# 

# Social Work England

Contracts Finder

# Invitation to Tender

**Commission for research into social work education and training: specialist regulation, Covid-19 response, and** **equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**

# Reference - Social Work England 00339

**Closing date for submission of tender:**

**Friday 4th December 2020 at 17:00**

Please complete your tender submission in accordance with the instructions provided.

CONTENTS

This document is in two parts:

Part A is the invitation to tender and provides all the background information, a description of what is required, and an overview and instructions for the completion and submission of the tender document.

Part B is the tender submission document, this should be completed in full and returned in advance of the deadline in accordance with the instructions given.

**Part A**

1. Background
   1. Every day, social workers support millions of people to improve their chances in life. Social Work England is a specialist body taking a new approach to regulating social workers in their vital roles. We believe in the power of collaboration and share a common goal with those we regulate—to protect the public, enable positive change and ultimately improve people’s lives.
   2. Social Work England was established under The Children and Social Work Act 2017 to be a new single-profession regulator for social workers in England. We are a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), operating at arm’s length from Government. We became the regulator on 2nd December 2019.
   3. We will regulate the social work profession by:
      1. setting standards of practice and conduct in social work;
      2. assuring the quality of social work education;
      3. registering qualified social workers;
      4. ensuring social workers keep their skills and knowledge up to date; and
      5. investigating concerns about social workers.
   4. Our office is based within Sheffield, and located at 1 Northbank, Blonk Street, Sheffield, S3 8JY.
   5. Social work is a regulated profession. This means that to be able to practise as a social worker in England, individuals must be registered with us. Once registered, all social workers are listed on our public register (the **“Register”**), which shows a statutory list of individual social workers who are authorised to practise in England. To join the Register an individual must successfully complete an approved education and training course.
   6. To ensure the quality of social work education, we set [education and training standards](https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/education-and-training/), which are the standards against which we assess and approve social work education and training courses. Course providers then use our standards to develop their courses to ensure that students who successfully complete a social work course can meet our [professional standards](https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/) and can apply to be registered with us.
   7. The education and training standards apply to all social work qualifying routes, including:
      1. Undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
      2. Full and part-time courses.
      3. The social work degree apprenticeship.
      4. Any approved alternative training routes and courses.
   8. As part of their education and training all social work students must complete practice-based learning. The structure, duration and range of the learning is determined by the course provider.
   9. Social work students are recognised by the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care as key workers supporting the national response to Covid-19. Placements were therefore allowed to continue, where possible and appropriate, throughout the pandemic. We took a flexible approach and encouraged course providers to make any necessary adjustments to allow students to continue their practice-based learning, which included considering a reduction in the number of placement days.
2. Aim
   1. As an organisation we are committed to learning about social work and to gathering data and intelligence about the profession and people’s experiences. We want to make a unique contribution to the evolution of regulation, inform our work as the new specialist regulator and provide a detailed picture of social work in England. Research forms a key aspect of this goal.
3. Objectives
   1. The objective of this procurement is to undertake a study into social work education and training, with particular focus on specialist regulation, Covid-19 responses, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Research[[1]](#footnote-2) was recently carried out on behalf of Social Work England, to conduct and study on perceptions of social work in England. It is expected that the successful applicant will use this opportunity to expand on the findings/outcomes of the previous research. From this piece of research, we want to understand:

*Specialist regulation:*

* + 1. the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of Social Work England as the new regulator.
    2. the thoughts and opinions on the future of social work education and training provision in England.

*Covid-19 responses:*

* + 1. the impact of course adjustments on the effectiveness of student learning during Covid-19.
    2. the impact of Covid-19 on new graduates in the post qualifying framework, i.e. the assisted and supported year in employment (ASYE).
    3. the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of social work students and new graduates during Covid-19.

*Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI):*

* + 1. the experiences, attitudes, perceptions and barriers in social work education (including ASYE) for students/new graduates who identify with protected characteristics.
    2. the student experience of anti-discriminatory practice in their training and its impact on their practice.
  1. The requirement involves the need for a Potential Provider to conduct research into two (2) separate areas (**“workstreams”**):
     1. Student experiences (**“workstream one”**); and,
     2. Course providers’ and placement providers’ experiences (**“workstream two”**).
  2. Although two (2) separate pieces of research are required, we are looking for a single provider to deliver both requirements. The Potential Provider will be expected to conduct both pieces of research with the overarching objectives in mind, delivering the services in parallel and providing key insight into the findings from each workstream. Where applicable, the Potential Provider will be expected to identify any overlap of key themes, and as part of their final written report, identify how each set of findings intrinsically link to the other.

1. Duration
   1. It is envisaged that the contract will initially run for a period of three (3) months until Friday 16th April 2021, subject to satisfactory review of key performance indicators and service levels. It is intended that the two (2) workstreams will be carried out in parallel and a final report produced **by no later than 31st March 2021**. The contract is intended to start on 4th January 2021 (or as otherwise agreed).
   2. We reserve the right to extend the contract after the initial period by up to a further one (1) months, subject to mutual agreement. We will endeavour to begin discussions in respect to any possible extension option at least one (1) month prior to the contract expiry date.
2. Service requirements
   1. We are seeking a Potential Provider who are experts in delivering research studies and who can demonstrate high levels of service/experience within the health and social care sector.
   2. The Potential Provider must ensure that all the Provider Personnel who are involved in the delivery of the workstreams are:
      1. appropriately experienced, qualified, and trained to provide the requirements as set out within this Invitation to Tender (ITT); and,
      2. apply all reasonable skill, care, and diligence in providing the requirements.
   3. As both workstreams are expected to be delivered in parallel, the Potential Provider must demonstrate the capacity to be able to conduct high quality research for each requirement, with a final report on findings being delivered **no later than** **31st March 2021.**
   4. Potential Providers are expected to present creative plans to identify their proposals for: conducting research, identifying participants, data collection, research methodologically and the presentation of findings.
   5. Potential Providers are expected to undertake both quantitative and qualitative elements as part of their research, which may include, but not be limited to desktop reviews, a survey, interviews and focus groups with a range of course providers, placement providers, social work students and newly qualified social workers. Potential Providers are also expected to deliver vignettes, and a final report as part of their research delivery.
   6. The following section identifies the key questions for each workstream that we expect the Potential Provider’s research to address.

Expected Outcomes

*Workstream 1 – Student experiences*

* 1. In this part of the research requirement, we are looking for the Potential Provider to deliver research that addresses the following key questions:
     1. What are students’ thoughts and views on student registration, and the possibility of Social Work England introducing a social work student register?
     2. What have been the experiences, attitudes, perceptions and barriers for students during Covid-19 in progressing on their course?
     3. Do those experiences differ for students/new graduates based on protected characteristics and deprivation levels, and if so how?
     4. How has Covid-19 impacted student poverty (digital and material), and does this differ based on protected characteristics and deprivation levels?
     5. What are students’ feelings and experiences of representation and cultural sensitivity on social work courses and placements?
     6. What are students’ experiences of anti-discriminatory practice in training and applying that to theory and practice?
     7. What is the impact of Covid-19 on new graduates in the post qualifying framework, i.e. ASYE?

*Workstream 2 – Course providers’ and placement providers’ experiences*

* 1. In this part of the research requirement, we are looking for the Potential Provider to deliver research that addresses the following key questions:
     1. What are course providers’ experiences, attitudes and perceptions of having a specialist regulator and what are their thoughts on the future of social work education and training provision in England?
     2. What are course providers’ and placement providers’ thoughts and views on student registration, and the possibility of Social Work England introducing a social work student register?
     3. What is the impact of course adjustments made in response to Covid-19 and how do they differ across the entry routes, e.g. simulated and virtual placements?
     4. How has Covid-19 impacted the practice placement experience for practice educators?
     5. What is the impact on the post qualifying framework, i.e. the planned adjustments and support for the assisted and supported year in employment (ASYE)?
  2. Potential Providers should describe their proposed model(s) for carrying out each workstream, demonstrating their data collection method(s), including how they will engage with each of the groups, (students, course providers and placement providers), using approaches that feature the voices and experiences of the people in each group.
  3. It is expected that the student/new graduate group will be appropriately represented across the protected characteristics, and that the course provider groups are represented across the entry routes. The proposed group selection samples (per workstream) should be explained as part of the Potential Provider’s bid submission. Any methodology should consider accessibility and simplicity of language and proposed questions wherever possible, ensuring that anyone can answer the questions easily.
  4. Potential Providers should provide evidence on appropriate stratified sample sizes to enable analysis. For the student group this should include by age, gender, ethnicity, cohort year and socio-economic groups.

