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| **Social Work Fast Track Tender****1282****Supplier Day Surgery Sessions - Questions and Answers** |
|  | **Question** | **Answer** |
| **1** | How will you assess cost against the criteria? How will you measure cost as well as the value for money requirement? | We will look at whole life of the contract cost, and what the Department will get for that cost. See the ITT requirement 3 for what the department is looking for. The assessment will be against the requirements requested. You are reminded to detail a full breakdown of costs as the panel can only assess what is presented in the bid. |
| **2** | How will you assess on a like for like basis both suppliers that do and don’t include VAT? | We will be assessing against the cost criteria as stated in the requirement and would remove VAT costs for the evaluation, but whole life costs to department would be the main consideration. We are scoring bids against the criteria. |
| **3** | How will you obtain evidence to meet satisfaction KPIs? | DfE will get regular updates on performance. The ways this will be obtained are to be decided with the successful bidder. |
| **4** | What course of action would you adopt in the event that there is no single winning tender? | There will be an award decision following and evaluation moderation meeting. |
| **5** | Can the successful bidder continue to collect data on participants following the end of the contract? | Among other things, this involves considering the ownership of personal data. We would seek legal advice once a successful bidder has been identified. |
| **6** | Who owns existing IPR material when the contract ends?Do we have to buy back IPR licences if rights are transferred to the DfE? | Intellectual Property Rights or IPR is a term that covers rights to patents, trademarks, design rights, copyright, trade or business names, and databases. An organisation’s IPR that is vested in the organisation before it starts a DfE programme or project remains vested with the organisation. Any IPR resulting from the programme or project which is publicly funded would be vested in the Crown and any existing IPR developed further through the programme or project and supported by project funding would be vested in the Crown. Usually a licence to use crown IPR is given free to those who want it.  |
| **7** |
| **8** | Is the programme a fixed priced contract or will costs be paid in arrears? | We intend to pay for what is spent, normally in arrears. |
| **9** | Is it permitted to include a profit in the cost? | If you intend to factor in a profit margin, please outline this clearly in your in bid. |
| **10** | Do fixed costs – such as laptops - now fall outside of Cabinet Office Efficiency Controls? | It’s our current understanding that laptops fall outside Cabinet Office Efficiency Controls. Cabinet Office makes definitive judgments on these matters and suppliers should consult the guidance at [**https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-controls/cabinet-office-controls-guidance-version-40**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-controls/cabinet-office-controls-guidance-version-40)when costing their proposals.  |
| **11** | Do you have a set target price for the contract? | No. |
| **12** | Is the training bursary provided by the supplier? | Yes – we would expect to see that in costing breakdown. The value is for the bidder to determine and justify. |
| **13** | What do you mean by receiving a training bursary in year 1 and a salary in year 2? | Year 1 is the pre-qualification period. Until students qualify they will receive a bursary. From qualification (14 months) they will receive a salary from LAs. |
| **14** | Does the local authority cover employment costs post qualification? | We would expect the Local Authority to cover employment costs post qualification. The bursary can be charged to the contract and covers the period to qualification (no more than 14 months). |
| **15** |  What is the incentive for the local authorities not to offer only a 1 year contract? | Any bidder would have to work out a structure that meets our expectations of high quality and low attrition rates.  |
| **16** | Would the contract cover costs in the pre-recruitment phase of the first financial year?  | Yes –the funding covers the start-up phase. Costs need to fall within the specification. |
| **17** | Once the 14 month period is completed, are local authorities financially responsible for the trainees? | Following qualification, we would expect participants to employed and paid by the local authority. |
| **18** | Are these bursaries additional to those bursaries already in the system? | It is our understanding that programmes such as these are not eligible for DH Social work bursaries. |
| **19** | Are fee levels expected to be similar to existing programmes? | We cannot answer that – it is for the supplier to tell us costs. There will be an assessment of costs and value for money. |
| **20** | Is there expectation that candidates would pay fees towards this programme? | That is up to the supplier to determine. |
| **21** | Would current ESG funding be maintained during this scheme? | As long as the Education Support Grant remains as it is currently configured, it’s our understanding that the programme would be eligible. Bidders need to bear in mind that all government funding is subject to Spending Review outcomes. |
