



Invitation to Quote

Invitation to Quote (ITQ) on behalf of Low Pay Commission (LPC)

Subject: To further our understanding of how employers set pay for apprentices

Sourcing Reference Number: CR20016

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

Registered in England and Wales as a limited company. Company Number 6330639.
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VAT registration GB618 3673 25
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Version 2.0

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 Contracting Authorities improve efficiency, generate savings and modernise.

It is our vision to become the leading service provider for the Contracting Authorities 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 Contracting Authorities. This allows Contracting Authorities 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 the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), 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 Contracting Authorities. Our Contracting Authorities who have access to our services and Contracts are detailed [here](#).

Privacy Statement

At UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) we recognise and understand that your privacy is extremely important, and we want you to know exactly what kind of information we collect about you and how we use it.

This privacy notice link below details what you can expect from UK SBS when we collect your personal information.

- We will keep your data safe and private.
- We will not sell your data to anyone.

- We will only share your data with those you give us permission to share with and only for legitimate service delivery reasons.

<https://www.uksbs.co.uk/use/pages/privacy.aspx>

Privacy Notice

This notice sets out how the Contracting Authority will use your personal data, and your rights. It is made under Articles 13 and/or 14 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

YOUR DATA

The Contracting Authority will process the following personal data:

Names and contact details of employees involved in preparing and submitting the bid;
Names and contact details of employees proposed to be involved in delivery of the contract;
Names, contact details, age, qualifications and experience of employees whose CVs are submitted as part of the bid.

Purpose

The Contracting Authority are processing your personal data for the purposes of the tender exercise, or in the event of legal challenge to such tender exercise.

Legal basis of processing

The legal basis for processing your personal data is processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller, such as the exercise of a function of the Crown, a Minister of the Crown, or a government department; the exercise of a function conferred on a person by an enactment; the exercise of a function of either House of Parliament; or the administration of justice.

Recipients

Your personal data will be shared by us with other Government Departments or public authorities where necessary as part of the tender exercise. The Contracting Authority may share your data if required to do so by law, for example by court order or to prevent fraud or other crime.

Retention

All submissions in connection with this tender exercise will be retained for a period of (7) years from the date of contract expiry, unless the contract is entered into as a deed in which case it will be kept for a period of (12) years from the date of contract expiry.

YOUR RIGHTS

You have the right to request information about how your personal data are processed, and to request a copy of that personal data.

You have the right to request that any inaccuracies in your personal data are rectified without delay.

You have the right to request that any incomplete personal data are completed, including by means of a supplementary statement.

You have the right to request that your personal data are erased if there is no longer a justification for them to be processed.

You have the right in certain circumstances (for example, where accuracy is contested) to request that the processing of your personal data is restricted.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data where it is processed for direct marketing purposes.

You have the right to object to the processing of your personal data.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFERS

Your personal data will not be processed outside the European Union

OR

COMPLAINTS

If you consider that your personal data has been misused or mishandled, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner, who is an independent regulator. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
0303 123 1113
casework@ico.org.uk

Any complaint to the Information Commissioner is without prejudice to your right to seek redress through the courts.

CONTACT DETAILS

The data controller for your personal data is:

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

You can contact the Data Protection Officer at:

BEIS Data Protection Officer, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET. Email: dataprotection@beis.gov.uk.

Section 2 – About the Contracting Authority

Low Pay Commission (LPC)

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) is an independent public body (sponsored by The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy: BEIS) that advises the Government about the National Minimum Wage. There are 9 Low Pay Commissioners drawn from a range of employee, employer and academic backgrounds. All the commissioners serve in an individual capacity. They are supported by a small secretariat, which has 8 members of staff.

The Low Pay Commission makes evidence-based recommendations based on:

- commissioned and independent research;
- analysis of relevant data regarding the state of the economy and the impact of the minimum wage;
- consultations with employers, workers and their representatives;
- written and oral evidence from a wide range of organisations; and
- fact-finding visits across the UK to meet employers, employees and representative organisations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/low-pay-commission>

Section 3 - Working with the Contracting Authority.

