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| **Social Work Fast Track Tender****1282****Questions and Answers** |
|  | **Question** | **Answer** |
| **1.**  | Your invitation to tender letter on page 5 states “Your organisation has or will be able to secure Cyber Essentials Plus certification prior to contract award”*and* on page 6“the successful tenderer will be required to provide evidence of Cyber Essential Plau certification or equivalent (i.e. demonstrate they meet the five technical areas the Cyber Essentials scheme covers mean Cyber Essentials Plus rather than just Cyber Essentials certification prior to contract award” Can you confirm that you really mean Cyber-Essentials Plus certification rather than just Cyber-Essentials certification ? | The terms and conditions of the ITT have been amended, including details of the level of internet security required.  This has now been set at Cyber Essentials, not Cyber Essentials Plus, in line with similar government contracts. |
| **2.** | I note for the revised tender (1282) for the delivery of a fast-track entry programme for child and family social workers that that the contractor needs to have I SO/IEC 27001 accreditation. Having spoken with accrediting bodies, I understand typical lead times for ISO accreditation are 8-12 weeks at the lower end. I wanted to confirm that the accreditation would be required at the point of contract aware, i.e. January 25th 2016, rather than the point of tender submission 18th November 2015. I understand that a bidding organisation could obtain (and submit) a letter confirming that accreditation is being sought to offer some assurance to the contracting body. I would be grateful if you can confirm that this is the case.  | We expect the successful bidder to comply by the date that the contract is signed. We shall accept a letter confirming that accreditation is being sought as part of any submission made.  |
| **3.** | In requirement 1, tenderers are invited to set out “support so that graduates of the programme successfully complete their induction year” is the “induction year" their first year on the programme, or the second?  | This is the induction year following graduation as a social worker, therefore this is referring to the second year of the programme. |
| **4.** | In requirement 2, the tender calls for a detailed plan. Given that the duration of the contract over 3+2 years that activities broken down month-by-month is a sufficient level of detail? | Yes this is sufficient. |
| **5.** | In requirement 3, on costs, I presume there are no limits on consultancy/ marketing spend/ fixed assets such as laptops as there are none mentioned in the tender. Please can you confirm that this is the case? | There are no limits however the Cabinet Office introduced Efficiency Controls in 2010 and we would expect providers to comply with this guidance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-controls/cabinet-office-controls-guidance-version-40> |
| **6.** | In requirement 4, tenderers are invited to set out “how the independence and impartiality of any advice would be maintained, particularly to avoid any potential conflicts of interest”. I’m not sure I understand this in the context of the tender. Please can you explain? | The successful supplier will be working closely with participants, local authorities and potentially other organisations to fulfil the contract. KPIs in the ITT include reports on participant and local authority satisfaction levels. A supplier is asked to show how independent and impartial advice will be provided on these and similar matters. |
| **7.** | In terms of meeting Cyber Essentials standards, is this per ISO – i.e. needs to be in place at point of award, rather than point of submission of tender? | This is to be in place at point of award. |
| **8.** | Having looked into the ISO accreditation, it seems there are various different bodies which accredit the organisations who provide ISO certification. (e.g. ASCB - an International accreditation, UKAS) Please can you let me know what form accreditation the accrediting body needs? | Further information about accreditation can be found at <http://www.cyberstreetwise.com/cyberessentials/> which, as well as lots of informative downloadable documents. If you wish to Identify a suitable Certifying Body please contact one of the Accreditation Bodies:* For small and medium sized enterprises – IASME (IA for SMEs): <https://www.iasme.co.uk/index.php/cyberessentialsprofile>  (questionnaire on free download)
* Organisations of all sizes – CREST: <http://www.cyberessentials.org/>
* Scotland and North England – Quality Guild (QG) - <http://www.qgbiz.co.uk/>

For further information about ISO (e.g. ISO 27001) accreditation bodies please  refer to the UK Accreditation Service website’s list of [accredited certification bodies](http://www.ukas.com/about-accreditation/accredited-bodies/) and, for ISO 27001, the list of certification bodies for [Information Security Management Systems (ISMS)](http://www.ukas.com/about-accreditation/accredited-bodies/certification-body-schedules-ISMS.asp). |
| **9.** | Which section of the response constitutes part 2 and is therefore subject to the 40 page limit? | Part 1 refers to the declarations and information to be provided by the tenderer (document 4) and part 2 refers to your response to the specifications (section 3). The 40 page limit refers to section 3 of your bid- all other sections fall outside the page limit. |
| **10.** | Is section 4 “Cost and Charging Arrangements” a repeat of requirement 3? Or do you require further information? | We would expect to see a summary of the headline costs in section 3 and then a detailed breakdown in section 4- this section falls outside the 40 page limit. |
