstrates that the supplier has an exceptional and in depth understanding and demonstrates that the proposal will deliver DWP’s requirements as well as delivering significant added value and continuous improvement in relation to the services. Exceptional supporting information is provided which demonstrates outstanding and relevant experience of the suppliers understanding and the delivererability of the overall proposal.
16	Good	A strong proposal which demonstrates that the supplier has a good understanding of DWP’s requirements and demonstrates that the proposal will deliver DWP’s requirements in relation to the services. The proposal will deliver added value. Strong supporting information is provided which demonstrates good and relevant evidence of the supplier

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		understanding and the deliverability of the overall proposal.
9	Meet the Requirement	The proposal demonstrates that the supplier understands and will deliver DWP's requirements in relation to the services. Satisfactory supporting information is provided to evidence understanding and deliverability of the proposal.
4	Poor	There is some supporting information provided to evidence understanding and/or deliverability of the proposal. However, there are some weaknesses in the supplier's understanding of DWP's requirements and/or there are reservations about whether the proposals will deliver DWP's requirements in relation to the services.
0	Unacceptable	The proposal does not demonstrate that the supplier understands DWP's requirements and/or does not demonstrate that it will deliver DWP's requirements in relation to the services. There is little or no supporting information provided to evidence understanding and/or deliverability of the proposal.

Draft Security Plan

- 6.5 Cabinet Office has introduced mandatory requirements relating to data handling, security and information assurance in government contracts. Information must be protected, together with systems, equipment and processes which support its use. Our contractors must provide an appropriate level of security.
- 6.6 Potential Suppliers (whether for a contract) are required to submit a Draft Security Plan detailing how you will comply with the DWP Security Policy for Contractors, which includes compliance with ISO/IEC27001 and Cyber Essentials Scheme. A copy of this document can be found on ['Gov UK - Other DWP procurement and policy documents'](#) and full guidance is provided in the relevant document and in Schedule 6 of the terms and conditions of contract. A full Security Plan will be due twenty (20) days after contract award.

Offshoring (including Landed Resources)

- 6.7 In accordance with the DWP Offshoring Policy, prior written consent from DWP must be sought where Potential Suppliers (and/or their sub-contractors) are proposing to host or access Departmental systems, services or official information outside of the United Kingdom, or to bring foreign nationals to the United Kingdom to provide services in delivery of the Contract.

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- 6.8 Potential Suppliers must be aware of this and must submit an application for approval together with their tender. Where DWP gives consent, the Potential Supplier shall comply with any reasonable instructions notified to it by DWP in relation to the Authority Data in question. More information can be found in the document A Guide to DWP Offshoring Policy which can be found on ['Gov UK - Other DWP procurement and policy documents'](#).

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE)

- 6.9 Your attention is drawn to the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended (TUPE). It is the Authority's view that TUPE is likely to be applicable if this ITT results in a Contract being placed. Nevertheless, it is your responsibility to consider whether or not TUPE applies in the individual circumstances of your tender, particularly if you are proposing to submit an innovative tender, seeking your own legal advice. Information has been provided in:
- Annex H – TUPE Employee Liability Information
- 6.10 If you have a contrary view to that of the Authority on the applicability of TUPE, it would be helpful if you would advise the Authority using Annex G, giving the reasons no later than one (1) week prior to the tender return date.

Qualitative Evaluation, Questions and Weightings (60%)

- 6.11 The information below provides information about the technical questions and associated weightings in priority order. Word limits have been provided for each question. If Potential Suppliers exceed these limits, only the response within these page limits will be assessed; the remainder of the answer will be disregarded.
- 6.12 Potential Suppliers should note that the questions form part of the electronic Invitation to Tender document accessed in BravoSolutions. Please ensure that you also attach any additional required appendices to support your responses, making sure you do not exceed the stipulated word count for each question.
- 6.13 Economic operators forming consortia should refer to the relevant sections of the Instructions to Potential Suppliers.
- 6.14 Potential Supplier responses will be scored using the scoring methodology described in paragraph 6.4 of this document. Weightings are shown below.

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Award Criterion	Technical Evaluation Criteria	Weighting (%)
1	Delivery (24%)	
	1.1 - Delivery Model	10
	1.2 - Holistic Assessment	9
	1.3 - National Coverage	5
2	Key performance Indicators (6%)	
	2.1 - Performance	6
3	Staffing (18%)	
	3.1 - Structure	9
	3.2 - Recruitment and Selection	9
4	Management of Service (6%)	
	4.1 - Administration Systems	2
	4.2 - Quality Control processes and Continuous Improvement	4
5	Implementation (6%)	
	5.1 Implementation Plan	6
Total		60

- 6.15 **The Authority will reject any Tender where a response to question PF1 or PF2 is “No”**
- 6.16 **The Authority will reject any Tender where a response to a technical question attracts a score of zero (0).**
- 6.17 Qualitative scoring comprises 60% of the overall evaluation. Responses will be scored against each Award Criteria. Scores will be calculated using the formula: $\text{Score}/25 \times \text{Weighting}$.

Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004

- 6.18 The Authority is committed to open government and to meeting its legal responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. All information submitted to the Authority may need to be disclosed by the Authority in response to a request under the Act. If you consider that any of the information included in your tender is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity.

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- 6.19 You should be aware that even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive, the Authority may be required to disclose it under the terms of the Act if a request is received. Please note that the receipt of material marked 'confidential' or equivalent by the Authority should not be taken to mean that the Authority accepts any duty of confidence by virtue of that marking. If a request is received, the Authority may also be required to disclose details to unsuccessful tenderers.

Confirmation and Declaration

- 6.20 The final section of Tender Evaluation – The Technical Envelope, is a declaration against the information provided. This must be completed by a person with authority to act on behalf of the Potential Supplier. This section also serves as a checkpoint for Potential Suppliers to confirm that they have provided all the information, including additional Annexes, required so far.

7. Pricing Proposal – The Commercial Envelope (40%)

- 7.1 This envelope is where your Pricing Proposal must be uploaded. The following pricing document should be uploaded;

- **Annex S (v2) – Pricing Proposal**

- 7.2 The pricing proposal will be scored using the methodology described in paragraph 7.3. The sum evaluated will be the total contract price tendered.
- 7.3 The following formula will be used to calculate Potential Suppliers Commercial score;

Lowest Bid/Bid x 40

A worked example is shown below;

Potential Supplier	Pricing Schedule Contract Price £	Calculation	Commercial Score
A	4,000 (lowest bid)	$(4,000/4,000) \times 40$	40.0
B	4,400	$(4,000/4,400) \times 40$	36.4
C	5,200	$(4,000/5,200) \times 40$	30.8
D	6,000	$(4,000/6,000) \times 40$	26.7

8. Overall Score

- 8.1 Overall scores will be calculated by adding Qualitative scores to the Financial score. See the example below:

Potential Supplier	Qualitative Score	Financial Score	Overall Score - Out of a maximum score of 100
A	45.6	40	85.6
B	33.5	36.4	69.9
C	28.1	30.8	58.9
D	34	26.7	60.7

Note: Scores for illustrative purposes only, we will be working to all decimal places.

9. Baseline Security Standard

- 9.1 Where contractors staff are to be given access to Authority's assets (defined as premises, systems, information or data) the attention of Potential Suppliers is drawn to their contractual obligation. Full details of the actions required to comply with the above procedures, can be found in the guidance document 'HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard – A Guide for DWP Contractors'. A PDF version of this document can be viewed on gov.uk.

10. Merlin Standard

- 10.1 Potential Suppliers need to be aware that they must attain the Merlin Standard, if not already held, where they have a supply chain within their delivery model for this contract. Potential Suppliers will be assessed against the Merlin Standard by a third party organisation within a year of the contract go live and they must achieve accreditation within one (1) year and every two (2) years thereafter.
- 10.2 For further information on the Merlin Standard, please see:

<http://www.merlinstandard.co.uk/>
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/merlin-standard.pdf>; and
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/sub-contracting-merlin-guidance.pdf>

11. Tender Clarification

- 11.1 DWP may need to clarify details of your tender and in those instances DWP will send any questions using the DWP eProcurement Portal to the named person (by email) that is registered on the system, who should arrange for a reply to be provided by the stipulated deadline.
- 11.2 DWP may seek independent financial and market advice to validate information declared, or to assist in the evaluation.

12. Contract Award

Parent Company Guarantee (PCG)

- 12.1 If your company has a parent company and should you be deemed successful in tendering for this contract, then DWP will require a signed Parent Company Guarantee (PCG) to be in place prior to any contract(s) being signed.
- 12.2 The PCG is not negotiable however there may be exceptional circumstances where the wording needs to be amended or an equivalent deed of guarantee supplied. These may include Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), consortia and organisations that have parent companies based abroad.
- 12.3 If the parent company is a charity, the Authority would need to understand whether there is anything in the provisions of the charity's constitution that prevents them from being able to offer a PCG. In these circumstances the Authority may require an alternative guarantor.

