



Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of Higher Education Funding Council for England

Subject UK SBS Understanding of mental health and wellbeing in the UK PGR population

Sourcing reference number BLOJEU-CR17067HEFCE

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS)
www.uksbs.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
Registered Office Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FF
VAT registration GB618 3673 25
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UKSBS

Shared Business Services

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Section 1 – About UK Shared Business Services

Putting the business into shared services

UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UK SBS) brings a commercial attitude to the public sector; helping our customers improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading provider for our customers of shared business services in the UK public sector, continuously reducing cost and improving quality of business services for Government and the public sector.

Our broad range of expert services is shared by our customers. This allows our customers the freedom to focus resources on core activities; innovating and transforming their own organisations.

Core services include Procurement, Finance, Grants Admissions, Human Resources, Payroll, ISS, and Property Asset Management all underpinned by our Service Delivery and Contact Centre teams.

UK SBS is a people rather than task focused business. It's what makes us different to the traditional transactional shared services centre. What is more, being a not-for-profit organisation owned by its customers, UK SBS' goals are aligned with the public sector and delivering best value for the UK taxpayer.

UK Shared Business Services Ltd changed its name from RCUK Shared Services Centre Ltd in March 2013.

Our Customers

Growing from a foundation of supporting the Research Councils, 2012/13 saw Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) transition their procurement to UK SBS and Crown Commercial Services (CCS – previously Government Procurement Service) agree a Memorandum of Understanding with UK SBS to deliver two major procurement categories (construction and research) across Government.

UK SBS currently manages £700m expenditure for its Customers.

Our Customers who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Section 2 – About Our Customer

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

HEFCE funds and regulates universities and colleges in England. We invest on behalf of students and the public to promote excellence and innovation in research, teaching and knowledge exchange. In all our activities we aim to:

- ensure accountability for funding and be a proportionate regulator
- act in the public interest and be open, fair, impartial and objective
- be an effective broker between Government and the sector and in doing so, ensure that we are implementing government policy effectively.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/>

Section 3 - Working with UK Shared Business Services Ltd.

In this section you will find details of your Procurement contact point and the timescales relating to this opportunity.

Section 3 – Contact details		
3.1	Customer Name and address	Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Nicholson House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SR
3.2	Buyer name	Laura Barrowman
3.3	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4	Estimated value of the Opportunity	£30,000 – £40,000 – Excluding VAT
3.5	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Emptoris e-sourcing tool. Guidance Notes to support the use of Emptoris is available here. Please note submission of a Bid to any email address including the Buyer <u>will</u> result in the Bid <u>not</u> being considered.

Section 3 - Timescales		
3.6	Date of Issue of Contract Advert and location of original Advert	09/06/2017 Contracts finder
3.7	Latest date/time ITQ clarification questions should be received through Emptoris messaging system	05/07/2017
3.8	Latest date/time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all potential Bidders by the Buyer through Emptoris	06/07/2017
3.9	Latest date/time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Emptoris	10/07/2017 14:00
3.11	Anticipated rejection of unsuccessful Bids date	19/07/2017
3.12	Anticipated Award date	19/07/2017
3.13	Anticipated Contract Start date	21/07/2017
3.14	Anticipated Contract End date	20/10/2017
3.15	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

Introduction

HEFCE funds and regulates universities and colleges in England. We invest on behalf of students and the public to promote excellence and innovation in research, teaching and knowledge exchange. We inform, develop and implement government policy to benefit the sector, students, and society.

Aims

In recent years, research policy observers and academics have voiced concerns about the impact of current academic working conditions in universities on mental health¹.

Despite an increasing awareness of stress and mental ill-health issues within academia, and a growing number of studies that now address this issue, there is a need for more empirical data on the prevalence of mental health problems and the organisational policies that are linked to them. In particular, there is limited data about the incidence of mental health issues amongst the postgraduate research (PGR) student population.

HEFCE aims to develop and sustain a dynamic and internationally competitive research sector that makes a major contribution to economic prosperity, national wellbeing and the expansion and dissemination of knowledge. We support higher education institutions (HEIs) in training and developing researchers, with doctoral degrees forming a critical link in the supply chain for the UK's research base and knowledge-intensive economy.

As such we wish to gather data on the mental health and wellbeing of the PGR student population to inform our understanding of mental health and wellbeing among PGR students in UK higher education institutions.

Objectives

We wish to gather qualitative evidence and quantitative data that will inform our knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing in the UK PGR population. The study should focus more strongly on the student interest rather than the economic consequences that arise as a result of this issue.