Presentation of findings

* 1. We expect Potential Providers to deliver both workstreams in conjunction with the other, although individual research findings (for each workstream) should be presented.
  2. A presentation of the research findings should be provided to us prior to the final written report. It will need to contain appropriate graphs, images and other visual representations to deliver the findings.
  3. Throughout the lifetime of the proposed contract, the Potential Provider may also be expected to attend, and present at meetings upon request. This will be remotely.
  4. Upon the conclusion of the research, the Potential Provider will provide a singular detailed written report which will contain a section for each individual workstream. This final written report should be delivered to a publishable standard. It will need to be graphic designed to a high, but simple and easy-to-read standard and contain appropriate graphs, images and other visual representations to deliver the most impact. Following the completion of the final written report, Potential Providers are also expected to deliver a presentation to Social Work England that provides a general overview of the research findings.
  5. As part of their bid submission, Potential Providers should provide:
     1. An overview of the design of the research including what support will be required by Social Work England;
     2. An approach to data collection and data processing for workstream one;
     3. An approach to data collection and data processing for workstream two;
     4. An outline of the question areas for the survey/focus groups/interviews;
     5. An outline of how they intend to reach research participants per workstream (e.g. via an existing participant base, via recruitment/advertisement, in collaboration with another organisation, etc);
     6. Details of the project team including their relevant skills and experience;
     7. A vision for the presentation of findings and final report including how data will be made available in a clear and accessible format, and two examples of previous, relevant reports;
     8. A detailed plan for delivery of each aspect of research;
     9. A breakdown of costs for all aspects of work including VAT where applicable;
     10. An overview of any added value that can be offered as part of the research delivery; and,
     11. A complete research ethics checklist.

Billing procedure

* 1. Potential Providers should be aware that the payment of services will be based on the completion of set delivery milestones. These milestones will be agreed by the parties during contract formation, following the submission of the Potential Providers delivery plans.
  2. Due to Social Work England budget restrictions, the costs for all Services must be billed before the end of our 2020-2021 Financial Year (31st March 2021). As a result, all Services (excluding the overview presentation) must be delivered/incurred no later than 31st March 2021.

1. Procurement

Best practice criteria

* 1. We have agreed a set of best practice principles in relation to this Invitation to Tender (ITT). These principles provide a framework to ensure that we act in an ethically and commercially responsible way in our contractual arrangements. Adhering to these principles is an integral part of our procurement process.
  2. We will:
     1. encourage local employment and enterprise to create and maintain local job opportunities and training;
     2. seek value for money and the minimisation of risk;
     3. harness the capability, diversity and innovation of our service provider to add value to our operational effectiveness and efficiency;
     4. adhere to a procurement process which is equitable, lawful and compliant with regulations;
     5. seek to be easy to do business with, in order to minimise costs, risks and time;
     6. ensure the confidentiality of information entrusted to us while working with service providers who also respect this practice; and
     7. permit hospitality only to an extent that it cannot be perceived as an inducement.

# Instructions to Potential Providers

* 1. We are using this ITT to conduct an open competition for the procurement of a research provider. A notice will be posted on Contracts Finder, and all Potential Provider’s will be expected to submit a tender submission in line with the instructions provided within this document. A desktop evaluation will be completed upon the receipt of tenders in order to award the proposed contract. Social Work England will further reserve the right to interview the Potential Providers following the completion of desktop evaluation, as part of the tender process.
  2. All tenders received that are compliant (submitted in accordance with the tendering instructions) will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria set out below.
  3. Tenders should be prepared and submitted using Part B of this document. Tenders will be evaluated, and bids scored.
  4. The contract will be awarded against the total overall score and will be based on the most economically advantageous tender (a mixture of quality and price). Potential Providers will only be notified on the outcome of tender process following the completion of the evaluation stage.
  5. The following indicative timetable is provided for the Potential Providers benefit. Please be aware that these are indicative timescales (except for the deadlines in bold) and may be subject to change at our absolute discretion.

