



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

National Careers Service: Area Based Contracts

Generic - Once Only (OO) Questionnaire Template for completion.

NOTE: Organisations choosing to subcontract some or all of their delivery are accountable and responsible for the performance of each subcontractor. The ESFAs assessment of Prime Contractors' performance will also take into account the performance of any subcontractors and will be marked accordingly.

It is Mandatory to complete only once all of the questions listed, irrespective of your Bidding Area(s) selected and upload once in the relevant place in the online technical envelope.

The Growth Company Limited

Question [OO-01]: Understanding of context

Please describe how the National Careers Service contributes to the Governments economic growth and social mobility agenda's.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Sound knowledge of policy context such as DfE Careers Strategy, Fuller working lives, Industrial Strategy and other relevant policy documents, and how you will keep up to date with policy changes;
- How you will support both the strategic direction and the delivery priorities for the National Careers Service and explain how your business model will respond to changes in policy;
- How your strategic planning will be aligned to government policies and priorities;
- Sound knowledge of key National Careers Service principles such as:
 - Universal and impartial service;
 - Service is independent from learning provision;
 - Tailored to the needs of the individual;
 - Sound knowledge of advice and guidance that supports career management for individuals;
 - Focusing on priority groups customers; and
 - Encouraging customers to self-serve using the digital service.

Maximum score 150 points – weight = 1

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

'A thriving careers system, that is accessible to everyone, is at the heart' of Government's focus on social mobility (DfE Careers Strategy). The National Careers Service (NCS) sits at the intersection between UK Government's (UKG) economic growth and social mobility agendas by:

- Supporting growth: sharing knowledge of employer/economy needs to combat skills/labour shortages inhibiting growth
- Enabling mobility: helping customers to grasp their potential and take practical steps to realise it.

This intersection reflects the Growth Company's (GC) unique position. We are the NW's largest economic development organisation, supporting:

- 15,000 NW businesses to grow and create 9,254 new jobs p.a. through business support/export/inward investment services
- 28,837 NCS customers p.a. into jobs/learning.

Understanding the impact of policy on people, places and employers is business critical to us.

SUPPORTING THE POLICY CONTEXT

GC will help NCS fulfil its role in UKG strategies, e.g.:

- Careers Strategy's aim to provide 'support and guidance tailored to individual needs' and use 'data and technology to help everyone make choices about careers'. Our e-booking system (CAS) will enable customers to choose the channel that best fits their need (phone/Skype/face-to-face [F2F]), with guidance tailored to diagnosed/presenting needs. GC will help 'adults get, hold and progress in a job, whatever their age, ability or background' with Priority Groups (PG) accessing Specialist Advisors (e.g. jobless 50+). We will integrate with/promote National Digital Service to primary/secondary customers (e.g. LAs to support 19+ transition)
- Fuller Working Lives (FWL) by supporting individuals to increase earnings across their working lives and reducing the number leaving work prematurely (e.g. via redundancy). Embedding what works from NCS/DWP pilots, we will: work with Growth Hubs to target low-skilled SME workers for Mid Life Career Reviews and help employers understand the productivity gains from a multi-generational workforce; support older workers with health conditions to identify roles/working patterns/retraining to extend working lives
- The Industrial Strategy's intention to 'boost national productivity and the earning power of people' by inspiring people to pursue jobs/learning that reduce employer skills gaps/shortages that constrain growth. By improving customer skill levels (e.g. by referring to the National Retraining Scheme) we will help tackle 'the biggest drivers of regional variation in productivity'
- Social mobility in Great Britain by directly impacting on the Working Lives indicators. Customers will be supported to increase earnings and enter/progress into managerial/professional occupations. We will integrate with Opportunity Areas (Oldham/Blackpool).

GC will keep up-to-date with policy changes through existing partnerships with DfE/ESFA, BEIS, DIT, DWP, HCLG. Each has a named Account Manager (Carol Jamieson=ESFA) who ensures UKG policy changes are identified, with service implications agreed at quarterly cross-GC fora.

SUPPORTING NCS STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our business model has been designed to contribute to policy areas (above) and NCS' strategic direction/delivery priorities via:

- Right Advice, Right Time: high quality (OFSTED 2), flexible, local, multi-channel delivery including evenings/weekends, integrated with the National Digital Service and local provision
- Skills Funding Statement: our targeted marketing and partnership strategy, which will secure 95% of starts from PGs. PG Specialist Advisors use a blended tech approach and incorporate practice from our 17/18 pilot to raise Apprenticeship awareness
- Digital by Default: Each Adviser is a trained Digital Champion, augmenting Careers Information Advice & Guidance (CIAG) with national tools and local digital content (CareersNW), enabling customers to self-serve

- Careers guidance provision for young people: GC works with 34 LAs, 493 schools/colleges to support the transition to NCS at 19 (25 for SEND)
- Technical Education Reforms: Advisers have received T-Level awareness training, and regular local LMI briefings, to ensure advice keeps pace with local economic shifts.

SUPPORTING NCS DELIVERY PRIORITIES/PRINCIPLES:

- Universal and impartial service: Integration with national web/phone helps promote/ensure a universal service. Each Adviser will be L4+ qualified and required to demonstrate impartiality via observations
- Service is independent from learning provision: GC has ethical wall arrangements: the NCS delivery teams are not part of the GC Skills & Education division and NCS data is segregated from other GC customer/employer CRMs. Service independence was a mandatory scored selection criterion in our open and competitive supply chain process
- Tailored to the needs of the individual: Customers will access support at a time (8-8), channel (F2F/skype/phone) and method which works best for them
- Skilled knowledge of advice and guidance that supports career management (CM) for individuals: Our methodology supports CM via effective needs diagnosis, iterative interviewing models, case loading and follow-up. Advisers are trained in multi-modal motivational interviewing and will build SMART Action Plans. Expert LMI combines sector/national information with insights from GC's 15k employer relationships
- Focusing on PG customers: We engage/empower PGs through established colocation with public/third sector partners in 275+ venues. Specialist Advisers have been upskilled to meet specific PG needs e.g. SEND
- Encouraging customers to self-serve using the digital service: customers are encouraged to register a digital careers account and evidence career management with new NCS tools. We also utilise proven tools (e.g. LearnMyWay) to increase customer confidence/skills in using digital services.