This study will measure the mental health and wellbeing of PGR students – including those who disclose a diagnosed mental health condition and those who do not. It will look at the structure of research degree programmes (RDPs) and the broader higher education (HE) research culture to identify environmental factors that may cause mental distress or otherwise affect the student experience.

¹ Work organization and mental health problems in PhD students, Research Policy (March 2017)
www.elsevier.com

It will gather information about HEIs' student support services and pastoral care available to PGR students, and will seek to identify barriers that may hinder access. It will approach relevant stakeholder groups, i.e HEI teams with a remit in this area, student unions, AMOSSHE etc.

The research should identify any evidence relating to differential outcomes according to personal characteristics, including whether any particular groups of students appear to be more at risk than their counterparts. Potentially vulnerable groups may extend beyond those who fall into one of the categories of protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010, for example students from particular institutional types, different socio-economic backgrounds or international students. At this stage evidence may be indicative only, but observable issues of this type may help to inform future work.

In 2015 the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and Researching Equity, Access and Partnership (REAP) created a report for HEFCE. 'Understanding Provision for Students with Mental Health Problems and Intensive Support Needs'². While the emphasis of this earlier report was provider focussed, HEFCE would like to use this proposed research to build upon previous work, although the emphasis is now on PGR students and the student interest.

Finally, it will compare the community-level mental health and wellbeing of PGR students with that of other student groups, academic staff and the wider UK population.

The output will be a report, which will present findings and recommendations, and scope out further work that may be undertaken in partnership with other research funders to develop, test and implement policy interventions that seek to improve the student experience. The results will be published in a formal report, which will present a literature review alongside the findings and recommendations of this research.

Background to the Requirement

The student interest

The 2011 HE White Paper 'Students at the Heart of the System'³ indicated a role for HEFCE as the 'student champion', including protecting and promoting student interests. This responsibility covers promoting and encouraging a diverse and inclusive HE system, using an evidence-based approach, and presenting and encouraging good practice or research to support culture change in the student interest where evidence shows a need for it.

One key area of the collective student interest is the academic experience. For PGR students, this includes ensuring the excellence of research environments and supporting infrastructure, as well as promoting outcomes that contribute to personal, societal, economic and cultural wellbeing.

² <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/year/2015/mh/>

³ *Students at the Heart of the System* (June 2011) Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31384/11-944-higher-education-students-at-heart-of-system.pdf

Research degrees

Research Degree Programmes (RDP's) cover a range of doctoral and Masters-level qualifications. HEFCE provides grant funding to HEIs to help meet the high costs of RDP supervision. This funding is allocated according to a formula based on quality scores from the Research Excellence Framework and the volume of PGR activity. Additional funding for tuition fees, project-specific costs and subsistence may be provided by other sources, including the Research Councils, charities, industry or government.

PGR students are strategically important to research capacity: they provide critical mass within research groups, are seen as 'engines of innovation', and are integral to academic culture⁴. Given the costs of RDP supervision and the role PGR students play within the talent pipeline, they are recognised as a valuable resource.

Many PGR students become part of a cohort, belonging to a graduate school and/or a doctoral training centre. Cohort-based approaches aim to enhance support for students, improve the research environment, and provide access to professional and personal development and pastoral care. This recognises the fact that the academic environment is highly-competitive and that PGR students may experience a range of external challenges (including financial pressures, relationships and living away from family) during the course of their studies.

Mental health and wellbeing

We are becoming increasingly aware of the effects of stress and ill-health in HE. In 2016, HEFCE held two conferences regarding mental health and wellbeing to discuss how HEIs can respond to growing demand from students for services and provision. Awareness of stress, anxiety, eating disorders and sleep disorders among academic staff and students is rising, despite relatively low levels of disclosure. According to Universities UK, there has been significant growth in specialist support and guidance services provided for students, and many HEIs have introduced wellbeing initiatives for the prevention of mental health problems.

According to the Equality Challenge Unit, 111,490 PGRs were enrolled on RDPs at English HEIs in academic year 2013-14. Of those PGR students, 0.9% declared a diagnosable mental health condition, compared with 0.7% of taught postgraduate students, 2.4% of undergraduates and 0.2% of academic staff. The mental health charity 'Mind' has reported that one in four British adults experiences a diagnosable mental health problem each year: this includes a range of conditions, like depression, anxiety, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and eating disorders. To put this into context, within a population of 111,490 PGR students, more than 27,800 would experience mental ill-health in any given year.