| **ACTIVITY** | **EXPECTED DATE** |
| --- | --- |
| **ITT Launch** | **Tuesday 10th November 2020** |
| **Drop-In Session** | **Monday 16th November 2020 – 13:30 – 14:30** |
| **Submission deadline for clarification questions** | **Thursday 26th November 2020 at 17:00** |
| **Response deadline for clarification questions** | **Friday 27th November 2020 at 12:00** |
| **ITT closing date (Tender Submission Deadline)** | **Friday 4th December 2020 at 17:00** |
| Desktop Evaluation | 7th December – 18th December 2020 |
| Contract Award | Monday 21st December 2020 |
| Standstill Period | 21st December 2020 – 1st January 2021 |
| Contract Commencement | 4th January 2021 |

* 1. Potential Providers are invited to an online 'drop-in' session with Social Work England on Monday 16th November 2020 from 13:30 – 14:30. This will be an opportunity for Potential Providers to ask any questions they may have around the content of the tender, or social work education and training. Please note, to ensure a fair, open and transparent competition process, during the ‘drop-in’ session we will not be answering any questions outside the information that is included in this invitation to tender. All questions asked (and the responses provided) will also be published anonymously on the Contracts Finder notice for reference. Before submitting a tender, Potential Providers are encouraged to revert to the Contracts Finder notice to ensure that their response encompasses any further information that may be included as part of the clarification questions and responses process.
  2. Potential Providers wishing to attend the 'drop-in’ session should email [commercial.team@socialworkengland.org.uk](mailto:commercial.team@socialworkengland.org.uk) **no later than Friday 13th November 2020 at 17:00**. Potential Providers may have up to three (3) participants attend the drop-in session. When emailing to request a place at the drop-in session, Potential Providers **must** provide the names and email addresses of the individuals that wish to attend.
  3. A link for a Microsoft Teams meeting will be provided on the morning of Monday 16th November 2020. It is therefore the responsibility of the Potential Provider to ensure that they remain available during the period in which the ‘drop-in’ session will take place.
  4. It should also be noted that the ‘drop-in’ session will be recorded by Social Work England. All processing will be completed in accordance with our obligations under Data Protection Legislation (namely the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation). The recorded session will be subject to internal use only and shall not be shared with any other party. Social Work England will retain the recording for the purposes of audit and confirming the responses to questions about the tender. You can find out more about how we process your personal data here: <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/privacy/>.

