

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**FOR**

**RM6355 Provision of Safeguarding Support for Covid-19 Inquiry**

**Contract Reference CCZV23A01**

**CONTRACT FOR**

**UK COVID-19 INQUIRY**

**A NDPB OF THE**

**CABINET OFFICE**

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1. What You Need To Know

What ‘We’ and ‘You’ Means:

* 1. When we use ‘Buyer’ we mean the specific department/organisation who are requesting information on ability to provide the proposed goods/services.
  2. When we use ‘you’ or ‘your’ we mean your organisation, or the organisation you represent, in completing this Request For Information (RFI).
  3. We are requesting information on behalf of the Buyer for their proposed requirement.
  4. The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”) regulate how we procure. This means that we and you have to follow processes that are fair, transparent and equitable for all bidders.

# RFI Scope

* 1. The Buyer requires information to assist in refining the requirements for this procurement activity
  2. You are asked to advise if your organisation would be interested in bidding for this opportunity as part of your response to the RFI. If you are not interested, it is requested that a reason be submitted as this is valuable feedback for the Buyer to consider.
  3. The Buyer has not specified a format for the detailed response as this can limit creativity and make it difficult to understand. You are therefore freely available to present information in your desired format.

# Background To The Buyer

* 1. The UK Covid-19 Inquiry (the “Inquiry”) is independent of government and sponsored by the Cabinet Office (“CO”). It has been established to examine the UK’s preparedness and response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to learn lessons for the future.

# Background To The Requirement

* 1. Trauma-informed emotional support and safeguarding services are integral to the Inquiry achieving the objectives set out in the Inquiry’s [Terms of Reference.](https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/documents/terms-of-reference/)
  2. The Inquiry has pledged to be trauma-informed across all of its work.
  3. A trauma informed approach means seeking to reduce the risk of retraumatisation to people who are engaging with the Inquiry.
  4. Emotional support is one of the key ways of reducing retraumatisation by offering timely, sensitive, psychologically informed emotional support to people engaging with the Inquiry’s work.
  5. Emotional support is not counselling or therapy. The focus is on facilitating the person’s engagement with the Inquiry, creating support plans, facilitating stabilisation, providing psychological containment and facilitating the person’s journey through their engagement process.
  6. The contracts shall provide the offer of emotional support for everyone engaging with the Inquiry, and shall be divided into 3 separate Lots:
  7. Lot 1 Digital emotional support service with accessible offer for ALL
  8. Lot 2 Phone based and face to face emotional support
  9. Lot 3 Staff-related support tender (including reflective practice, 1:1 emotional support for staff and training rollouts)
  10. The initial contract term for each Lot will be for a 1 year period. The contract will include the option for the Authority to extend the contract by increments of between 6 and 24 months, up to a maximum overall contract term of 4 years (1+3). The supplier shall be provided with a minimum of (3) months written notice in respect of contract extensions or contract termination.
  11. Please refer to the supplementary material provided with this RFI for further information:
      + RM6355 Virtual Pre Market Engagement slides
      + RM6355-Industry Clarification Q\_A-Standard v1.0

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# Information Required

* 1. The Buyer requires you to submit responses to the following questions. The Buyer has no obligation to use the information to inform any subsequent procurement exercise.