⁴ Understanding the recruitment and selection of postgraduate researchers by English higher education institutions (September 2014) Careers Advisory & Research Centre. <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2014/pgrectuitment/Title,92157,en.html>

Scope

The overarching aim of the project is to assess the scale of the issue and scope out opportunities for further work that can be undertaken in partnership with other research funders to identify and design policy interventions that will improve the PGR student experience, academic success and career outcomes. The focus of the work should be primarily on PhD students.

The successful contractor will carry out an international literature review to determine the level of published knowledge on health and wellbeing in academia. This will be supported by the identification of robust sources of qualitative evidence and quantitative data on mental health.

The contractor will use sampling methodology to measure and compare the mental health and wellbeing of PGR students – both those who disclose a condition and those who do not with other student groups, academic staff and the wider population. Factors to consider in developing this aspect of the study should include: the structure of RDPs, the role of supervisors, student unions, the broader HE research culture, and environmental factors that may influence mental health and wellbeing or otherwise affect the PGR student experience. The contractor should also gather information about HEIs' student support services and the pastoral care available to PGR students, and identify barriers that may hinder access. The contractor should capture information across a range of PhD environments.

The output will be a report setting out the current state of knowledge on the health and wellbeing of PGR students, identifying gaps in the evidence and a strategy to fill them, and recommending future work.

HEFCE is seeking bids that bring informed thinking and expertise in similar work to this contract. Bidders are invited to set out and justify the methodologies they propose to use in the delivery of this project. In outlining their approach, bidders should address any ethical issues in the design and implementation of the project.

Requirement

The successful contractor will be expected to deliver the following mandatory key deliverables:

- **Statement of work at commencement of the project, outlining the work activities they will undertake and a clear methodology. This statement will be discussed and refined at an inception meeting with the HEFCE Project Manager.**
- **Project plan and risk assessment**
- **Regular progress reports to the HEFCE Project Manager**
- **Group discussions with student groups at identified HEIs**
- **Group discussions with institutions**
- **Presentation of emerging findings to steering group**
- **Interim (draft final) report – to include the literature review**
- **Final report**
- **Guest post for the HEFCE blog to accompany publication of the final report**
- **Report on and demonstrate compliance with Data Protection legislation including measures to secure personal data against unauthorised or unlawful**

processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to personal data

- **Tenderers should also indicate how the contractor will deal with any personal, mental health, ethical or other sensitive issues that might arise when working with potentially vulnerable people, whether this happens directly or indirectly (including through remote contact) and ensure that the research is in accordance with existing standard practice**

As a minimum, the final report should include (although not necessarily in this order):

- **Executive summary**
- **Context for mental health and wellbeing in postgraduate research**
- **Literature review**
- **Method**
- **Analysis**
- **Key findings**
- **Conclusions (referencing where possible, the situation of the UK within the international setting)**
- **Recommendations**

The final report must be written in accordance with HEFCE's corporate style. Advice and guidance on this will be made available to the successful contractor.

Throughout the project, the contractor will be expected to be in regular communication with the HEFCE Project Manager to ensure that contractual obligations are being fulfilled and that the project is progressing as expected in terms of scope and time, and to ensure that any potential issues or risks are identified, monitored and managed appropriately.

Timetable

Award contract	19 th July
Inception meeting with contractor, steering group and project lead	21 July London
Contract dates	24 July- 20 Oct
Emerging findings presentation to steering group	Mid Sept
Pilot group discussions with student groups	August - Sept
Interim (draft) report to look at emerging findings and literature review	Beginning Sept
Project work concludes when the final report is signed off by HEFCE	20 Oct

Terms and Conditions

Bidders are to note that any requested modifications to the Contracting Authority

Terms and Conditions on the grounds of statutory and legal matters only, shall be raised as a formal clarification during the permitted clarification period.

Section 5 – Evaluation model

The evaluation model below shall be used for this ITQ, which will be determined to two decimal places.

Where a question is ‘for information only’ it will not be scored.