| **22** | Can you say more about how this fits in with DH funding? | Programmes such as these are not eligible for DH social work bursary funding. Bidders are encouraged to take this into consideration when building a breakdown of costs. |
| **23** | Is there flexibility in the contract to make it less of a contract for services with a lower degree of department control? | No. |
| **24** | Can you clarify what you mean by ‘in the first year’? | The first year of the programme. |
| **25** | What level of detail are you expecting in the bid?What is the level of detail you are expecting around the involvement of local authorities? | We are looking for what has been outlined in the ITT. Do not make any assumptions about what is known; the panel can only assess what is in the bid. The bidder must give the panel the best level of confidence that arrangements set out in the bid would be followed through to deliver our specified outputs. |
| **26** |
| **27** | What level of scope is there for discussion following the contract award? | We expect any bid to be detailed and convincing. Post-contract discussions will be about elaboration rather than variation. |
| **28** | Would any bidder have to demonstrate strong links with regional and partner agencies? | The bidder would need to give us confidence that they can deliver what they have set out to do in their bid. |
| **29** | Can I include letters of support in the bid? | You can include anything that gives us confidence in your capacity to deliver our specified outputs. |
| **30** | What are the penalties for not meeting the contract terms? | That is a discussion to be had between the department and the successful bidder. As an example, funding will be linked to achieving the KPIs |
| **31** | If we wanted to work with an HEI is it down to us to work together to submit a joint bid? | Yes |
| **32** | Is the tender deadline negotiable? | No. |
| **33** | Are we able to start developing partnerships without having them fully confirmed by the tender deadline?  | When assessing bids we need to be confident that the requirements of the ITT can be delivered. |
| **34** | In the ITT, why have you included particular social work theories, such as systemic practice, motivational interviewing and parenting interventions? | We are interested in the detail of what students will be learning and why. These are simply examples. |
| **35** | Would the contract run for three years from January, or in line with financial years? | The programme start date is to be negotiated with the successful supplier. We are expecting costs in the bid breakdown to be outlined in financial years. |
| **36** | Do you have a preference for a single contract? | This is a single contract for the entire ITT. |
| **37** | What are your expectations for trainees and graduates salaries immediately after the programme? | LAs would need to decide terms and conditions. We are looking for a supplier to say they can ensure 12 months employment post qualification. We are looking for strong candidates to enter and stay in the profession. |
| **38** | How do you define a statutory placement? | We define a statutory placement as one that: • take place in a local authority setting;• involve work on S17 and S47 cases (under the Children Act 1989);• involve work on delivering requirements of the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005;• require case records to be updated by the student, under appropriate supervision. |
| **39** | Are you able to give an indication of departmental expectations for level of MA take up? | That is for the bidder to identify. |
| **40** | Over development of the project (in the curriculum stage, for example), what level of involvement could we expect from the department in these stages? | That is to be discussed at point of award. It is for the bidder to outline what level of support they might expect. The bidder should also outline how they plan to develop the curriculum. |
| **41** | Could you clarify whether this tender is for a commissioning organisation/HEI provider? | It is up to the bidder to explain how they could meet the requirements. We will look for a supplier to develop a bid that meets the criteria to a high quality. This is an open tender, and we are looking for a supplier to deliver all of what is written in the ITT. |
| **42** | Could a consortium bid to deliver the entire contract? | Yes |
| **43** | Do you have a preferred model in place for the design of the programme? | It is up for the bidder to propose a design. The qualifying programme must comply with HCPC requirements. |
| **44** | Are you open to variations in start date? (September 2017 instead of summer 2017) | ‘Summer’ indicates a level of flexibility. The exact start date of the programme will be discussed with the successful bidder. |
| **45** | Is the expectation that students linked with local authorities will undertake their placement there? | That is for the bidder to determine. |
| **46** | What are expectations of candidate quality? | That is for the bidder to determine what is appropriate. |
| **47** | Are you letting this contract in lots or through a single tender? | Through a single tender. |
| **48** | Given the short timescale, and that the emphasis is on preparing students through work-based training, is there less emphasis on theoretical academic elements? | It is for the bidder to design the programme. |