Our business model is agile-by-design and we will respond to policy changes by adapting our:

- Subcontracts e.g. contract variations to targets/priorities/allocations
- Marketing/Partnership strategy to reflect e.g. new PGs
- Frontline Capabilities by creating new posts or upskilling Advisors
- Geographical prioritisation. Advisors are tech-enabled and mobile, enabling us to increase frontline capacity e.g. FTE in Opportunity Areas
- LMI: Our Careers Intelligence Unit (CIU) updates and broadcasts our LMI to reflect new strategies (e.g. Sector Deals)
- Products/Processes e.g. assessment tools, action plans, the Career Growth Programme to reflect new PGs.

We also work with the ESFA to trial new approaches, e.g. the FWL pilot trialling Mid Life Career Reviews and the ASIST pilot to engage unsuccessful Apprenticeship applicants.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TO ENSURE ALIGNMENT

Our strategic planning process is led by our Head of Careers. An Annual Business Implementation Plan ensures UKG policies/priorities are:

- incorporated via aligning with ESFA planning cycles (financial year) and reflecting ESFA contract variations
 - identified via our stakeholder Account Management and CIU policy scanning.
- The plan informs our delivery model, internal resource allocation and subcontractor agreements.

Any in-year changes are:

- identified via quarterly reviews with the ESFA/LEPs
- considered at the Quarterly Project Board
- discussed with subcontractors at the NW Quality and Strategy Group
- reflected in internal/subcontractor resource allocation/agreements.

Question [OO-02]: Marketing, Social Media and Branding

Please explain how you will support a nationally co-ordinated marketing and social media strategy for the service as detailed in PART C - Marketing and Branding of the ITT.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your capability and experience of supporting media activities through radio and press interviews, and digital media activities such as on-line interviews, engagement through social media, webinars, etc. You should include details of how you have measured the impact of media activity;
- Your capability and experience of producing content which can be used across a range of media platforms including print, digital and social media;
- Your ability to use digital and social media to raise awareness of the value of careers advice through differentiated activities which address the needs of particular audiences;
- Your experience of managing co-ordinated marketing activity across different media (including digital and social media) in support of national campaigns and promotions, so that consistent messages reach local areas and venues.
- How you will ensure that all careers advisers use social media strategy to promote the service by generating and sharing local relevant content which exemplifies how the service benefits customers;
- What you will include in your marketing strategy for each of the geographical areas that you are bidding for and the impact measures that will be used;
- What investment you will make to achieve these requirements and in what timescale
- How you (and your subcontractors) will ensure you comply with the brand for the Service and any related brand values and guidelines as detailed the tender specification.

Maximum score 150 points – weight = 3

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

The Growth Company (GC) marketing campaigns reach 30k+ employers, 200k+ customers and 800+ stakeholders p.a. We are a trusted custodian of the NCS Brand (since 2012). GC's Director of Marketing & Communications Deborah Holmwood will lead our National Careers Service (NCS) strategy, supported by Head of Stakeholder Communications Carla Nuttall and a NCS Partnerships & Marketing Officer (PMO). Our approach will:

- Support nationally co-ordinated marketing and social media strategy
- Apply across our supply chain/NW contract
- Be 100% brand compliant e.g. using NCS web/0800 in adverts.

RADIO, PRESS AND DIGITAL

GC's PR Team has built a formidable network of media partners (e.g. Bauer/Global/BBC) covering 31 Regional Radio Stations, regional TV (BBC/ITV) and all major local press (e.g. Lancashire Evening Post) generating £8.4m advertising value equivalent (AVE) media coverage (16/17). We will use this network alongside our cross-Group digital media reach (487k followers, 514k unique web visitors) to drive up

referrals, increase brand awareness and showcase impact. GC's 16/17 #SEEDIFFERENT radio (e.g. Kiss), press (e.g. Warrington Guardian) and digital campaign was a perception-changing strategy for Apprenticeships, reaching 215k young people/24k employers. It delivered: 85k web hits; 53,009,339 social media impressions; 120k+ engagements in 22 months.

CONTENT CAPABILITY/EXPERIENCE

GC will use our team of 15 marcomms experts and 250+ external/agency copywriters to produce targeted, impactful print/media/digital content for NCS. GC created 55 case studies for NCS in 2017 (23 shared nationally). These bring a human face to our news stories, LMI bulletins and thought leadership across:

- 20+ e-newsletters e.g. NCS LMI=500 subscribers
- 41 digital/social media accounts
- Trade publications e.g. CDI Career Matters
- Media e.g. Liverpool Echo

GC's Work and Health Programme launch press pack secured coverage by BBC, ITV, Manchester Evening News (MEN). Content shared reached 12,234 with a 20% total engagement rate (industry standard 2%).

