Case for Direct Award to the Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

Heath Education England [HEE] believe that RCNs the only organisation capable of providing support such as to meet specific requirements of the HEE implementation of the Baroness Watkins of Tavistock review of mental health nursing in England work – individually and jointly. RCN is the only supplier with the requisite expertise and experience to assist HEE in fulfilling Mandate deliverables and actions of UK government policy including the Long-Term Plan and People Plan. Specifically:

* Improvement of organisational culture in mental health nursing led establishments leadership culture, by working in partnership with One Voice collaborative to shape and inform cultural change.
* Develop the skills of mental health nurses and the wider workforce in terms of psycho social interventions
* Supporting non-training grade, staff grade, specialty and associate specialist (known collectively as ‘SAS’ doctors) by implementing relevant recommendations of the NHS Improvement and HEE ‘Maximising the Potential’ report (2019) for SAS doctors;
* Facilitating growth of the medical workforce through recruitment and retention interventions, with a focus on providing appropriate, accessible educational opportunities and support for junior doctors at a regional and national level.

HEE believes that it is highly unlikely for any other supplier to be able to provide the following skills/tools provided by RCN as a current supplier for the following reasons:

1. RCN, founded in 1916, is the largest UK based professional membership organisation and registered charity representing nurses and nursing; RCN is the only organisation to hold the IP for this Psycho Social training model, as well as being the sole organisation who hold the IP for the standards which were originally developed to deliver this training in early 2000. The organisation was granted Royal status in 1939 and therefore carries a level of reputation and access to expertise that is not replicable across other suppliers.
2. The RCN is a body that can and does make academic level awards as part of their training development and delivery.
3. RCN has been delivering this specific piece of training since early 2000, and has a long standing track record of developing well attended and well received training for nurses. They also have a dedicated training arm and are developing nursing standards that will define the nursing profession as a whole, which in turn means they are setting the standards for nurses to adhere to.
4. RCN has a membership of over 500,000 members and so has wider access to members of the nursing profession, and the skills and expertise therein, than any other organisation.
5. RCN operate a number of expert reference groups and forums and this includes mental health forum, education forum, CYP Mh forum amongst others
6. The NHS Long Term Plan (2019) specifically outlines the requirement to work with the Royal Colleges of which RCN is the only one with a professional development element focussed on nurses and nursing and is the only nursing royal college.

The duration of the direct award is 3 years so as to:

* Provide HEE programmes with continuity and sustainability through and across NHS financial years.
* Achieve greater efficiency in HEE programme management by reducing delays in project implementation and delivery. This efficiency is achieved by having one procurement exercise and therefore reduces procurement timelines and associated costs.
* Ensure that this piece of work can be completed and progress to be a self sustaining piece of training.

In the event that RCN are unable to provide dedicated services, there will be a detrimental impact on HEE service delivery for a number of reasons:

* Significant delay to the delivery of projects where RCN is the only supplier, due to their positioning within the community and expertise. This will include the delivery of a specific project developed to ensure the delivery of training to meet recommendations of the Baroness Tavistock review
* NHS organisations will be met by increased pressure as nursing workforce numbers and associated quality of care will continue to drop if recruitment and retention policies and education and training improvement cannot be devised by the supplier with their expertise of the workforce.
* Stakeholder engagement will be adversely impacted if HEE are unable to utilise the contacts and networks owned and facilitated by RCN uniquely.

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