The evaluation team may comprise staff from UK SBS, the Customer and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation the scores will be finalised by performing a calculation to identify (at question level) the mean average of all evaluators (Example – a question is scored by three evaluators and judged as scoring 5, 5 and 6. These scores will be added together and divided by the number of evaluators to produce the final score of 5.33 ($5+5+6 = 16 \div 3 = 5.33$))

Pass / fail criteria		
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject
Commercial	SEL1.2	Employment breaches/ Equality
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information Exemptions
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Contract Terms
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool

Scoring criteria			
Evaluation Justification Statement			
In consideration of this particular requirement the Contracting Authority has decided to evaluate Potential Providers by adopting the weightings/scoring mechanism detailed within this ITQ. The Contracting Authority considers these weightings to be in line with existing best practice for a requirement of this type.			
Questionnaire	Q No.	Question subject	Maximum Marks
Price	AW5.2	Price	15%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Methodology and remit	30%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Knowledge of the sector and PGR landscape	20%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Project Team	15%
Quality	PROJ1.4	Project Plan and risk	20%

Evaluation of criteria

Non-Price elements

Each question will be judged on a score from 0 to 100, which shall be subjected to a multiplier to reflect the percentage of the evaluation criteria allocated to that question.

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 20% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 20.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 12% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points available multiplied by 20 ($60/100 \times 20 = 12$)

Where an evaluation criterion is worth 10% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 10.

Example if a Bidder scores 60 from the available 100 points this will equate to 6% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points available multiplied by 10 ($60/100 \times 10 = 6$)

The same logic will be applied to groups of questions which equate to a single evaluation criterion.

The 0-100 score shall be based on (unless otherwise stated within the question):

0	The Question is not answered or the response is completely unacceptable.
10	Extremely poor response – they have completely missed the point of the question.
20	Very poor response and not wholly acceptable. Requires major revision to the response to make it acceptable. Only partially answers the requirement, with major deficiencies and little relevant detail proposed.
40	Poor response only partially satisfying the selection question requirements with deficiencies apparent. Some useful evidence provided but response falls well short of expectations. Low probability of being a capable supplier.
60	Response is acceptable but remains basic and could have been expanded upon. Response is sufficient but does not inspire.
80	Good response which describes their capabilities in detail which provides high levels of assurance consistent with a quality provider. The response includes a full description of techniques and measurements currently employed.
100	Response is exceptional and clearly demonstrates they are capable of meeting the requirement. No significant weaknesses noted. The response is compelling in its description of techniques and measurements currently employed, providing full assurance consistent with a quality provider.

All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that the final score returned may be different as there may be multiple evaluators and their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score.

Example

Evaluator 1 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 2 scored your bid as 60

Evaluator 3 scored your bid as 40

Evaluator 4 scored your bid as 40

Your final score will $(60+60+40+40) \div 4 = 50$

Price elements will be judged on the following criteria.

The lowest price for a response which meets the pass criteria shall score 100. All other bids shall be scored on a pro rata basis in relation to the lowest price. The score is then subject to a multiplier to reflect the percentage value of the price criterion.

For example - Bid 1 £100,000 scores 100.

Bid 2 £120,000 differential of £20,000 or 20% remove 20% from price scores 80

Bid 3 £150,000 differential £50,000 remove 50% from price scores 50.

Bid 4 £175,000 differential £75,000 remove 75% from price scores 25.

Bid 5 £200,000 differential £100,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Bid 6 £300,000 differential £200,000 remove 100% from price scores 0.

Where the scoring criterion is worth 50% then the 0-100 score achieved will be multiplied by 50.

In the example if a supplier scores 80 from the available 100 points this will equate to 40% by using the following calculation: Score/Total Points multiplied by 50 ($80/100 \times 50 = 40$)

The lowest score possible is 0 even if the price submitted is more than 100% greater than the lowest price.

In the event of a tie -

Once the evaluation process and due diligence is complete, should the result of the process result in a tied place(s) then the supplier(s) who scored the highest total in the following quality total criteria shall be considered the successful supplier and shall be awarded the opportunity

Should the above still result in a tie we will go to a secondary tie decision which will be Who scored the highest total in the Price criterion (Question AW5.2) they shall be considered the successful supplier and shall be awarded the opportunity?

Section 6 – Evaluation questionnaire

Bidders should note that the evaluation questionnaire is located within the **e-sourcing questionnaire**.