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

GC's 41 audience-specific digital channels will deploy differentiated approaches to target different audiences e.g. PG/Employers/Stakeholders. 50 NW NCS Adviser Digital Champions will work within the national Communications Toolkit and Social Media Playbook. In 2016 GC trialled 10 borough-level Twitter feeds to promote hyper-localised NCS information/LMI. LA-specific content yielded traction and impact: @Mcrcareers had 1.8k impressions in one month (341% increase); jobs fair tweets achieved 439 impressions/26 engagements. Daily impressions increased from 2 to 336 and profile views by 80%. Our bi-monthly NCS e-bulletin takes messages from ESFA/DWP/CDI to 356 regional stakeholders.

MANAGING COORDINATED ACTIVITY

GC are experts in integrating national branded campaigns locally (e.g. DIT Export is GREAT), delivering consistent co-ordinated messages. In 2017 we delivered a multi-channel campaign for National Apprenticeship Week (NAW). 'Every Week is Apprenticeships Week' landed impactful messages through: local media/broadcast partners (e.g. MEN Feature (circ. 52k), GM Business Week (circ. 12k+)); Social Media 'events' with radio station Key 103 reached 5,200 young people (11.6k impressions/4% engagement). 200+ posters were displayed across LA/VCS/Schools/FE. Prospectuses featuring NCS were circulated to 80k adults.

CAREERS ADVISERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Creating/sharing inspirational content (e.g. case studies) via social media are mandatory KPIs for all advisers/subcontractors. The NCS Social Media Playbook will govern practice and define boundaries e.g. customer consent. Social media will be core to staff induction/CPD. GC are Digital Champions Network members and will use accredited online learning to ensure all NCS Advisers are competent/confident in social media. Promoting all channels including national/local social media will be part of GC's Quality Framework, monitored via observations and digital account tracking.

MARKETING STRATEGY AND IMPACT MEASURES

Our NW Strategy (summarised below) will raise awareness of National/Area Based Services, create strong brand awareness, and ensure NCS speaks with one voice in the NW. Our objectives are to:

1. Integrate national/local messages

A new PMO role will be a linchpin, connecting National/Prime/Subcontractor/Stakeholder marcomms teams. They will co-ordinate a NW-wide Events/Campaign diary, including quarterly stakeholder roadshows/1:1s and aligned national activity e.g. Skills Show. They will increase awareness of area/national NCS and cascade monthly messaging using established channels with all LEPs/LAs/partners.

-Impact Measure: Stakeholder/Primary/Secondary Customer Brand awareness (baseline/annual survey).

2.Maximise customer audience reach across each LEP/CA/LA

Carla will coordinate Press/PR through GC media partners (above), establishing a social media hierarchy (Region/Local/Stakeholder) across our supply chain (120k additional followers/222k reach) to share local case studies/LMI, using paid-for boosts for key campaigns. Co-located advisers will be trained/equipped to advocate NCS in 275+ confirmed community locations. Quarterly LEP-based high-street Awareness drives will promote the whole service.

-Impact Measure: Increased: local use of National Digital/Contact Centre (SFA Benchmarks); LMI/opportunity awareness (baseline/annual survey); digital/social media traction (analytic tracking).

3.Personalise engagement to Priority Groups (PG)

PG-specific content (e.g. 9xmonthly case studies shared with NCS/GC Media partners) designed by professional copywriters will deliver an AVE of £180k and be distributed through the channels used by PGs (e.g. Instagram 18-24/local newspapers for 50+). PMO will amplify content reach by integrating with local campaigns e.g. GC is working with GMCA Mayor Andy Burnham on the 'EU City of Age' (Fuller Working Lives). 25% of Advisers will be media-trained to support marcomms.

-Impact Measure: 54,000 p.a. customers engaged (95%=PG).

4.Support the digital first agenda (increasing self-serve)

Deborah will project manage production/dissemination of 15 Social Media 'How to guides', training Advisers (NW-wide) on using Social Media for career management (e.g. Vlogging/Meme/LinkedIn Templates). LMI distributed through Social Media (6xdaily posts) will link to national web-services as a call to action.

-Impact Measure: Increased local use of National Digital Service and CMO.

5.Protect the Brand (Compliance)

GC takes NCS brand/guidelines/values/customer charter compliance seriously. We will:

-Embed them through Induction/CPD/toolkits across staff/subcontractors

-Reinforce through supply chain contracts

-Promote NCS website/digital tools and share national social media posts

-Provide compliance-checked collateral

-Obtain ESFA approval during design stages

-Audit advisor/subcontractor output and brand/Customer Charter visibility

-Impact Measure: Zero non-compliance (TNS/Observations/visits).

INVESTMENT

GC will invest £194k in achieving the impact: £82k in the PMO to ensure delivery of local/national aligned activity and brand/key messaging; £112k for strategy, press/PR including media packages (GC gets 45% discount), digital (including web, paid-for Social Media, video case studies), events, materials/collateral. We will also leverage local supply chain partner resource (marcomms/Digital Champions and 34 Social Media accounts).

Question [OO-03]: Information Technology (IT) Systems

Please provide evidence of your capability to meet information technology requirements and the systems and resources you will have in place to deliver the service integration by the required timescale.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your current or proposed operational IT systems and the changes required to them to support the delivery of the service; ensuring the security measures are in place that reduce the risk of exposure of sensitive information from these systems;
- A plan that demonstrates how you will integrate with the Data Sharing Service from October 2018;
- Your approach to delivering the obligations set out on the Code of Connection;
- Your approach to delivering the data interfacing defined in the tender specification;
- Your approach to establishing/amending service management arrangements to ensure continuity of services and ability to develop/enhance services over time;
- Your planned 'end-to-end' service solution, clearly describing the key components including telephone capability;
- Your service integration plans, highlighting any bespoke aspects that need development and when they will be delivered;
- How the IT systems and the business processes will be tested;
- What criteria will be used to demonstrate readiness;
- How you will drive and support growth (scalability) through information technology;
- How you will cater for change and evolution of the service;
- Your track record of delivering projects for ICT integration to agreed deadlines; and
- How subcontractors will use IT systems;