| **49** | Does the specification putting the practical element in the first half of training go against recent research? | It is for the bidder to design a programme that meets the requirements in the ITT. |
| **50** | Can we have a collaboration of universities? | This is an open tender for a single contract. We would expect the bid to give us confidence about any collaboration proposed. |
| **51** | Can I offer students the chance to leave the programme early with a PGDip and not an MA? | It is for the bidder to design the programme. |
| **52** | Can you go into more detail about the quality assurance and reporting expectations? | We would work out with the successful provider how this relationship would function – however we expect to monitor closely both ongoing performance and summative achievements. |
| **53** | Do you envisage in this bid that academic institutions would take the lead over the local authority? | It is up to the bidder to decide. |
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| **55** | Is there potential for subcontracting? | We are open to receiving bids of this nature; however, we will let a single contract and all bids will be assessed against the same criteria. |
| **56** | Do you have an expected minimum standard for the ratio between students and social workers? | That is for the bidder to propose. |
| **57** | Are there expectations over which regions you want to be covered? | That is for the bidder to propose. |
| **58** | Why three regions? | This is a suggestion. However there is an emphasis on growth in the ITT. Suppliers must consider the number of regions needed to cover the required number of posts. |
| **59** | Can we be flexible on the number of regions? | Yes – you can be flexible to your bid, as long as it is in line with our expectation of expansion. |
| **60** | Would starting in more than 3 regions be problematic? | We will assess all bids on their merits. We will score against all the criteria in the ITT. |
| **61** | Are you expecting the focus on family/children to deviate from generic programmes? | Any programme must meet regulatory approval. HCPC requirements are threshold requirements, and there is latitude for training to enrich that – in this case in the area of child and family social work. |
| **62** | What would be the position if a trainee chose to pursue an adult care post after 14 months - would they be counted as successful participants? | They would meet KPIs for an approved social work qualification, but would be lost to the programme from the point of taking up such a post. |
| **63** | Regarding the 170 minimum placement days – are you expecting these 170 days to be completed with the first year or within the 14 months? | Within the 14 months. |
| **64** | Are there specific types of MA qualification that the Department would prefer? | It is for the supplier to propose. |
| **65** | Is the practice supervision in the first year or the induction year? | It is for the supplier to propose methods to support trainees through the programme to achieve an MA.  |
| **66** | Is there the expectation that all candidates would progress to an MA? | That would be for the supplier to determine what is achievable. This would be discussed in greater detail with the successful supplier. |
| **67** | Are you looking for local authorities to be the lead on the programme? | That is not specified in the ITT – it is for the bidder to propose. |
| **68** | Are you intending that we include the assessment of the ASYE?Can you clarify how year 2 of the course relates to ASYE? | We expect employers to induct their employees, and we are looking for value added to this experience. |
| **69** | Do you have a profile in mind of the candidates you are looking for? | We do not have particular people in mind, only that they have the potential to be excellent social workers. The bid should propose how they will be attracted and selected and the programme quality assured to ensure high quality outputs. |
| **70** | Are you looking for one provider? | This is for one contract; there is scope to subcontract across a consortium. |
| **71** | Are you looking for large HEIs with other partners to deliver this programme? | We are looking for the delivery of outputs detailed in the specification. |
| **72** | In a consortium approach, would it be appropriate to involve voluntary or private bodies? | It is important to ensure the candidates are prepared for statutory child and family social work. HCPC is a threshold requirement and there is scope for delivering over and above that. |
| **73** | Assuming a consortium arrangement – would there be a central admissions process which is over and above a process that the constituent members would have? | There may or may not - it is for the supplier to propose an admissions process. |
| **74** | In a consortium – are you looking for something more centrally driven or federal? | We are looking to ensure that a single organisation is accountable for delivering this programme. The systems put in place to manage the programme are up to the supplier. |
| **75** | Is there a preferred type of organisation to lead this bid? | No. |
| **76** | Do you envisage freedom in the way the academic content is delivered across a consortium? | We are looking for confidence in consistent delivery of the outputs. It is for the bidder to assure us about the nature of the learning experience. |
| **77** | How would suppliers recruit to the programme? | It is for the supplier to propose methods to recruit to our specified outcomes in a way that convinces the assessment panel. |