| **11.** | Can project plans and marketing plans be included as annexes and therefore not subject to the 40 page limit? | Yes, project plans and marketing plans can be excluded from the 40 page limit. |
| **12.** | Please advise on the source of funding for a “competitive training bursary”. | Subject to Spending Review outcomes, DfE will be funding a training bursary and we would expect to see this included in any financial breakdown. |
| **13.** | Should bidders include in their tender costs a bursary in line with the current Frontline or Step Up bursary of around £19,600? | That is for bidders to determine and justify. |
| **14.** | How does DfE propose to administer the bursary? Is it the intention that the contracted HEI will manage bursary funds? | The contracted provider will be responsible for administering all funds related to the programme. |
| **15.**  | Will DfE be seeking a minimum degree classification at undergraduate level for fast track participants? | The programme focuses on attracting high-calibre students into the profession. It will be for bidders to determine entry requirements. |
| **16.** | Can project and marketing plans be included as annexes, and are therefore not subject to the 40 page limit? | Yes, project plans and marketing plans can be excluded from the 40 page limit. |
| **17.** | For ISO certification, does the certification body have to be accredited by UKAS, or can it be accredited by one of the other accreditation bodies (e.g. ASCB)? | It is up to the organisation/company to decide which certification body to go with. |
| **18.** | Many of the KPIs outlined will only be able to be collected by the contractor using its own management systems, so I don’t see how these can be “independent” – presumably you want bidders to explain how they will collect this information? I can also see that in some cases it would be possible to provide independent verification for information provided to the department, is that what is envisaged here? | KPIs provide the Department with information and advice about how the programme is performing and as yet we can’t predict what “similar matters” might arise. However, we are saying that should issues arise during the lifetime of the contract then we would expect the contractor to provide the Department with independent and impartial advice on these issues, should they arise. We will discuss with the successful bidder what independent verification may be needed of KPIs. |
| **19.** | Please can you confirm that the IP licence referred to in clause 12.13 of the Terms and Conditions will be for non-commercial purposes only? | The contract clearly states what “Intellectual Property Rights” means and what is included under this heading. Clause 12.13 requires the contractor to grant to DfE a royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable and non-exclusive licence (with a right to sub-licence) to use any Intellectual Property Rights they own or have developed prior to the Effective Date or otherwise not in connection with the Contract (“Contractor IP”) if it is required to enable the DfE (and potentially others) to take any benefit of the Contract including the Services provided and the use and further development of the IP Materials. |
| **20.** | Will the DfE grant a licence to the Contractor to use Service Specific IP Materials after the expiry of the Contract period? | This is a matter to discuss with the successful bidder. |
| **21.** | Is the Department open to considering alternative responses from tenderers that are not fully compliant with the terms and conditions? That is to say, that the tenderer may submit both a compliant and an alternative response, for example where the tenderer considers that the proposed alternative represents improved value for money? | All bids will be assessed against the ITT. Tenderers are free to submit what they wish but need to observe the 40 page limit. |
| **22.** | Should the costing information include projected costs for the potential contract extension into Years 4 and 5, or just for the initial 3-year period? | It should include costing information for years 4 and 5 as well as the initial 3-year period. |
| **23.** | Can you please advise whether evidence provided in the form of case studies can be included within the annex or should be within the body of the main proposal and counted towards the 40 page limit. | Evidence provided in the form of case studies can be included within the annex however this should only add to the evidence provided in the main proposal and should not constitute new evidence. Please see the answer to Q9 in the Q&A log on contractsfinder for information about what to include in the 40 page limit. |
| **24.** | Can the DfE tell us what rate of inflation they assume for their other programmes? | This is for bidders to tell DfE. |
| **25.** | Is there flexibility if a bidder is invited to interview?  | This is something that we would pick up with those invited to interview, however as it stands the interviews will take place on 7th December. |
| **26.** | Schedule 8 item 4.12 (page 60). Document states that the Contractor will "not Process or otherwise transfer any Personal Data outside the EEA". Google mail stores data outside the EEA. For those organisations using gmail what assurances would DfE be satisfied with in order to demonstrate security compliance? | That is a discussion to be had between the department and the successful bidder. |
| **27.** | Can you please clarify the basis of the calculation of service credits that will be applied to any under performance in service levels and KPIs as set our in Schedule 4, in order that our tender proposal charges can be modelled accordingly? | Service credits will need to be proposed by the potential bidder and any issue relating to underperformance would be dealt with on a case by case basis. |