Maximum score 150 points Weight = 3

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

CORE IT SYSTEM

The Growth Company (GC) will use CogniSoft YETI for our core National Careers Service (NCS) CRM system. YETI is secure, cloud-based, and integrates with CDS. YETI is GDPR-ready and will manage/monitor/report customer data/MI/claims and share data with DSS to track NCS touchpoint activity. Our new service requires changes/enhancements, including:

- Base data/field configuration to new Data Dictionary/funding rules
- Integration of GC's Careers Appointment System (CAS)
- Data Migration and Prime/Subcontractor/Team hierarchy
- Telephony API integration to auto pop-up client records based on caller ID
- Code of Connection (CoC) integration APIs to DSS

SECURITY

GC and CogniSoft are certified ISO27001/Cyber Essentials; Supply-chain-wide Cyber Essentials Plus (CEP) will be achieved ahead of go live (GC=19/04/18). Dom Delsoldato (GC IT Director) is responsible for IT security/governance frameworks. Framework controls include: vulnerability; patches; secure configuration; physical security; protective monitoring/intrusion detection/response; end user device; authentication/access control; at-rest/in-transit data; user/admin separation/management. Boundary networks are protected by Enterprise-class Firewalls to protect networks/assets (e.g. Fortigate 600D). NCS benefits by:

- Application Security: Secure application controls reduce risks of sensitive data exposure; YETI Groups/permissions are all based on the principle of least privilege. Access rights are granted based on job role/functional requirements

- Data Centre Security: Data is hosted in CPNI-audited Equinix datacentres within the UK (certified ISO27001:2013/ISO22301/ISO9001/ISO5001, SSAE16/ISAE3402, PCI-DSS, OHSAS18001), providing 99.9% resiliency to our platforms. Physical infrastructure is designed with high availability/robust backup/Disaster Recovery and is owned/maintained by GC/CogniSoft with access only by nominated employees. InfoSec controls are governed by ISO27001:2013

- Security Testing: Annual penetration tests (PT) are carried out by CREST-accredited external providers (GC=NCC/YETI=CESG CLAS)

OUR PLAN

Our Plan follows an Agile methodology with the below milestones to integrate with DSS:

27/3/18 IT (Prince2/Agile) Project Manager/Group Appointed

13/7 Mapped Data Dictionary/Model

20/7 YETI reconfigured

17/8 DSS event-based subscription API

17/8 Developed Automated Claims API

20/8 Hardware in place e.g. Tablet/laptop

24/8 Prime/Sub Connectivity Resilience Tested

31/8– 4/9 Expert/All Users Trained

07/9 Prime/Sub IT audited

07/9 Internal Tests e.g. JSON Payload Handling

17/9 Readiness Tested (below)

CODE OF CONNECTION

GC will sign and flow through CoC obligations in sub/vendor contracts, satisfying annual security questionnaires/IT health checks. YETI meets current CoC (from 2014), employing physical/logical separation between hosting environments and adhering to CoC policy/testing regimes. GC Governance, Internal Audit (IA), ISO and PT will implement/monitor/control obligations for: Service Responsibilities (e.g. records), Data Controls (e.g. quality), and security (e.g. Physical).

INTERFACING

Interfacing will be delivered to OUR PLAN and governed in line with CoC. We chose YETI as CogniSoft have delivered/produced/consumed RESTful services using c.200 methods (e.g. JSON Payloads/Tolerant Readers). All CogniSoft Apps are RESTful compatible e.g. YETI integrates with DWP Universal Jobmatch (UJ) using RESTful methods. GC partners with CDW for short-term interfacing assignments.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT

GC's 6 x FTE ITIL Service Desk with ticket-management system is led by an ITIL-qualified Manager. Service requests are raised by phone/email/web portal with 2nd/3rd line support provided by app/hardware/CogniSoft specialists. Contract SLAs include: helpdesk support M-F 8-6, 24hr email/portal, 1st contact (2 hours), hourly updates and resolution (12 hours), call logging and reports.

Development staff provide 3rd line support to the Desk (minor development work) allowing real time support for user issues/bugs. Large development requests move to SERVICE CHANGE/EVOLUTION process.

END-TO-END

- Engagement: CAS Appointment booking system supporting direct customer/stakeholder referrals; BP&N call platform facilitates warm transfers and immediate access; cold transfers transmit to YETI via DDS
- Triage: CAS diagnostic tool supports channel choice/access to local support
- Action Planning: YETI (customer data capture), Careers & Skills Action Plan (CSAP) generation
- Career Management: digital career management captured in YETI via DDS interface; CareersNW providing access to local/perishable LMI/content
- Impact: The following maximise JLOs: YETI broadcasting learning/job opportunities; Learner Records System (LRS)/UJ interfaces; claims/MI processed via DDS; phone tracking/follow up with call recording
- Underpinned by: Adviser equipment (laptop/tablet/mobile) for outreach/phone/Skype (1:1 video)/Social media support

INTEGRATION/BESPOKE ASPECTS

YETI's flexibility will enable integration into NCS Accounts/tracking touchpoints via DSS (above).

Bespoke aspects further integrating services:

14/9 CAS upscaled across NW

17/8 CareersNW

17/8 Learning and Information Platform (LIP)

9/9 Phone Integration, APIs linking in/outbound, warm/cold transfers to YETI records.

