

## Invitation to Tender

### Health Survey for England 2024: Provision of a laboratory services for salivary cotinine analysis

**Reference: HSE24\_cot**

#### 1. Summary

The National Centre for Social Research is inviting interested parties to submit a proposal for the provision of Laboratory Services to conduct salivary cotinine analysis to support the 2024 Health Survey for England (HSE 2024). HSE 2024 has been commissioned by NHS England to the National Centre for Social Research, who require a sub-processor to carry out cotinine analysis for the study.

#### 2. Proposed procurement timetable

The Timetable below is subject to change and Tenderers will be informed accordingly.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>
Invitation to tender published	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Deadline for clarification questions	1 <sup>st</sup> November 2024 <b>5pm</b>
Response to clarification questions	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Deadline for tenders	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 <b>5pm</b>
Evaluation of tenders	18 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2024
Contract award	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2024
Contract start date	January 2025

#### 3. Budget

The National Centre for Social Research has a budget of up to £60,000 (excl. VAT) for the contract. Please ensure your overall cost does not exceed this amount. Suppliers are asked to complete a breakdown of costs as specified in the response template.

## 4. Proposals and evaluation criteria

Proposals should be submitted in the Response Template (Annex A). The information received in your tender submission will be evaluated against the following weighting and scoring criteria:

Technical response: 65%

Price: 35%

We also require suppliers to complete the NatCen Information Security Questionnaire (Annex B).

### Pricing scoring

The calculation used for the price element is the following:

$$\text{Score} = \frac{\text{Lowest Tender Price}}{\text{Tender Price}} \times 25\% \text{ (Maximum available marks)}$$

For example, if three Tender Responses are received and Tenderer A has quoted £30,000 as their total price, Tenderer B has quoted £50,000 and Tenderer C has quoted £60,000 then the calculation will be as follows:

Tenderer A Score = £30000/£30000 x 25% (Maximum available marks) = 25%

Tenderer B Score = £30000/£50000 x 25% (Maximum available marks) = 15%

Tenderer C Score = £30000/£60000 x 25% (Maximum available marks) = 13%

## 5. Specification of requirements

### About Health Survey for England

The Health Survey for England (HSE) is a series of annual surveys covering the adult and child population living in private households in England. It began in 1991. The surveys measure the public's health and associated factors. The surveys:

- provide annual data from nationally representative samples to monitor trends in the nation's health;

- estimate the proportion of people in England who have specified health conditions;
- estimate the prevalence of risk factors or health related behaviours associated with these conditions;
- examine differences between subgroups of the population (for example, by age, sex or income) in their likelihood of having conditions or risk factors;
- assess the frequency with which particular combinations of risk factors are found, and in which groups these combinations most commonly occur;
- monitor progress towards health targets;
- monitor height, weight, overweight and obesity in adults and children

## About NHS England

The purpose of NHS England is to lead the NHS in England to deliver high-quality services for all. They do this by ensuring that the healthcare workforce has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to patients and the public.

NHS England work with the wider NHS and our partners to optimise the use of digital technology, research and innovation, and to deliver value for money and increased productivity and efficiency. They are responsible for running the vital national IT systems which support health and social care, and the collection, analysis, publication and dissemination of data generated by health and social care services to improve outcomes for patients.

## About the National Centre for Social Research

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) is a registered charity and is the largest independent and not-for-profit social research organisation in the UK. NatCen was founded in 1969 by Sir Roger Jowell and Gerald Hoinville with the aim of carrying out rigorous social policy research to improve society.

We are interested in what people really think and really do. Over the last 50 years we've asked the public what they think about thousands of different issues, enabling us to collect evidence to help inform policy decisions and present insights into human behaviour and attitudes.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR, NHS England will be the Data Controller and the National Centre for Social Research will be a Data Processor. The successful supplier of laboratory services will be a sub-processor. The supplier shall act in accordance with instructions from NHS England and the

National Centre for Social Research and will be expected to take appropriate measures to destroy sensitive and personal data in a timely manner.

## Requirements

Each annual HSE survey collects data from a sample of the adult and child population living in private households in England. Saliva samples are collected from children aged 4-15 every year and from adults aged 16 and over in alternate years. Salivary cotinine is measured to establish nicotine exposure, including from passive smoking.