Ranking Tenders – Recommendation for Contract Award

- 12.4 The tender process has been designed to ensure that tenders are evaluated fairly to ascertain the most economically advantageous tender and once the qualitative and financial aspects have been evaluated the Authority will produce a ranked merit list based on this tender process.
- 12.5 The Potential Suppliers, that attract the highest two overall scores from the evaluation process, taking into account the Award Criteria weightings, will be recommended for contract award.
- 12.6 Before any contract can be entered into the Authority is mandated to seek and obtain Independent Approval, Ministerial Approval and possibly Crown Representative Approval.

13. Independent Approval

- 13.1 The results of the Qualitative and Price Evaluation Process (resultant rankings along with the marks awarded) will be independently checked and verified by individual(s) not previously involved in the procurement process.
- 13.2 Subject to this Independent Approval the Department will then seek Ministerial Approval before an award of contract can be made.

14. Ministerial Approval

- 14.1 The final decision to award will be subject to Ministerial Approval. No communication of any details regardless of whether a tenderer has been successful or otherwise will be issued until this approval has been granted and authorised by the Minister concerned. Once this approval has been communicated to the procurement team they will have

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responsibility for the issue of the appropriate successful/unsuccessful letters to all those suppliers that submitted a response to the ITT.

15. Standstill Period

- 15.1 As this procurement falls under Schedule 3 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Authority intends to hold a voluntary standstill period. This is a 10 calendar day pause between contract award decision and the formal award of the contract.

16. Publication of Contract Award on Contracts Finder

- 16.1 The details of this contract will be published on Contracts Finder. Irrespective of whether or not publication of a Contract Award Notice in OJEU is required, details of all contracts awarded with a value greater than £10,000 are required to be published on the Contracts Finder website. Details will be published after twenty (20) days following the end of the standstill period or after twenty (20) days from the award of contract where no standstill applies.

17. Post Contract Award

Contract Documentation

- 17.1 The Authority will be responsible for producing a final contract document and issuing it to the successful supplier(s).

Sustainable Development

- 17.2 In accordance with the Sustainable Development Contract Schedule the successful supplier is required to complete and provide a policy statement (within six (6) months of contract (or call-off) start date and annually thereafter) to demonstrate how they will satisfy and adhere to the principles of sustainable development. Also at the six (6) month stage after commencement of the contract, the successful supplier will need to produce an Sustainable Development Action Plan detailing (but not limited to) how they will tackle key issues such as waste minimisation, water consumption reduction and carbon emissions within their business and in relation to this contract.

Life Chances

- 17.3 In accordance with the Life Chances Contract Schedule the successful supplier is required to complete and provide a Life Chances Workforce Monitoring Template and Diversity and Equality Delivery Plan (within six (6) months of contract start date and annually thereafter) detailing their approach to Diversity and Equality within their business and in relation to this contract.

“Life Chances through Procurement Guidance for DWP Contractors” can be found on Gov.uk:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/530435/life-chances-through-procurement-guidance-for-dwp-contractors.pdf

18. Use of SMEs in the Contractor's Supply Chain

- 18.1 The Authority recognises the important role small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have in helping to deliver economic growth and prosperity. SMEs are defined as enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. The Authority is committed to supporting the government's target of government spending with third party suppliers to go to SMEs through either direct spend or indirectly through the supply chain where it is relevant to the contractual requirement to do so and provides value for money.
- 18.2 In support of the government's commitment on SMEs, the Authority is putting in place processes to promote greater engagement with SMEs. The Authority encourages its suppliers to make their sub-contracting opportunities accessible to smaller companies and implement SME-friendly policies in their supply-chains.
- 18.3 The Contractor is encouraged to:
- Open opportunities for SMEs in supply chains by splitting requirements into smaller elements to make them more attractive to the SME market whilst bringing innovation, flexibility and value for money
 - Advertise any sub-contracting opportunities where appropriate and economical to do so, for example by using Contracts Finder or informing local networks/partners
 - Where possible pay SMEs earlier than the contractual requirement of 30 days from receipt of valid invoice
 - Work with SMEs throughout the life of the contract to develop innovative and cost effective solutions delivered through the supply chain.
- 18.4 Regular contract review meetings should be used to enable both parties to explore continued and increased use of SMEs where appropriate throughout the life of the contract. Additional information may be requested by the Authority on the volume of business undertaken throughout the supply chain with SMEs.

Expenditure with SMEs

- 18.5 The Authority is required to provide regular reports on the level of procurement spend with SMEs to the Cabinet Office. To measure and accurately report on this, the Contractor and where applicable, its sub-contractors shall identify the volume of indirect expenditure the Authority

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undertakes with SMEs and shall provide this information on a quarterly basis to the Authority or Cabinet Office.

19. DWP Complaints Procedure

- 19.1 The Authority has published a [Commercial Complaints Process](#) for use during competitive procurement.