TESTING

GC/CogniSoft processes/systems will be tested by ISO9001/CEP/IA. Annual test evidence will be available to ESFA (Integration/business acceptance/end-to-end/Business Continuity/Active monitoring/alerting/PT). Due diligence/annual IT Health Checks are applied to sub/vendor contracts.

READINESS

Alongside TESTING (above) GC Readiness Checklist includes: Hardware build; RESTful scenario tests; User Acceptance; Security Requirements; Apps Complete; Issue Log Closure; User Guide; Expert/User Training.

SCALABILITY

GC infrastructure/service includes scalable servers and YETI licenses. Also: CAS increases NCS referrals; Tech Triage fast-tracks self-serve clients (focus 1:1 on PGs); Phone/YETI integration improves productivity to support more customers; LearnMyWay increases customer skills to channel shift to National web; UJ/LRS/DSS integration captures more outcomes/touchpoints, releasing frontline capacity to engage more people.

CHANGE/EVOLUTION

GC cater for change/evolution through Agile/Prince2 methodologies. Our ITIL Change Management process assigns resource and confirms delivery times to ESFA. GC employs an IT Solutions Architect (+ 7FTE Dev Team) to design/build/deliver evolutions. System changes are sandboxed and rolled out in waves, outside of operating hours to reduce disruption.

TRACK RECORD

GC has met 100% of deadlines in delivering 6 ICT integration projects across ESFA/BEIS/DWP. Developments for NCS contracts included design/build/delivery of: ESyNCS (CDS and Strategic MI projects/XML Automated claims), CAS pilot with GC/DWP systems. CogniSoft capabilities are strong, meeting deadlines for 5xNCS Primes' live operation of initial transition/CDS service/MI Data Collection routines.

SUBCONTRACTORS

Subcontractors will use:

- CAS: appointment booking/diary management/triage
- YETI: warm/cold transfers, create/update customer records and National Account, create CSAPs, track touchpoints, manage caseload and outcomes/validation
- Telephony platform: NCC referrals, call recording, telephone monitoring (KPIs)
- LIP: Workforce development

Access to above managed by secure logins, with designated user rights. Training provided.

Question [OO-04]: Subcontracting

Please explain how you intend to manage the risks associated with delivering the service through a network of subcontractors to meet ESFA requirements?

In your response please provide evidence of:

- The capacity in which you intend to use subcontractors in the delivery of the service, including:
 - o Information, Advice and Guidance services; and
 - o Supporting services including, but not limited to, technology, telephony, marketing, advertising, administration and finance.
- The processes you will put in place to:
 - o Select and appoint subcontractors; and
 - o Monitor, measure and manage the performance of all subcontractors including how you will deal with poor quality and under or over performance; and
 - o Manage risks and mitigation.
- How you will ensure they meet the mandatory requirements and the minimum service requirements as set out in the ITT;
- How you will ensure consistent quality in the delivery of the service;

Please **supply details on the Subcontractor pro forma** of all of the organisations (name and type of organisation) with whom you intend to subcontract with and how they will support your delivery model.

Maximum score 150 points Weight = 2
Maximum 5000 characters (2 pages)

The Growth Company (GC) subcontracts (£14.2m pa) and manages risk across 80 diverse subcontractors on behalf of ESFA/DWP/BEIS/GMCA. GC holds the Merlin Standard (Sep 17) and our National Careers Service (NCS) 'management of subcontractors is exceptional' (OFSTED 17).

CAPACITY

To manage supply chain service integration risks, GC centralises contract-wide support from our 125+ experts (ICT/telephony/marketing/marketing/finance/quality). These functions are supported by vendor contracts e.g. Cognisoft YETI, UNIT4 Accounting, BP&N telephony. We ensure delivery meets local need by choosing the Careers Information Advice & Guidance (CIAG) specialist (including GC) best suited to each LEP/LA. Together we will deliver 100% coverage of end-to-end CIAG via 1:1/phone/digital channels from 275+ NCS locations.

SELECTION/APPOINTMENT

GC uses OCT processes to reduce performance/quality risks. For NCS we issued an open advert Stage 1 call (Nov-17). A panel of service/procurement experts scored applicants against a published matrix mapped to ESFA's SSQ/experience/capability. 15 were shortlisted. Stage 2 tested technical capability (e.g. engagement) and track record (e.g. Outcomes), mapped to NCS ITT. GC's panel scored tenders against published criteria and we issued provisional volume/geography/financial offers (data-driven e.g. NOMIS) to 8 suppliers (40% of all volumes) scoring highest on CIAG capabilities/NCS contractual separation/independence/local knowledge/CIAG qualified staff (Proforma). All passed ESFA SSQ and GC financial due diligence. A varied supply chain reduces impact of supplier failure.

MONITOR/MEASURE/MANAGE PERFORMANCE RISKS

GC's NCS Supply Chain Manager (SCM), Karen Sellors, will be responsible for performance in line with ESFA Performance Management Framework. Karen will monitor performance weekly via live YETI reports. Performance Dashboards (incl. Quality) will report against agreed profiles/tolerance. Internal Audit will monitor compliance. Where tolerance is breached, Karen will increase monitoring and provide extra support (training/management). Where improvement is insufficient, escalation includes: month 3-Improvement Notice and month 6-market share shift/caps/termination. High performance is rewarded by market share uplift. GC has "developed and implemented comprehensive arrangements to monitor all aspects of the work of subcontractors exceptionally well" (Ofsted 17). GC successfully managed the exit of 2 failing subcontractors (e.g. TUPE) in our existing NCS services, whilst maintaining delivery and seamless caseload management.