| **LOT 1 QUESTIONS:** Please answer the following questions if your organisation is intending to bid for the services outlined in Lot 1 (Digital Service Offering) | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Question: | Do you have any viable solutions or ideas for the type of pricing mechanism to implement with consideration to the uncertainty of volumes.? Also due to the uncertainty of volumes there might be a requirement to request additional resource at short notice, how will this affect the pricing model? |
| Q1 | Supplier response: |  |
| Q1b | Question: | The Inquiry would like to offer a 24/7 service. How will the additional accessibility requirements affect price ? Do you have any viable solutions/ recommendations to allow us to provide an accessible service with sufficient response rates and value for money? |
| Supplier response: |  |
|  | Question: | Do you have any viable solutions to deliver SMS text based support into different languages and how this could be managed in terms of delivery and value for money with consideration of volumes and response times? Languages would include Welsh and other languages (for example, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Arabic, Chinese [Mandarin + Cantonese], Romanian, Somali, Portuguese, Kurdish and Tagalong). |
| Q2 | Supplier response: |  |
| Q3 | Question: | Do you have any viable solutions and/or knowledge for the viability of the delivery of both written and audible resources into different languages? We would be looking for Welsh and other languages (for example, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Arabic, Chinese [Mandarin + Cantonese], Romanian, Somali, Portuguese, Kurdish and Tagalong) |
| Supplier response: |  |
| Q4 | Question: | The Inquiry is considering a 24-hour service for Lot 1 SMS / Text service and the websupport service. Do you have any proposals for alternative solutions to provide an accessible service whilst considering the user journey and value for money? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q5 | Question: | Do you have any recommendations/ solutions to maximise accessibility for the inclusion of the services under Lot 1? E.g. support for users of BSL (BSL users often have low literacy rates) |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q6 | Question: | Do you believe Lot 1 SMS/ text service can be provided anonymously including managing potential referrals from Lot 1 to Lot 2. Do you have any recommendations or solutions to delivering this model? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q7 | Question: | From the outline of the determined delivery models is there anything included that might stop you from bidding? If so, can you highlight the areas of concern and potential improvements the Inquiry can think about to address this?. |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q8 | Question: | The Inquiry is hoping to achieve ‘go live’ within 4 weeks of contract signature. Do you consider this to be feasible and if not how long would you expect? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q9 | Question: | Do you consider it reasonable to expect a suitably experienced support worker to be able to offer grounding exercises, support planning, signposting, risk assessment and active listening via SMS? If not, what level of skill and experience would you expect to provide? |
| **LOT 2 QUESTIONS:** Please answer the following questions if your organisation is intending to bid for the services outlined in Lot 2 (In-person, phone call, video call support offering) | | |
| Q9 | Question: | Do you have any viable solutions or ideas for the type of pricing mechanism to implement with consideration to the uncertainty of volumes.? Also due to the uncertainty of volumes there might be a requirement to request additional resource at short notice, how will this affect the pricing model? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q10 | Question: | Do you have any recommendations/ solutions to maximise accessibility? For example, we will require an offer of support in Welsh, and potentially other languages (for example, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Arabic, Chinese [Mandarin + Cantonese], Romanian, Somali, Portuguese, Kurdish and Tagalong) |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q11 | Question: | Do you consider it reasonable to expect a suitably experienced support worker to be able to offer grounding exercises, support planning, risk assessment and extensive active listening? If not, what level of skill and experience would you expect to provide? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q12 | Question: | Do you have any ideas as to how we could maximise accessibility and inclusion for the services under Lot 2? E.g. support for users of BSL. Considering acceptable response times and value for money. |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q13 | Question: | From the outline of the determined delivery models is there anything included that might stop you from bidding? If so, can you highlight the areas of concern and potential improvements the Inquiry can think about to address this? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q14 | Question: | The Inquiry is hoping to achieve ‘go live’ within 4 weeks of contract signature. Do you consider this to be feasible and if not how long would you expect? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q15 | Question: | The Inquiry is planning an extensive community based listening events schedule across the four nations of the UK. Do you think this is feasible to staff with support workers across a broad geographical area? What pricing model would you suggest? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q16 | Question: | The Inquiry is anticipating the use of phone based support and potentially video based calls to support users at this enhanced level of Tier 2 support. How feasible does this sound and are there any other solutions you would suggest? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| **LOT 3 QUESTIONS:** Please answer the following questions if your organisation is intending to bid for the services outlined in Lot 3 (Inquiry staff support) | | |
| Q15 | Question: | What pricing mechanism would you suggest to maximise value for money and mitigate risks for all concerned. |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q16 | Question: | Do you have any viable solutions or recommendations as to how we could maximise accessibility and inclusion for the services under Lot 3? with consideration of value for money. |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q17 | Question: | The Inquiry is hoping to achieve ‘go live’ within 4 weeks of contract signature. Do you consider this to be feasible and if not how long would you expect? |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q18 | Question | The Inquiry requires a solution to reduce risk of burnout and vicarious trauma. Current scoping activity has determined the outputs of 1:1 sessions and group reflective practice. We would welcome alternative approaches to minimise risks of potential impacts to our staff. |
| Supplier Response: |  |
| Q19 | Question | From the outline of the determined delivery models is there anything included that might stop you from bidding? If so, can you highlight the areas of concern and potential improvements the Inquiry can think about to address this?. |
| Supplier Response: |  |

