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**Invitation to Tender for Research and Consultancy Services**

**R1217a: London Care Services Research**

**Context**

This project is being commissioned by London Councils. London Councils is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London’s 33 councils. We lobby for local governance for London boroughs, promoting their leadership of local communities and services and arguing for the tools necessary for them to do that job. We also act as a catalyst for effective sharing of practice, knowledge, information and services between boroughs.

London Councils runs a number of direct services on behalf of member authorities, including London Care Services [LCS].

LCS negotiates prices of foster and residential care services for looked-after-children with providers of those services, on behalf of subscribing member authorities (all the London Boroughs, the City of London and three counties). It also draws up and manages the LCS Model Contract, which member authorities use when they make a placement with an LCS approved provider.

The work of LCS is overseen by the Association of London Directors of Children’s Services [ALDCS].

**Introduction**

Local authorities in London have developed various collaborative arrangements to commission placements for children in their care. In recent years, local authorities have been operating in a climate of limited resources and increased demand for children’s services. They have been asked to make efficiencies and, at the same time, ensure children are in placements of the highest quality, where they can thrive.

ALDCS asked London Councils to conduct a wider review of the arrangements for commissioning fostering and residential care currently operating in London, with the purpose to explore ways of improving the system and practices.

London Councils approached this task in two parts – a first report focusing on the role and function of London Care Services (LCS), the overarching cross-regional consortium for all London boroughs and 3 neighbouring counties, due to be completed by January 2018.

This research will inform the second report of the review and will build on both the first part and the previous Oxford Brookes University study published in July 2015 which can be found here:

[The Efficacy and Sustainability of Looked After Children’s Services, by Oxford Brookes University](https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications/publication_830.html)

ALDCS is seeking a better understanding of the different arrangements in London. They are particularly interested in how the different arrangements operate, the links between them, benefits and challenges, and the cumulative impact those arrangements have on effective commissioning and market development.

Through the research the successful bidders should be able to:

* Provide ALDCS with recommendations and strategic advice on the current commissioning arrangements for LAC placements.
* Identify strengths and areas for improvement in the commissioning arrangements.
* Work with ALDCS to develop an action plan to drive more efficient, effective and economical practices to manage the market.

**Methodology**

Given the existing research by Oxford Brookes we would expect the successful bidders to build on the previous study to:

* Carry out field research with stakeholders and experts from different commissioning arrangements in London.
* Gather and analyse quantitative and qualitative evidence to understand the functioning of those arrangements.
* Evaluate their impact on local authorities’ expenditure.

We would expect the research to address the following questions:

* What is the role and function of all commissioning arrangements in London?
* What are the links between the different commissioning arrangements?
* Are they operating in a complementary or competing way?
* What are the gaps between the arrangements and opportunities for potential alignments?
* How do the different arrangements achieve effective commissioning and best value for local government in London?
* What recommendations and advice can be provided to support the work of consortia in delivering effective commissioning (e.g. influence service development to meet demand, value for money, etc.)?
* What do consortia need to do to add value to their role (identify and suggest opportunities for improvements)?
* What risks do commissioners need to be aware of with regard to current pressures on the market?

We expect the following to be considered but are happy to accept suggestions from bidders as to the best methodological approach to ensure that the above questions can be answered:

* Qualitative interviews.
* Possible use of participatory observation methodology of commissioning activities of front line staff in local authorities (dependant on time constraints).
* Quantitative surveys and data analysis.

We require the following outputs from the project:

* Weekly progress updates (by phone or email).
* Interim Report.
* Final written report that draws together the evidence from all London consortia.
* Presentation of key findings for ALDCS.
* Key set of recommendations for ALDCS to consider for action planning.

**Project Costs and Timetable**

This project is being included in the government’s Contracts Finder database to comply with recent changes in national procurement policy which specifies that any procurement opportunities and contract awards above certain low thresholds (£25,000) are published on [Contracts Finder](https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder).

Costs should be clearly presented and be inclusive of all fees, direct and indirect costs, expenses but exclusive of VAT.

You should indicate based on the timings below how you would envisage the project progressing based on your suggested methodology:

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| **Activity** | **Date** |
| Deadline for receiving tender | 8 January 2018: 12.00pm |
| Contractors informed of outcome | w/c 15 January 2018 |
| Contract awarded | w/c 15 January 2018 |
| Inception meeting | w/c 22 January 2018 |
| Interim reporting | Mid-March 2018 |
| Final report | Mid-April 2018  |

**Reporting Procedures and Project Management**

The project manager for this assignment is Cristina de Paiva-Brooker – tel: 020 7934 9676; cristina.depaiva-brooker@londoncouncils.gov.uk

We would expect regular updates on progress to the project manager for this project, including weekly progress updates (by phone or email).

We expect to comment on all draft outputs and this should be reflected in your cost and time schedule.

Final outputs may be distributed internally and to key external stakeholders and made available on our websites.

**Tender Requirements**

We expect bidders to have the following skills and experience:

* Expert knowledge and understanding of commissioning services for looked after children and the foster and residential care market.
Experience of complex social care research including a focus on looked after children and the development of the services to support those children.
* Existing contacts and good relationships with London boroughs and other relevant stakeholders such as foster and residential care sector representatives.
* Knowledge of London local government and its sub-regional arrangements.
* Knowledge and experience of making recommendations and action planning across more than one organisation.

Bidders should be able to give independent and expert advice and analysis and should not have a direct conflict of interest in the outcome of this project.