HSE 2024 involves saliva samples from children only. It is estimated that between 700-900 saliva samples will be obtained for HSE 2024.

The successful supplier must be capable of carrying out accurate measurement of low levels of cotinine. In recent years, the methods used for HSE has been LC-MS/MS methods with an LLOQ of 0.1 ng/mL. Samples from children were first assayed using a low range assay of 0.1-50ng/ml. Any of these that were over-range were then re-assayed using a high calibration range assay of 1 to 750ng/ml, provided there was sufficient saliva available from that participant. In HSE years where saliva was collected from adults, those from self-reported smokers using a high calibration range assay of 1 to 750ng/ml, and any that were below 1ng/ml were then re-assayed with a low range assay. Samples from adults who were self-reported non-smokers were analysed in the same way as children. Although HSE 2024 only involves children's sample, the successful supplier must also be capable of carrying out analysis for adult samples.

For costing purposes, supplier should assume that 900 saliva samples collected from children will be assayed using a low range calibration and 25 will be re-assayed using a high range calibration.

*For information only: In a HSE survey year where saliva is collected from adults and children, typically 90% of samples are initially assayed using a low range calibration and 10% are initially assayed using a high range calibration. 7% of all samples are re-assayed using a high range calibration and 0.5% of the samples are re-assayed using a low range calibration.*

Saliva samples are collected in participants homes using one of two protocols. Option one requires the participant to dribble their saliva into a tube (this method is used for all participants aged 4 to 10 and anyone aged 11+ who wished to use this

method). Option two uses the Salivette method and is offered to participants aged 11 and over.

The saliva samples are packaged and initially dispatched via Royal Mail Tracked 24 to a central laboratory (along with blood and urine samples also collected as part of the study). The central laboratory will arrange onward shipping of saliva samples by courier to the successful supplier. A sample manifest will be provided on paper and electronically (by secure FTP). For HSE 2024 we anticipate a relatively small number of shipments, between 2 and 6 in total. In subsequent years, we envisage a return to a typical routine with fortnightly batches being dispatched from the central laboratory to the supplier.

The successful supplier will provide batches of QC checked results electronically, by secure FTP. For HSE 2024 we anticipate a relatively small number of results files (between 2-6). In subsequent years, we envisage a return to a typical routine with results provided on a monthly basis. Calibration and QC data will be delivered each quarter.

Once data collection has been completed and QC checks finalised, the results from the quality checks of the data will be summarised in the HSE Methods report. This includes results for a range of target values: the target value, assayed value, standard deviation and coefficient of variation achieved. See tables 27 and 28 in the [HSE 2022 Methods tables](#) for an example. The successful supplier will write a section in the Quality Control of Analytes chapter, including details on the laboratory equipment, procedures and analytical methods used for analysis of samples; and the procedures and reporting thresholds for quality control (see chapter 9.3 *Quality Control of blood, urine and saliva analytes* in [HSE 2022 Methods report](#) for an example). Comments from the supplier will be sought on any abnormal assay values that fall outside the quality assessment threshold.

After analysis, residual samples should be stored until the study fieldwork is complete and data reconciliation is complete (for HSE this is likely to be at the end of 2025). The National Centre for Social Research will then request that samples and accompanying paperwork are destroyed. At the end of the contract, the supplier shall securely delete all electronic data from its systems.

## **Indicative project timetable**

The Timetable below is subject to change and Tenderers will be informed accordingly.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Date</b>
Contract start date	January 2025
Project set-up	January 2025
Samples shipped	February - April 2025
Analysis and reporting	February - April 2025
Calibration and QC reporting	April 2025
Sample destruction	December 2025

## 6. Data Protection

The successful supplier will act as a data processor. The supplier must comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Personal data will only be stored and processed within the UK.

Ahead of any personal data being shared, the supplier must sign NatCen's Third Party Agreement and all staff handling confidential data must sign a non-disclosure agreement (see Annex C). Suppliers are not required to complete these as part of the tender process.

As mentioned in Section 4, suppliers are required to complete the NatCen Information Security Questionnaire (Annex B) as part of the tender submission.

## 7. Contractual details

A sub-contract will be put in place between NatCen and the successful supplier. A template subcontract is available in Annex D. Relevant terms from the main HSE contract between NHS England and NatCen are embedded in the sub-contract.