Guidance on completion of the questionnaire is available at <http://www.uksbs.co.uk/services/procure/Pages/supplier.aspx>

PLEASE NOTE THE QUESTIONS ARE NOT NUMBERED SEQUENTIALLY

Section 7 – General Information

What makes a good bid – some simple do's 😊

DO:

- 7.1 Do comply with Procurement document instructions. Failure to do so may lead to disqualification.
- 7.2 Do provide the Bid on time, and in the required format. Remember that the date/time given for a response is the last date that it can be accepted; we are legally bound to disqualify late submissions.
- 7.3 Do ensure you have read all the training materials to utilise e-sourcing tool prior to responding to this Bid. If you send your Bid by email or post it will be rejected.
- 7.4 Do use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint Excel 97-03 or compatible formats, or PDF unless agreed in writing by the Buyer. If you use another file format without our written permission we may reject your Bid.
- 7.5 Do ensure you utilise the Emptoris messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that typically we will release the answer to the question to all bidders and where we suspect the question contains confidential information we may modify the content of the question to protect the anonymity of the Bidder or their proposed solution
- 7.6 Do answer the question, it is not enough simply to cross-reference to a 'policy', web page or another part of your Bid, the evaluation team have limited time to assess bids and if they can't find the answer, they can't score it.
- 7.7 Do consider who your customer is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every customer's needs.
- 7.8 Do reference your documents correctly, specifically where supporting documentation is requested e.g. referencing the question/s they apply to.
- 7.9 Do provide clear and concise contact details; telephone numbers, e-mails and fax details.
- 7.10 Do complete all questions in the questionnaire or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.11 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

What makes a good bid – some simple do not's 🙄

DO NOT

- 7.12 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.13 Do not attach 'glossy' brochures that have not been requested, they will not be read unless we have asked for them. Only send what has been requested and only send supplementary information if we have offered the opportunity so to do.
- 7.14 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.15 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Customer to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you.
- 7.16 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or Customer staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.17 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not offer UK SBS or Customer staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.20 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.21 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.23 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool may be submitted to Crown Commercial Service (previously Government Procurement Service), Telephone 0345 010 3503.
- 7.24 Bidders will be specifically advised where attachments are permissible to support a question response within the e-sourcing tool. Where they are not permissible any attachments submitted will not be considered.
- 7.25 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.26 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.27 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.28 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority.
- 7.29 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.30 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.31 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.32 Bidders should note the Government's transparency agenda requires your Bid and any Contract entered into to be published on a designated, publicly searchable web site. By submitting a response to this ITQ Bidders are agreeing that their Bid and Contract may be made public
- 7.33 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 Bidders may only amend the Contract terms if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified we may reject your Bid.
- 7.35 We will let you know the outcome of your Bid evaluation and where requested will provide a written debrief of the relative strengths and weaknesses of your Bid.
- 7.36 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.37 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Emptoris e-sourcing tool.
- 7.38 Bidders should note that if they are successful with their proposal the Contracting Authority reserves the right to ask additional compliancy checks prior to the award of any Contract. In the event of a Bidder failing to meet one of the compliancy checks

the Contracting Authority may decline to proceed with the award of the Contract to the successful Bidder.

- 7.39 All timescales are set using a 24 hour clock and are based on British Summer Time or Greenwich Mean Time, depending on which applies at the point when Date and Time Bids shall be submitted through Emptoris.
- 7.40 All Central Government Departments and their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further, the 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.

For these purposes, the Contracting Authority may disclose within Government any of the Bidders documentation/information (including any that the Bidder considers to be confidential and/or commercially sensitive such as specific bid information) submitted by the Bidder to the Contracting Authority during this Procurement. The information will not be disclosed outside Government. Bidders taking part in this ITQ consent to these terms as part of the competition process.

- 7.41 From 2nd April 2014 the Government is introducing its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme to replace the current Government Protective Marking System (GPMS). A key aspect of this is the reduction in the number of security classifications used. All Bidders are encouraged to make themselves aware of the changes and identify any potential impacts in their Bid, as the protective marking and applicable protection of any material passed to, or generated by, you during the procurement process or pursuant to any Contract awarded to you as a result of this tender process will be subject to the new GSC from 2nd April 2014. The link below to the Gov.uk website provides information on the new GSC:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-security-classifications>

The Contracting Authority reserves the right to amend any security related term or condition of the draft contract accompanying this ITQ to reflect any changes introduced by the GSC. In particular where this ITQ is accompanied by any instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as a result of any changes stemming from the new GSC, whether in respect of the applicable protective marking scheme, specific protective markings given, the aspects to which any protective marking applies or otherwise. This may relate to the instructions on safeguarding classified information (e.g. a Security Aspects Letter) as they apply to the procurement as they apply to the procurement process and/or any contracts awarded to you as a result of the procurement process.

USEFUL INFORMATION LINKS

- [Emptoris Training Guide](#)
- [Emptoris e-sourcing tool](#)
- [Contracts Finder](#)
- [Tenders Electronic Daily](#)
- [Equalities Act introduction](#)
- [Bribery Act introduction](#)
- [Freedom of information Act](#)