Bidders should provide the following information in their tender:

1. The size and nature of your organisation (if relevant) and your experience of directly relevant consultancy and research work.
2. Your understanding of the aims and objectives of the project and how it interacts with the current policy context.
3. An outline of your proposed methodology and approach to tasks outlined in this document.
4. Experience of the individual(s), including their role on the project and tasks if relevant (CVs should be included separately in an annex, max 1 pages each).
5. Arrangements for project management, reporting and quality control.
6. Research timetable with key milestones, including any risks that may affect the timing or delivery of outputs and contingencies.
7. Clear structure of charges including day/hour rates, time spent on tasks, expenses. VAT will be paid at the applicable rate (an example of a clear cost structure is given in annex 2).

We will evaluate your response against the evaluation criteria given below.

70/30: 70% quality and 30% cost

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| --- | --- |
| **Evaluation criteria – Quality [70% of the total]** | **Weighting [100%]** |
| 1. Understanding of the aims and objectives of the work, the policy context and key issues specifically:
* Knowledge of London local government and its sub-regional arrangements for commission services for looked after children.
* Understanding of the pressures and priorities for London boroughs.
* The impact of borough pressures and priorities on the LAC market and the services that are offered.
* Understanding of the broad range of stakeholders whose views and experience should inform the arrangements for commissioning LAC services.
 | 40% |
| 1. Experience of undertaking similar projects, including:
* Experience of working with local government and sub-regional commissioning groups.
* Experience of undertaking work to bring about changes and improvements to commissioning practices, and making well-evidenced recommendations.
* Experience of presenting complex social research to experts and local government officials.
* Experience of and existing relationships with a broad range of stakeholders invested in supporting LAC.
 | 25% |
| 1. A clear methodology and approach to the tasks set out in this document, including:
* How the views of stakeholders will be sought and incorporated into this work and approaches to achieving broad consensus to the project proposals.
* How a broad and high-level review of commissioning arrangements in London and market development of foster and residential services will provide appropriate background to a set of recommendations to inform action planning.
* A detailed, clear timetable for achieving the tasks within the overall timescale outlined in this document.
 | 35% |

**Format of Tender Response**

If you wish to apply, **an electronic copy of your tender response with completed FOI and Equal Opportunities documents** (available on the website) should be sent to tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk quoting reference number **R1217a** to arrive by **12pm on Monday 8 January 2018.** Bidders should ensure that they have received a confirmation email of receipt of tender by the deadline.

**All submission documents should be provided in Microsoft Word format.**

If necessary, you may seek clarification on the procurement process or the specification by contacting Sorcha Rooney on 020 7934 9768 or email via Sorcha.Rooney@londoncouncils.gov.uk. Enquiries will not be answered if received within **2** days of the date for submissions of tenders. Bidders should note that responses to each enquiry will be copied to all organisations bidding (though will not identify the originator of the enquiry) through the London Councils and Contracts Finder website.

If you are aware that the submission of your tender may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, please inform the officer to whom you are making the application.

***Full instructions to bidders are also provided in Annex One. Bidders are advised to read all instructions before submitting their tender.***

**Freedom of Information Act**

You should be aware that the information you submit may be subject to a request for information. The provision of any information to external parties by London Councils is determined by statutory conditions provided for in the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Equality Opportunities**

The successful contractor will be required to comply with London Councils Equal Opportunity Policy and bidders should complete the Equal Opportunities Questionnaire with their tender submission.

**Terms and Conditions**

Please see accompanying terms and conditions and confirm acceptance in your submission. These relate to:

* Intellectual Property rights; and
* Data sharing and Data Processing.

**Annex One: Instructions to bidders**

1. **Tender Submissions**
	1. All pages of the bidder’s tender should be sequentially numbered (including any annexes and supporting documents).
	2. Bidders are advised to submit tenders by email to tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk quoting reference **R1217a.**
	3. The tender must not arrive later than the date and time stipulated. Tenders received after that time may not be considered unless the bidder can prove that the tender was dispatched in sufficient time to meet the deadline.
	4. By submitting a tender, the bidder agrees to keep that tender open for acceptance by London Councils for 90 days following the closing date.
	5. London Councils does not accept suppliers’ Terms and Conditions.
2. **Amendments to Tender Documents**
	1. Prior to the deadline, London Councils may modify the tender documents by amendments in writing. London Councils may extend the deadline for tenders to allow for significant amendments to be fully assessed and taken into account.
	2. The bidder may modify the tender prior to the deadline for receipt by giving notice in writing or by email.
	3. No tender may be modified after the deadline for receipt.
	4. The contractor may not transfer, assign or sublet the contract, or any part thereof, without the prior written consent of London Councils. If such consent is given the contractor will remain liable for the performance of the contract in it’s entirely as if such assignment or sublet had not taken place.
3. **Tender Charges**
	1. Charges must be in pounds sterling and be inclusive of all costs but can be exclusive of VAT.
	2. Charges shall be fixed for the duration of the Contract and will not be subject to any variation unless detailed in the Contract document.
	3. London Councils shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the production of the tender submission.
4. **Tender Evaluations**
	1. London Councils intends to commission the most economically advantageous tender and reserves the right to accept or reject all or any part of any tender.
	2. London Councils does not bind itself to accept the lowest charged tender.
	3. London Councils reserves the right to change the timing or any other aspect of the procurement process or to cancel the procurement process at any stage without prior notice.
5. **Intellectual property rights**
	1. All information provided by London Councils shall be treated by the Contractor as confidential except where prior written consent has been given by London Councils that such information may be disclosed. The dissemination of information within your organisation should be on a need-to-know basis.
	2. All intellectual property rights arising from the work will reside with London Councils.

**Annex Two: Example of cost structure**

**Example of cost table**

**Below is an example of a clear cost structure. Other cost breakdowns will be accepted; however a clear structure that will allow London Councils to easily assess value for money – including cost per stage and/or days/hours per person - should be used.**

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