**Improving Case Management Systems in Children’s Social Care – draft procurement specification**

1. The department is conducting early market consultation to gather information for a potential procurement process related to the work on improving case management system in children’s social care. This document sets out the draft specification for that work.
2. There is a pressing need to modernise case management systems in children’s social care to enable social workers to spend more time with families. Recent reviews of children’s social care recognise that CSC case management systems should interface seamlessly with other systems to share data, improve user experience by reducing duplicative recording of information, and to offer better tools for retrieval and analysis of data.
3. We start from a position of already knowing much about these problems and about the structural issues which cause them: the products’ architecture; LAs’ approaches to using them; and the commercial environment for supplying CMS to children’s services.
4. We propose to procure a supplier to:
   1. develop a compelling vision for case management which the department, LAs, and both current and potential providers can unite around.
   2. embody this in a set of standards and minimum functionalities (“CMS standards”) for case management system products to adhere to at a point in the future.
   3. produce a credible and achievable implementation plan to secure (phased) adherence to those standards
   4. develop proposals for how standards should be maintained and developed beyond the life of this contract, notably how the ongoing evolution of these standards should be governed, and how the institutional apparatus for standard development and implementation should be made financially sustainable.

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| **What** | **How** |
| Articulate a vision for CMS and how this can be articulated in a minimum functionality for CMS (what it should do and how it should do it well) which LAs and the department support.  Output: A plain English vision setting out what children’s services CMS should be, prioritised list of minimum functionalities against which any CMS could be judged, and a description of a “gold standard” for children’s social care CMS products. | The successful bidder would work with the Department for Education to identify a group who could both bring their experience and expertise to bear on this work, and also give it legitimacy with LAs and the current/potential supplier market. This would include local authorities active and expert in this area and ensure that the sample is representative of the sector (for example, a cross-section of local authorities with CMS from different vendors).  The successful bidder will work with the Department for Education to build trust with key sector leaders, including ADCS and NPIMG, to ensure that there is formative input and sector agreement to the outputs.  The successful bidder will draw together an up to date set of user needs from the different users of CMS and the data they hold. |
| Map existing market products against the gold standard CMS  Output: list of products mapped against “gold standard” and appraisal of viability of improving the CMS to the gold standard | The successful bidder will survey the existing software architecture and its implementation in a range of LAs, evaluate how closely the products meet the “gold standard”, a high level view of the likely costs (direct to LAs, and indirect via suppliers) to reaching those standards, and any structural blockers or enablers to current products shifting to that standard. |
| Develop a set of technical standards for CMS products:   1. Data standards – a consistent way to organise, structure and format information collected and recorded in case management systems; this will likely be the first set of standards that will need to be developed as it will be a prerequisite to having interoperability standards. 2. Interoperability standards to enable case management systems to interface with other systems, so information can flow easily between different systems without friction. 3. Other non-functional standards such as commercial standards, information governance standards, accessibility and cyber security standards. We expect that a number of these standards can be adapted from existing digital standards for similar products. Commercial standards will need to be bespoke to address current market problems. 4. Minimum functionality standards describing the user interface and the types of interaction a CMS product should enable as a minimum.   Output: A set of technical standards (a, b, c, d) that could be used to enforce future compliance of products with said standards. | The successful bidder will:  a) review replicability of existing initiatives, for example LGA and SAVVI standards.  b) review replicability of existing non-functional standards to CSC CMS  c) identify the commonalities which already exist in the data models already in use across the main CMS and potentially some of the systems they interact with (for example, recording of financial information regarding placements or recording of placement brokerage activity).  d) develop and publish a data model in a manner which supports the aim of transitioning to a common data model ‘owned’ by the sector as a whole and as easy as possible for current and future providers to incorporate into their software. |
| Produce an effective strategy to address current market problems and ensure CMS standards are complied with | The successful bidder would work with the Department for Education to appraise different market interventions (including measures such as new duties and statutory guidance expectations, commercial buying frameworks, sector-led initiatives as well as “do nothing” option).  The successful bidder would appraise options for market intervention against, as a minimum, departmental priorities and cross-government policy, effectiveness, and cost (including set up and recursive costs), as well as the impact of options on the CMS market and local authorities. |
| Produce a strategy for the ongoing development of these standards and the enforcement architecture which ensures that they can:   * Evolve to support changes in practice, organisation, and technology; * Do so in a way which retains legitimacy with LAs, current/potential suppliers, and the department. * Continually demonstrate to market participants that they are a permanent fixture of the market with which all must engage. | The successful bidder would outline challenge for ongoing governance of standards and their enforcement in the sector.  The successful bidder would set out a range of options for governance structures, how the team carrying out this work relate to DfE and in future to other affected departments (who have overlapping standards projects of their own), and how it is to be put on a sustainable financial footing. |