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.	Contracting Authority Name and address	Low Pay Commission (LPC) 8th Floor, Fleetbank House, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London, EC4Y 8JX
3.2.	Buyer name	Alexandra Richards
3.3.	Buyer contact details	Research@uksbs.co.uk
3.4.	Maximum value of the Opportunity	£30,000.00 Excluding VAT
3.5.	Process for the submission of clarifications and Bids	All correspondence shall be submitted within the Messaging Centre of the e-sourcing. Guidance Notes to support the use of Delta eSourcing 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 on Contracts Finder	Friday, 7 th February 2020 Contract Finder
3.7.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification questions shall be received through Delta eSourcing messaging system	Monday, 17 th February 2020 11:00
3.8.	Latest date / time ITQ clarification answers should be sent to all Bidders by the Buyer through Delta eSourcing Portal	Tuesday, 18 th February 2020
3.9.	Latest date and time ITQ Bid shall be submitted through Delta eSourcing	Monday, 2 nd March 2020 14:00
3.10.	Clarifications if required	Wednesday, 4 th March 2020
3.11.	Anticipated notification date of successful and unsuccessful Bids	Friday, 6 th March 2020
3.12.	Anticipated Contract Award date	Friday, 6 th March 2020
3.13.	Anticipated Contract Start date	Tuesday, 10 th March 2020
3.14.	Anticipated Contract End date	Thursday, 31 st December 2020
3.15.	Bid Validity Period	60 Days

Section 4 – Specification

1. Background

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) invites tenders from researchers to further our understanding of how employers set pay for apprentices.

The LPC is currently undertaking a review of the minimum wage regime for apprentices. The existing framework has been in place since the introduction of the Apprentice Rate in October 2010. The Apprentice Rate applies to all apprentices aged under 19 and to those apprentices aged 19 and over in the first year of their apprenticeship. Those aged 19 and over in their second year or beyond are entitled to the age-related National Minimum Wage (the 18-20 Year Old Rate, the 21-24 Year Old Rate and the National Living Wage for those aged 25 and over).

The Apprentice Rate and the other minimum wage rates cover all hours worked as apprentices, including on and off-the-job training. It was introduced in October 2010 at a rate of £2.50 an hour. It notably rose by 21 per cent in October 2015. Between its introduction and April 2020, it will have increased by 66 per cent, faster than the youth rates of the NMW and the adult rate of the NMW. Despite the introduction of the NLW, the adult rate will only have increased by 47 per cent over the same period. The increases in the youth rates range from 25 per cent for 16-17 year olds, 31 per cent for 18-20 year olds and 38 per cent for 21-24 year olds. The LPC is keen to understand the impact of these increases in the Apprentice Rate on any employer decisions concerning pay. There have been significant policy reforms in England in recent years, which have changed the composition of the apprenticeship programme. It should also be noted that apprenticeship policy varies across the four countries of the UK and that the impact of the Apprentice Rate might vary.

Our recent analysis of the BEIS Apprentice Pay Survey, set out in Chapter 6 of the Low Pay Commission 2019 Report,¹ showed that coverage of the Apprentice Rate is highest for the youngest apprentices, with 36 per cent of 16-18 year olds covered by the rate in the first year of an apprenticeship and 18 per cent of those in their second year. Coverage falls steeply for older apprentices, such that only 2 per cent of those aged 25 or older are covered

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856590/LPC_Report_2019.pdf

in their first year. There are many further employers who effectively rely on the existence of the rate by paying below the age-appropriate NMW but above the Apprentice Rate.

However, most of the employers that we have spoken to on our visits and as part of our consultations have said that they do not use the Apprentice Rate. In our 2019 Report, we showed that there is a persistently high level of measured underpayment of the rate. This may be due to the fact that many employers do not appear to be paying for training hours (particularly those undertaken at college where the employer is less able to monitor hours worked). Employers state that they are paying at the age-appropriate rate but often do not include all training hours in their calculation and therefore the actual pay received by the apprentice is lower than their entitlement under the law.

We believe the non-payment of training hours is driving the high levels of underpayment among apprentices, as well as distorting the wider picture on apprentice pay. In the Apprentice Pay Survey we found that more than a quarter of apprentices are paid below the appropriate minimum wage, with the highest levels of underpayment for 16-18 year olds in the first year of an apprenticeship.

The LPC has an ongoing remit to monitor the operation of the UK minimum wage, and to assess the impact of increases in the levels of the Apprentice Rate, NMW and NLW in order to advise the Government on future rates. It undertakes continuous evaluation of the impact of minimum wage upratings on the sectors and groups of workers most affected, and on the labour market more generally. The LPC draws upon a range of evidence in making its assessment, including a number of research projects commissioned specifically to inform its recommendations. As in previous years, the LPC wishes to commission a number of new research projects to inform its future work. Among those, we would now like researchers to assess how employers set pay for apprentices.

There is global interest among policy-makers in the impact of minimum wages and the treatment of apprentices, trainees and young workers. The LPC is required to make recommendations to the Government on the level of the Apprentice Rate and its structure. The findings from this research will directly inform policy decisions touching the lives of thousands of apprentices as well as contributing to policy formation in the UK and beyond.