| **78** | Does their newly qualified year start after 14 months in conjunction with the start of their MA? | The induction process will be determined by the local authority, but candidates should be given the opportunity to study also for an MA. |
| **79** | How do you guarantee employment after 14 months? | That is for the provider to tell us in their bid. |
| **80** | Is the 170 practice day requirement essential? | The programme must meet regulatory standards to produce qualified social workers. Bidders must consider how they can deliver this output. |
| **81** | What about the adult-based aspect of the qualification? | The programme must meet HCPC approval, which says that all qualifying social workers should be safe to practise in any area of social work. Over and above this we intend candidates should be prepared for excellent child and family social work. |
| **82** | Are you looking for postgraduate or undergraduate candidates? | Postgraduate. |
| **83** | Would there be a natural marrying up with the ASYE? | We are looking for bids to add value to traditional induction training, to increase the overall quality of candidates. |
| **84** | Is the ITT based on the Frontline evaluation? | We are in touch with evaluators and that report is due in spring 2016. |
| **85** | What practice improvements (within the context of social care reform) do you think this programme is well placed to deliver? | The ministerial emphasis is on quality of practice, hence the focus on providing the best training. |
| **86** | Is it your intention that this programme will replace Step Up and Frontline? |  Ministers are looking to expand the number of entrants to social work through fast-track programmes. The future of all current routes is dependent on spending review outcomes. Subject to those outcomes, Step Up cohort 4 will run from January 2016, but there have been no further announcements beyond that. The Frontline pilot is for 3 cohorts, the last of which is currently being recruited.  |
| **87** | Will this run alongside existing fast track routes? | Ministers are looking to expand the number of entrants to social work through fast-track programmes. The future of all current routes is dependent on spending review outcomes. |
| **88** | Are you looking for students who are already in employment? | It is for the bidder to design a model that adheres to our specification. |
| **89** | What do you mean by ‘regional expansion’? | It is up to the bidder to interpret this in the bid – do not assume we understand your definitions without clear explanation. The intention is for this programme to run in most parts of England by 2021, subject to successful contract extension. |
| **90** | Can you explain the difference between Step Up/Frontline/Fast track? | Frontline is commissioned to deliver three cohorts and is currently delivering its final cohort. We are looking for a continuous delivery of a fast track programme. Step Up is slightly different; it is employer-led and does not have the MA/second year element to it. There is further information on these programmes on GOV.UK. |
| **91** | What distinguishes this from Step Up? What does it mean for the future of Step Up? | This programme has annual entry; Step Up is bi-annual. Step Up currently operates in most regions of England and this is planned to start in 3 regions. Ministers are looking to expand the number of entrants to social work through fast-track programmes. The future of all current routes is dependent on spending review outcomes. |
| **92** | Are the regional numbers based on a best estimate? | It is up to the supplier to do this research and identify their conclusions in their bid. |
| **93** | Are you envisioning a particular regional plan? | It is up to the bidder to determine how the programme would expand regionally. The ITT outlines the desire to cover multiple regions. |
| **94** | Is the MA for added value? | The ITT outlines that we are looking for a 2 year programme, with students given the opportunity to complete an MA. This intention is to create excellent social workers. |
| **95** | Are we looking at a reduction of more traditional entry routes? | The government does not control traditional entry routes. We are looking to increase the number of people coming through fast track routes. |
| **96** | Is it England only? | Yes – England only. |
| **97** | Where did the 1100 number come from? | This reflects Ministers’ ambitions to have a significant number of social workers who are trained through fast track programmes. |
| **98** | What is the biggest difference between this and existing fast track routes. | That is for the bidder to propose. It is different in a number of ways to Step Up. |
| **99** | Would suppliers be expected to give up their commitment to other programmes? | We are looking for suppliers to satisfy the requirements of this ITT. |
| **100** | Is regional emphasis less important than the recruitment numbers? | Recruitment numbers are a non-negotiable. Regional expansion is an important aspect of the ITT. |
| **101** | When you refer in the supplier event slides to a ‘competitive market’ – do you mean competition between graduates, or between existing social work routes? | We are looking for more fast-track entry places to reflect the Ministers’ ambition. |
| **102** | Can we put DfE as a referee if we want to? | Yes. |