Please send your responses to jack.rowan@covid19.public-inquiry.uk

# Timelines for RFI

* 1. These are our intended timelines. We will try to achieve these but, for a range of reasons, dates can change. We will tell you if and when timelines change.
  2. Please see the below for the RFI’s timelines:

| DATE | ACTIVITY |
| --- | --- |
| 20/07/2023 | Publication of the RFI |
| 20/07/2023 | Clarification period starts |
| 17:00 on 24/07/2023 | Clarification period closes |
| 17:00 on 26/07/2023 | Deadline for the publication of responses to RFI Clarification questions |
| 11:00 on 28/07/2023 | Deadline for submission of a RFI Response |
| 31/07/2023 | Analysis of RFI responses |
| 07/07/2023 | Confirm next steps to RFI Respondents |

# When And How To Ask Questions

* 1. We hope everything is clear after you’ve read this RFI document.
  2. If you have any questions, you need to ask them as soon as possible after the RFI is published. This is because we have a set deadline for submitting questions – the clarifications questions deadline (Refer to timelines for RFI above). This gives you the chance to check that you understand everything before you submit your response.
  3. You need to send your questions through the eSourcing Suite. This is the only way we can communicate with organisations. Try to ensure your question is specific and clear. Do not include your identity in the question. This is because we publish all the questions and our responses to all organisations invited.
  4. Responses will be published in a Questions and Answers document to all organisations who have registered their interest via the e-Sourcing Suite.
  5. If you feel that a particular question should not be published, you must tell us why and when you ask the question. We will decide whether or not to publish the question and response.
  6. COVID19 Inquiry will not enter into exclusive discussions regarding the requirements of this RFI with any organisation who have expressed an interest.

# RFI Costs

* 1. The Buyer will not reimburse any costs incurred by an organisation (including the costs or expenses of any members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors or advisors) in connection with the preparation and/or submission of the organisation’s RFI response, including (without limit) where:
     + The RFI is cancelled, shortened or delayed for any reason (including, without limitation, where such action is necessary due to non-compliance or potential non-compliance with the law, including the Regulations);
     + All or any part of the RFI is at any time amended, clarified, added to or withdrawn for any reason;
     + The organisation and/or its respondent is disqualified from participation in this RFI for any reason, including breach of these Terms of Participation.

# Right To Cancel Or Vary This RFI

The Buyer reserves the right to:

* 1. Change the basis of or the procedures for this RFI at any time;
  2. Amend, clarify, add to or withdraw all or any part of the RFI at any time, including varying any timetable or deadlines set out in the RFI; and:
  3. Cancel all or part of this RFI at any stage and at any time.

# Right To Confirm Or Request Updated RFI

* 1. The Buyer reserves the right to require organisations to confirm that their RFI response remains accurate at all stages of the RFI process and/or to request updated Information.
  2. The Buyer also reserves the right to specify additional standards or requirements according to their particular requirements.

# Conduct – Specific Obligations

* 1. You must not directly or indirectly canvass any Minister, officer, public sector employee, member or agent regarding this RFI or attempt to obtain any information from the same regarding this RFI (except where and as permitted by the RFI). Any attempt by the organisation to do so may result in the organisation’s disqualification from this RFI.

# Notices To Organisations

* 1. This RFI and any related documents referred to have been prepared by the The COVID19 Inquiry for the pre-market test to gather information.
  2. Whilst prepared in good faith, the RFI documents are intended only as a preliminary background explanation of the Buyer’s activities and plans. Therefore, it is not intended to form the basis of any decision on whether to enter into any contractual relationship with the Buyer.
  3. The RFI documents do not purport to be all inclusive or to contain all of the information that organisation’s may require.
  4. Neither the Buyer or its advisors, (included but not limited to) the directors, officers, partners, employees, other staff, agents or advisers of any such body or person:
     + Makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFI documents;
     + Accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the RFI documents or for its fairness, accuracy or completeness; or
     + Shall be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.
  5. Nothing in the RFI documents is, or should be, relied upon as a promissory or a representation as to the Buyer's ultimate decisions in relation to the RFI.
  6. The publication of the RFI documents in no way commits the Buyer to award any contract.