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) invites tenders for research that facilitates a better understanding of how employers set pay for apprentices.

We are particularly interested in understanding how the Apprentice Rate factors into employer decisions around apprentice pay. We are also interested in understanding the extent to which training hours and off-the-job training factors into pay setting for apprentices.

The study should assess whether decisions around pay setting for apprentices vary by age, gender, level of study, industry, occupation and geography. It should have a strong focus on groups – in particular, age groups – where coverage and usage of the Apprentice Rate is high.

It is important that the researchers gather information from employers that use the Apprentice Rate. The proposal should clearly outline how the researchers intend to identify or engage with these employers. Very few of the employers we have spoken to claim to pay the minimum wage, but pay surveys suggest that many apprentices across a range of sectors are paid at the Apprentice Rate or just above.

The study should note that training is a devolved issue and take account of the different apprentice regimes that apply across the four countries of the UK.

Specifically, the study might:

- Explore the factors that determine how employers set the pay of apprentices, in absolute terms and in relation to other workers;
- Assess any impact of the increases in the Apprentice Rate on pay setting for apprentices;
- Investigate why some employers set pay for apprentices to be above the Apprentice Rate but below the appropriate age-related rate, and how these rates are determined;
- Explore whether training hours influence decisions around pay and how employers record training hours;

- Explore whether employers believe the Apprentice Rate is overly complex and if so, why.

3. Suggested Methodology

The methods and data used are at the discretion of the prospective researchers, but these should be specified in detail. It is anticipated that this study will use new sources of information to examine the issues mentioned above. If using new sources, such as case studies, focus groups and surveys of employers, researchers should indicate: how they propose to gather data for the study; how they intend to make use of these data; and how they propose to overcome any remaining limitations of the data. The time frame for the study should also be specified.

It is vitally important that researchers access appropriate employers (those that employ apprentices and make use of the Apprentice Rate and/or the sub-minima rates of the NMW). These are most likely to be in certain low-paying sectors, such as hairdressing and childcare, or in higher-paying sectors that we know make use of the sub-minima rates of the NMW for apprentices, such as construction, engineering and the manufacture of furniture.

The research should use up to date, respected, methods, in line with recent studies. It is essential that the methodology and analysis stands up to external scrutiny by professional academics, economists, statisticians and analysts.

4. Deliverables

The initial primary audience for this work will be the LPC. The main output of the study will be a report, detailing the aims and objectives of the research, the methodology adopted and the main findings. The report should include a brief non-technical Executive Summary. An electronic copy (preferably Word and pdf format) for the LPC website will be required. The LPC will make the findings publicly available, and a synopsis of the report will be included in the Apprentice Rate Review and/or the Low Pay Commission's 2020 Report.

In addition, there would be other deliverables expected. Deliverables may vary according to individual projects but will include:

- A methodology paper;
- An informal presentation of data sources and methodology to the LPC at an initial meeting;

- Regular updates on emerging findings and project progress;
- A draft interim report;
- A draft final report;
- A final report incorporating comments from LPC;
- Two/three presentations of the key aspects of the work (at the research workshops on 23 April 2020 and 3 September 2020 and at a Commission meeting on 11 June or 15/16 July); and
- Key datasets and syntax files if appropriate.

The timescale for delivery of the research is flexible according to the needs of the project, but we would be looking in the first instance for an outline of the project at an inception meeting in mid-late March, a detailed methodology paper by 31 March, a presentation on data sources and methodology at the research workshop on 23 April, a draft interim report with initial findings by 29 May 2020, with a draft final report by 30 June 2020, a potential presentation to Commissioners on 11 June or 15/16 July, a final agreed report by 31 July, and a presentation to the 8th Annual LPC Research Symposium on 3 September 2020. Project management is likely to include attendance at an inception meeting at LPC, and review meetings as required.

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 and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required.

The evaluation and if required team may comprise staff from UK SBS and the Contracting Authority and any specific external stakeholders the Contracting Authority deems required. After evaluation and if required moderation 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	SEL1.3	Compliance to Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act
Commercial	SEL2.10	Cyber Essentials
Commercial	SEL2.12	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Act and the Data Protection Act 2018
Commercial	FOI1.1	Freedom of Information
Commercial	AW1.1	Form of Bid
Commercial	AW1.3	Certificate of Bona Fide Bid
Commercial	AW3.1	Validation check
Commercial	AW4.1	Compliance to the Contract Terms
Commercial	AW4.2	Changes to the Contract Terms
Quality	AW6.1	Compliance to the Specification
Quality	AW6.2	Variable Bids
Price	AW5.1	Maximum Budget
-	-	Invitation to Quote – received on time within e-sourcing tool
In the event of a Bidder failing to meet the requirements of a Mandatory pass / fail criteria, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to disqualify the Bidder and not consider evaluation of any of the Award stage scoring methodology or Mandatory pass / fail criteria.		