MANAGE/MITIGATE RISKS

GC's Risk Register process: Identifies potential risks; assesses RAG-rate likelihood/Impact; plans SMART mitigation actions; assigns owners; assesses residual risk; and monitors. Significant risks escalate to Corporate Register e.g.:

- Risk (R): Unable to secure CIAG supply chain. Mitigation (M): OCT process, pre-bid due diligence, delivery role explained
- R: Underperformance and/or low quality. M: as above/below
- R: Compliance breach. M: training/guidance issued, evidence sampling, observations/site visits
- R: Provider failure. M: annual due diligence checks, quarterly/monthly/weekly monitoring.

MANDATORY/MINIMUM SERVICE REQUIREMENTS (MR/MSR)

We will ensure these are delivered by:

- Appointing subcontractors with proven capabilities to meet MR/MSR
- Establishing/staff training on/auditing a universal delivery model which locks in MR/MSR
- Ensuring identical contractual terms flow down e.g. contract/specification/outcome targets/MR/MSR
- Using YETI to track/monitor compliance e.g. Action Plans
- Quarterly contract reviews to test compliance e.g. SCM Observation.

CONSISTENT QUALITY

GC holds ISO9001, Matrix (Dec 17), IIP, and Merlin standards; all subcontractors hold Matrix. GC is Ofsted Grade 2 with outstanding features (16/17). Led by GC's Quality Manager (QM), our NCS Quality Improvement Plan will drive us to Grade 1 attainment and ensures consistent quality across suppliers, addressing recommendations from Ofsted/Merlin/ESFA research/evaluations (TNS/IpSOS Mori).

GC Self-Assessment Process and Quality Assurance (QA) Strategy/Toolkit will apply to all suppliers. QM will provide quarterly detailed supplier QA reviews assessing: Action Plan quality; Observations; Moderation; Customer Feedback/Complaints; Impartiality; Attendance Monitoring; Continuous Quality Improvement Plans; Compliance Controls/accuracy. Results form part of supplier performance dashboards.

Our "outstanding" (Ofsted 17) Workforce Development Strategy ensures consistent quality across suppliers covering: NCS requirements; Matrix; Ofsted; LMI/Digital Champions; Specialist Adviser Knowledge. Staff competence/qualification requirements are in line with Career Development Institute Competence/Qualifications Credit Framework.

GC's Quality & Compliance Cycle is regulated via monthly validation and quarterly formal subcontractor reviews and Quality & Strategy Group Meetings.

Question [OO-05]: Performance Management

Please include details of your performance management processes that will ensure your performance (and that of any of your subcontractors) is maintained at the agreed level and explain how your performance management will result in an improved service and improved Outcomes for Customers.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your performance monitoring measures, the relationships between them and how they are used to get a holistic view of performance;
- How you use benchmarking to measure performance;
- How you utilise trends to measure improvements;
- How you use performance management to improve Outcomes for Customers;
- The intervention activities you will have in place and how are these will be implemented and monitored;
- How you will use accurate and timely data to provide a targeted, relevant personalised service offering;

Maximum score 150 points Weight =2

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

The Growth Company (GC) is a high performing/high quality (Grade 2) National Careers Service (NCS) Prime with 20 years' CIAG experience. We have refined our Performance Management Framework (PMF) to improve and maintain outcomes above our current levels to secure a Grade 1 Ofsted.

In 2017 we supported 78,656 clients and achieved:

- 100% Customer Satisfaction (CSO)
- 98% Career Management (CMO)
- 47% GMCWS(GM)/38.4% LCL Job and Learning (JLO)
- 91% GM/95% LCL Financial performance

PERFORMANCE MONITORING MEASURES

Our 'exceptional performance management methodologies' (Ofsted 17) measure:

- 'WHAT' is achieved (ESFA PMF): Customer Volumes/Priority Groups (PGs), CSO/CMO/JLO, financial performance (tolerance levels/funding caps).

- 'HOW' it was achieved (quality KPIs): e.g. Demographics (E&D KPIs), appointments booked in <5 days.

Our 'rigorous collection and analysis of data' (Ofsted 17) supports: performance/risk management; early intervention (e.g. CMO is a predictor of JLO); and staff/supplier/system interventions. Our YETI (CRM) will produce daily/weekly/monthly dashboards and league tables of Actual/Target performance at Adviser/Team/Supplier level.

BENCHMARKS

GC benchmarks services to improve performance/quality. We will drive a step change by:

- National NCS Benchmarking: Monitoring national rankings to adjust targets (staff/teams/supplier) in line with national funding targets/conversions/PMF/tolerance levels to achieve/maintain top quartile performance
- TNS Mystery Shopping reports inform league tables, allow longitudinal analysis and target interventions e.g. GC GM contract has the highest warm transfer rate (83%) following TNS analysis prompting call handling training
- IPSOS MORI reports: e.g. Year 6/Q4 report was used to improve contract reviews and tighten call/digital monitoring/controls. This increased satisfaction (87%) and advocacy (89%) above NCS averages
- Ofsted Grade 1: Via ESFA Prime Forum and bilateral working we identify/adopt practice from high quality providers. E.g. customer-owned career management; Champions model; and New LMI Strategy
- External Evaluations: E.g. SQW evaluation enabled GC to adopt new caseload progression methods and tracking approaches (e.g. QR codes, social media, evening/weekend calls)
- Observations: Our NW Quality & Strategy Group will benchmark/share cross-supplier good practice (e.g. Action Plans/LMI); codifying this on our web-based Learning and Information Platform (LIP) to increase 'outstanding' interventions in line with our quality improvement plan.