# Confidentiality

* 1. The contents of the RFI are being made available by the Buyer on the conditions that the organisation:
     + Treats the RFI as confidential at all times, unless the information is already in the public domain;
     + Does not disclose, copy, reproduce, distribute or pass any of the Information to any other person at any time or allow any of these things to happen, except where, and to the extent that, the Information has been publicised in accordance with paragraph 14 (Freedom of Information);
     + Only uses the Information for the purposes of preparing a Response (or deciding whether to respond); and
     + Does not undertake any promotional or similar activity related to this RFI within any section of the media.
  2. An organisation may disclose, distribute or pass any of the Information to its members of its Group of Economic Operators (if acting as a Lead Contact), Sub-Contractors, advisers or to any other person provided that:
     + This is done for the sole purpose of enabling the organisation to submit its response and the person receiving the information undertakes in writing (such written undertaking to be made available to the Buyer on the Buyer’s request) to keep the information confidential.
     + It obtains the Buyer’s prior written consent in relation to such disclosure, distribution or passing of Information; or
     + The disclosure is made for the sole purpose of obtaining legal advice from external lawyers in relation to this RFI;
     + The organisation is legally required to make such a disclosure; or
     + The information has been published in accordance with paragraph 14 (Freedom of Information).
  3. The Buyer may disclose information submitted by organisations during this RFI to its officers, employees, agents or advisers or other government departments who are stakeholders in this RFI.
  4. 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.
  5. 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 Buyer may disclose within HM Government any of the organisation’s documentation or information (including any that the organisation considers to be confidential and / or commercially sensitive such as specific information in its response) submitted by the organisation to the Buyer during this RFI. Organisations taking part in this RFI consent to such disclosure as part of their participation in the RFI process.

# Freedom Of Information

* 1. In accordance with the obligations and duties placed upon public authorities by the FoIA (Freedom of Information Act 2000) and the EIR (Environmental Information Regulations 2004) and in accordance with any Government Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities’ functions under the FoIA all information submitted to the Buyer may be disclosed under a request for information made pursuant to the FoIA and the EIR.
  2. Organisations should note that the information disclosed pursuant to a FoIA or EIR request may include, but is not limited to, the disclosure of its RFI response (including any attachments or embedded documents).
  3. If the organisation considers any part of its Response or any other information it submits to be confident or commercially sensitive, the organisations should:
     + Clearly identify such information as confidential or commercially sensitive;
     + Explain the potential implications of disclosure of such information taking into account and specifically addressing the public interest test as set out in the FoIA; and
     + Provide an estimate of the period of time during which it believes that such information will remain confidential or commercially sensitive.
  4. If the organisation identifies that part of its Response or other information it submits is confidential or commercially sensitive, the Buyer in its sole discretion will consider whether or not to withhold such information from publication. Organisations should note that, even where information is identified as confidential or commercially sensitive, the Buyer may be required to disclose such information in accordance with the FoIA or the EIR.
  5. The Buyer is required to form an independent judgement of whether the Organisation’s information referred to in paragraph 14.3 is exempt from disclosure under the FoIA or the EIR and whether the public interest favours disclosure or not. The Buyer cannot guarantee that any information indicated as being confidential or commercially sensitive by the organisation will be withheld from publication.
  6. If the organisation receives a request for information under the FoIA or the EIR during and in relation to this RFI, it should be immediately referred to the Buyer.

# Intellectual Property Rights

* 1. The RFI remains our property. You must use the RFI only for providing information for this RFI.
  2. You allow us to copy, amend and reproduce your response so we can:
     + Assess responses
     + comply with law and guidance
     + carry out our business
  3. Our advisors, subcontractors and other government bodies can use your bid for the same purposes.

# No Inducement Or Incentive

* 1. The organisation acknowledges and agrees that nothing contained within the RFI shall constitute an inducement or incentive nor shall have in any other way persuaded an organisation to submit a response or enter into any other contractual agreement.

# Support Information

* 1. For technical guidance, please review the ‘Useful Links’ on the e-Sourcing Suite homepage (<https://gpsesourcing.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sso/jsp/login.jsp>.) before contacting the e-Sourcing helpdesk.

| e-Sourcing Helpdesk | |
| --- | --- |
| Telephone Number: | 0345 010 3503 |
| Email Address: | [eEnablement@crowncommercial.gov.uk](mailto:eEnablement@crowncommercial.gov.uk) |