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	20%
Quality	PROJ1.1	Understanding the requirements and context	25%
Quality	PROJ1.2	Methodology and approach	30%
Quality	PROJ1.3	Ability to deliver (including project planning, resource and risk management and expertise)	25%

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:

$$\text{Score} = \{\text{weighting percentage}\} \times \{\text{bidder's score}\} = 20\% \times 60 = 12$$

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.
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All questions will be scored based on the above mechanism. Please be aware that there may be multiple evaluators. If so, their individual scores will be averaged (mean) to determine your final score as follows:

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.

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. Responses received after the date indicated in the ITQ shall not be considered by the Contracting Authority, unless the Bidder can justify that the reason for the delay, is solely attributable to the Contracting Authority
- 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 Delta eSourcing messaging system to raise any clarifications to our ITQ. You should note that 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 the Contracting Authority is and what they want – a generic answer does not necessarily meet every Contracting Authority'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, concise and ideally generic 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 ensure that the Response and any documents accompanying it are in the English Language, the Contracting Authority reserve the right to disqualify any full or part responses that are not in English.
- 7.12 Do check and recheck your Bid before dispatch.

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

DO NOT

- 7.13 Do not cut and paste from a previous document and forget to change the previous details such as the previous buyer's name.
- 7.14 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.
- 7.15 Do not share the Procurement documents, they are confidential and should not be shared with anyone without the Buyers written permission.
- 7.16 Do not seek to influence the procurement process by requesting meetings or contacting UK SBS or the Contracting Authority to discuss your Bid. If your Bid requires clarification the Buyer will contact you. All information secured outside of formal Buyer communications shall have no Legal standing or worth and should not be relied upon.
- 7.17 Do not contact any UK SBS staff or the Contracting Authority staff without the Buyers written permission or we may reject your Bid.
- 7.18 Do not collude to fix or adjust the price or withdraw your Bid with another Party as we will reject your Bid.
- 7.19 Do not offer UK SBS or the Contracting Authority staff any inducement or we will reject your Bid.
- 7.20 Do not seek changes to the Bid after responses have been submitted and the deadline for Bids to be submitted has passed.
- 7.21 Do not cross reference answers to external websites or other parts of your Bid, the cross references and website links will not be considered.
- 7.22 Do not exceed word counts, the additional words will not be considered.
- 7.23 Do not make your Bid conditional on acceptance of your own Terms of Contract, as your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.24 Do not unless explicitly requested by the Contracting Authority either in the procurement documents or via a formal clarification from the Contracting Authority send your response by any way other than via e-sourcing tool. Responses received by any other method than requested will not be considered for the opportunity.

Some additional guidance notes

- 7.25 All enquiries with respect to access to the e-sourcing tool and problems with functionality within the tool must be submitted to Delta eSourcing, Telephone 0845 270 7050
- 7.26 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 as part of the evaluation process.
- 7.27 Question numbering is not sequential and all questions which require submission are included in the Section 6 Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 7.28 Any Contract offered may not guarantee any volume of work or any exclusivity of supply.
- 7.29 We do not guarantee to award any Contract as a result of this procurement
- 7.30 All documents issued or received in relation to this procurement shall be the property of the Contracting Authority / UKSBS.
- 7.31 We can amend any part of the procurement documents at any time prior to the latest date / time Bids shall be submitted through the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.32 If you are a Consortium you must provide details of the Consortiums structure.
- 7.33 Bidders will be expected to comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.34 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
- 7.35 Your bid will be valid for 60 days or your Bid will be rejected.
- 7.36 Bidders may only amend the contract terms during the clarification period only, only if you can demonstrate there is a legal or statutory reason why you cannot accept them. If you request changes to the Contract terms without such grounds and the Contracting Authority fail to accept your legal or statutory reason is reasonably justified, we may reject your Bid.
- 7.37 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.
- 7.38 If you fail mandatory pass / fail criteria we will reject your Bid.
- 7.39 Bidders are required to use IE8, IE9, Chrome or Firefox in order to access the functionality of the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.40 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.

- 7.41 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 the Delta eSourcing Portal.
- 7.42 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.

- 7.43 The Government introduced its new Government Security Classifications (GSC) classification scheme on the 2nd April 2014 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. 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

- [Contracts Finder](#)