USING TRENDS

GC produces quarterly trend reports (including monthly adviser/team/supplier CSO/CMO/JLO projections) aligned to ESFA reporting periods to support monitoring/measuring and quality/performance improvements e.g:

- Contract KPIs: by team/subcontractor and customer characteristic. In 14/15 GC identified LLD GM customers dropped below KPI (8%). Engagement with VCSOs (e.g. United Response) saw monthly trend increases to 24% (last quarter)
- Quality/Compliance KPI trendlines show improving/declining/static performance at adviser/team/subcontractor level to identify areas for remedial action/investment
- Financial tolerance: monitoring claim/audit trends across partners identifies opportunities to cap/shift market share or commission new provision.

Trend reports are shared via weekly telekits, monthly/quarterly performance reviews for action/intervention (e.g. subcontractor allocation reviews, identifying good practice, performance/capability reviews).

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

Our PMF operates on a support-first basis, providing performance management tools/systems to increase outcomes. For NCS our approach includes:

- Stretching Targets: Contract-level KPIs flow down to every Adviser/team/supplier and include a stretch target to fix targets at the top quartile and/or above contractual commitments
- CPD: Our CDI-award winning 'exceptionally well-considered and comprehensive CPD programme for staff and subcontractors' (Ofsted) includes a Performance Excellence CPD strand which instils proven methodologies to stretch customer ambition and Adviser performance e.g. MINT
- Good Practice Sharing: Our quarterly Quality & Strategy Group takes an evidence-based approach to identifying and understanding good practice, codifying it, and rolling it out
- Teams/Subcontractor League Tables enable personal/organisation benchmarking/transparency, incentivising everyone to move up the rankings
- Reward and Recognition: Each partner operates incentivisation schemes (e.g. Adviser of the Month/OTE/Prizes).

INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

YETI reports/trend analysis inform performance review meetings to identify areas of excellence/improvement. GC has an Implementation Plan to rollout our new NCS model. Carol Jamieson will oversee implementation and interventions (including instigating caps) for:

- Staff: KPIs (outcomes/quality/compliance) agreed for the month ahead; Team Manager monthly 1:1 performance reviews; caseload tracking tool; trend forecasting; risk rating and Performance Improvement Plans. 3 stages of intervention for low performance: 1-Support (e.g. training/coaching); 2-Perform (weekly 1:1 supervision); 3-Capability (formal HR process)
- Subcontractors: Targets flow down (as above) and are agreed at go-live; weekly YETI monitoring/telekits; monthly formal KPI reviews; observation reports; risk rating. 3-stage escalation: 1-Support (training, management support); 2-Improvement Notice (3-months); 3-Market Share Shift/Termination (6-months)
- Customers: KPIs/action plan items and targets agreed in Career and Skills Action Plan (CSAP); 3 CSAPs are quality checked per quarter per advisor. YETI highlights inactive/stalled customers for Adviser intervention/follow up.

A TARGETED RELEVANT PERSONALISED SERVICE

We have designed an evidence-based next-gen NCS service following forensic analysis using Power BI analytics software. This has informed all aspects of our service and data will continue to define how we target resources and better personalise our offer e.g.

- CA/LA/LEP liaison and rigorous data analysis (e.g. NOMIS) will help to target locations/communities with higher concentrations of specific PGs e.g. Lone Parents, Knowsley
- targeted marketing & engagement activity, differentiated for PGs/places; e.g. good news in local press will work well in Blackpool (high 50+ population)
- accurate and timely data input to YETI will provide real-time data on which PGs are engaged and delivery of parity of outcomes
- service access location data across 275+ locations will help identify areas of high/low demand
- rigorous LMI analysis. LMI is validated by GC's Careers Intelligence Unit (CIU) and shared via social media/Careers NW. Good LMI increases CMO/JLO
- Feedback e.g. quarterly customer focus groups/stakeholder surveys/mystery shoppers/customer surveys provide key data on how service stages (e.g. Career Growth Programme) do/don't work
- CSAP/Intervention Data: analysis of CSAP objectives/completion provides insight on the suitability of actions for each customer. CIU will examine what Career Management actions lead to JLO achievement (by PG Group) to help advisers sequence the right support for each customer
- CDM/DSS Touchpoint Data: through YETI integration we will be able to measure customers' multichannel experience and better evidence the right time for each PG to transfer to self-serve
- Data accuracy: in line with DPA/GDPR, accuracy and use of individuals' data is checked at each touchpoint.

Question [OO-06]: Security Standards and Business Continuity

Please describe how your organisation is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of National Careers Service data will be protected.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- How your organisation, and any appointed sub-contractors or third parties, will meet all the National Careers Service security standards as set out in the relevant sections of the attached document set
- How you can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected. GDPR data processors must only be appointed if they can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected.

Please attach a copy of your organisations overall security policy and any other relevant documentation that demonstrates your organisations active commitment to security and how this policy is implemented. **Attach this policy to the appropriately marked section in the Technical envelope.**

Please attach a copy of your organisations business continuity and disaster recovery policies and plans to ensure continuity of service in the event of a business continuity incident. **Attach this policy to the appropriately marked section in the Technical envelope.**

Maximum score 150 points Weight =2

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

MEETING SECURITY STANDARDS

The Growth Company (GC) is a trusted ESFA Data Processor who ensures the confidentiality, integrity and availability of 250,000 data records pa. Our processes, people and systems comply with National Careers Service (NCS) Security Standards; Data Collection Guidance; Code of Connection; Data Sharing guidelines; Funding/Performance Rules; Contract for Services; and Schedule 8. Our Commitment Statement, signed by our Chief Operating Officer, will detail commitment to Information Assurance (IA) and Security Conditions (SC). We ensure compliance by:

-Investing in secure systems: E.g. Cognisoft YETI. CogniSoft is ISO27001:2013 certified, hold Cyber Essentials (Cyber Essentials+ achieved pre-go live) and YETI meets the CDS Code of Connection. CogniSoft's applications/hosting environment are tested annually by CLAS consultants to CREST standards.

-Risk Assessment: Mike Lafon, Head of Risk Management, is responsible for Corporate Risk Management. Mike leads an annual Information Security Risk Assessment process across direct/subcontracted delivery, reporting directly to our CEO. NCS Head of Careers undertakes an annual data risk assessment mapped to an Information Security Compliance matrix, resulting in identification of Security Gaps which are captured in a Risk Register. Service and Corporate Risk Registers and mitigations/controls are reviewed quarterly and scores amended.

- Subcontractor Data Security: We undertake NCS Compliance Assessments across direct/subcontracted delivery. Due diligence assesses subcontractor IA and SC. Subcontractors submit an Information Security (IS) Policy & Plan modelled on ISO27001 and NCS requirements. Our Audit team test ongoing compliance by annual audits. YETI will be used by subcontractors to ensure consistent, secure and available data.

-Data controls: are outlined in our ISO9001-standard Process Manuals, annually updated, outlining best practice in data quality, collection, sharing, consumption, duplication, storage and processing. Controls are mapped to NCS guidelines and ISO27001. Staff undertake mandatory training/testing on data protection/controls, with annual/interim refreshers.

-Data quality: Staff are responsible for ensuring the quality of data entry and are formally assessed by performance reviews, observation and record reviews. Independent Internal Audit measure the quality of input to identify training needs. NCS system-based controls (e.g. checkboxes) minimise opportunities for errors.

-Data Security: Dominic Delsoldato, Head of IT is responsible for IT Security, setting the framework for effective controls covering: vulnerability management; patch management; secure configuration; physical security; protective monitoring/intrusion detection; end user devices; security incident response; authentication/access control; protection of data at rest/in transit; user/administration separation; and user management. Annual penetration tests are carried by CREST-accredited external providers (GC=NCC; YETI=CESG CLAS).

-Handling Data Breaches: Breaches are captured in our Information Security Event Log. Our Information Security Incident Procedure outlines how we ensure detection, reporting, investigation, resolution and management of a personal data breach and a contingency plan. In the event of data loss, we have a robust Disaster Recovery plan. ESFA will be contacted immediately to inform them of any breach [Article 33 (2) (GDPR)] and the actions we have taken. If deemed necessary, an Independent Investigating Officer is appointed immediately.

GDPR REQUIREMENTS (SUFFICIENT GUARANTEES)

As an established ESFA Prime, GC has the resources and expertise to implement the technical and organisational measures to comply with GDPR and protect the rights of data subjects. These provide the sufficient guarantees required by ESFA and our own responsibilities as Data Processors.

Organisational Measures: GC is registered with the Information Commissioner (2002) and will cooperate with ICO/ESFA on data security issues [Article [A]31] including investigatory [A58]. We hold Cyber Essentials (Plus pre-go live) and ISO27001. We provide supply chain-wide systems and monitoring to manage supply chain sub-processors. Each year we have achieved an NCS Annual Compliance Certificate.

Our commitment is outlined in our revised policies/plans including: Data Security; Disaster Recovery; HR Recruitment Policy; Acceptable Use Policy; Information Security Policy; Physical Security Policy; Access Control Policy. Each reflects business, legal, regulatory and contractual obligations, including GDPR and sets the direction and principles for action. Our implementation of GDPR follows ICO guidance and builds on DPA principles. In developing our new processes, we have used the Article 29 Working Party's guidance and associated checklists from the ICO.

Following a GDPR Readiness Assessment, we have developed a GDPR Implementation Plan, incorporating an updated Information Security Plan (ISP) and outlining the actions we will take to ensure requirements are met/the rights of data subjects protected. All sub-processors are named (approval and any changes will be sought in writing from ESFA [A28.2]).

Technical Measures: YETI has GDPR-specific functionality e.g. rules application module to implement/manage data retention policies; a right to be forgotten function to erase records; and SAR reports to generate a copy of the subject's data. YETI provides a record categorisation of information under lawful processing and aids tracking of processing activity [A30.2]. Where there is a need for consent, reminders are provided to confirm and obtain consent. All data is maintained by Cognisoft and hosted at their secure Equinox UK Data Centre (ISO22301) ensuring the security of processing [A32].

Resources and Expertise: Our Data Protection Officer, Dee Beckett [A37], is leading on GDPR implementation. Dee has undertaken a data and information audit to update the asset register, map data flows and ensure that all personnel involved in collection, processing, sharing and storage of data are clearly identified, and DBS checked where appropriate, with levels of data access assigned depending on job role. Each data control team has identified the lawful basis for our processing activity under the GDPR (ITT specification [A29]), documented it and updated our privacy notices. Processing changes will be on the written instruction of ESFA. We invest in GDPR-specific training for staff to ensure we meet our obligations, protect individuals and avoid fines, Penalties and Compensation [A82-4]. GC's SMT is scrutinising GDPR progression at weekly board meetings.

Individual's rights (IRs): YETI increases our functionality in managing IRs. We have stress-tested YETI and mapped our systems/procedures to ensure they cover all IRs, e.g.: right to be informed; how we will store/process/delete personal data; provide it electronically in a commonly used format; Subject's Right to Access; Right to rectification; Right to erasure (retention/disposal); Right to restrict processing; Right of data portability; Rights related to automated decision making; and the Right to object. Each individual will be informed of their IRs at first contact. We are also updating how we seek, record and manage consent and refreshing existing consents (where needed), including our systems to verify individuals' ages.