1. Completing the Invitation to Tender
   1. To enable our evaluating officers the ability to fully assess Potential Providers suitability to provide the services, all of the information requested in this ITT must be provided. Failure to complete the tender submission in full or failure to provide any of the documents requested may result in your tender being rejected. Questions should be answered as instructed:
      1. please answer every question;
      2. questions must be answered in English; and
      3. when posed with Yes/No questions, please either circle your answer or delete as applicable.
   2. All other questions will require you to input text or numbers, or to tick boxes.
   3. Any figures requested should be stated in full (i.e. £4,000 not £4k), be exclusive of VAT (with VAT submitted as a separate line if applicable) and be in Great British Pounds.
   4. If the question does not apply to you, please write N/A; if you don’t know the answer please write N/K.
   5. Only the information contained within this ITT or as otherwise communicated in writing by us to Potential Providers should be considered when submitting your tender.
   6. Any information and/or documents submitted on or with this tender must relate to ‘the tenderer’ only – ‘the tenderer’ being the organisation which it is proposed will enter into a formal contract with us, should their tender be successful. Where required, we may seek further clarification from the tenderer following submission of a completed bid pack.
   7. The Potential Provider agrees and acknowledges that in cases where their tender submission is deemed non-compliant when compared with the instructions contained within this ITT and/or the service requirements detailed, that they will be excluded from the further competition process.
2. Format of Tender Submission
   1. Potential Providers are required to complete all the documentation listed below. You may complete the documentation electronically but must not make any changes to the structure and/or order of the document provided (except as necessary to accommodate your responses, i.e. enlarging response boxes etc.). In particular, please do not undertake any substantive changes to formatting, or add appendices instead of completing the tables provided, and so on, except when expressly requested or when necessary to properly present your offer.
   2. Potential Providers should complete and submit all schedules in Part B of this document, namely the:
      1. company details and general information schedule;
      2. response to specification schedule;
      3. response to pricing schedule;
      4. freedom of information exclusion schedule; and
      5. tendering declaration.
   3. The tendering declaration must be signed by a director, partner or other senior authorised representative in their own name and on behalf of the organisation. It should be noted that any information which is submitted within a Potential Provider’s tender submission may subsequently be used to form part of the contract and/or an appendix thereof. Potential Providers should therefore make sure that their responses are authorised at an appropriate level which would enable them, should they be successful, to become the subject of a binding contract.
   4. Potential Providers may submit joint bids (with services provided by more than one organisation). However, for the purposes of the contract, only one organisation may be the presented as the lead supplier. Any other organisation providing services would be classified as a sub-contractor.
3. Submitting a Tender
   1. An electronic copy of your completed tender submission (Part B of this document) and all associated documentation, should be submitted via email to [commercial.team@socialworkengland.org.uk](mailto:commercial.team@socialworkengland.org.uk) prior to the Tender Submission Deadline. The tender submission should contain the subject line title ‘Tender Submission (\*Your Organisations Name\*) – Commission for research into social work education and training’.
   2. We must receive all tender submissions before the Tender Submission Deadline. Any submission received on or after the Tender Submission Deadline may be rejected to ensure that all potential providers are treated fairly. It is the sole responsibility of Potential Providers to ensure that their tender submission reaches us by the stipulated deadline. The decision whether to reject a tender submission is made entirely at our discretion. We will not accept any tender submissions which are received after the Tender Submission Deadline due to network issues (unless the Potential Provider can provide evidence to the fact that an email transmission was made at least 5 minutes prior to the Tender Submission Deadline). The decision on whether to reject a tender submission is made entirely at our discretion.
   3. A tender submission must remain valid and capable of acceptance by Social Work England for a period of 60 working days following the Tender Submission Deadline. A tender with a shorter validity period may be rejected.
4. Conditions of Tender
   1. In submitting a response to this ITT, Potential Providers do so on the conditions as set within this document and Social Work England’s Supplier Terms and Conditions. In the event of any breach of these conditions, Social Work England shall be entitled to terminate any contract formed as a result of such tender submission and to claim damages accordingly.

Warnings and Disclaimers

* 1. The information supplied by us (whether in this document or otherwise) is supplied for general guidance in the preparation of tenders. Potential Providers must satisfy themselves by their own investigations about the accuracy of such information. We cannot accept responsibility for any inaccurate information obtained by Potential Providers.

Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

* 1. Potential Providers must not directly or indirectly canvass any employee (including temporary appointments), board member or any other related associate of Social Work England regarding this ITT, or attempt to procure any information from the same regarding the ITT (except as authorised by this ITT for the purpose of asking genuine questions about the process or the resulting contract). Any attempt to do so may result in the Potential Provider’s disqualification from the tender process.
  2. Potential Providers must also not (and shall ensure that their subcontractors, advisors or companies within their Group do not):
     1. communicate with any person other than Social Work England’s Commercial Team about the value, prices or rates set out in the tender submission, except where the disclosure (in confidence) of the approximate value is necessary to obtain insurance cover;
     2. fix or adjust any element of the tender submission by agreement or arrangement with any other person;
     3. enter into any agreement or arrangement with any other person, so that person refrains from making a tender submission;
     4. share, permit or disclose access to any information relating to this ITT with any other person;
     5. offer any inducement, fee or reward directly or indirectly to any employee (including temporary appointments), board member or any other related associate of Social Work England in order to influence the outcome of this ITT; and
     6. do anything which would constitute a breach of the [Bribery Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents).
  3. Potential Providers (their subcontractors, advisors or companies within their Group) are also responsible for ensuring that no conflicts of interest exist between any person directly or indirectly involved in the submission of the tender or delivery of the services, and any employee (including temporary appointments), board member or any other related associate of Social Work England. Any potential provider who fails to comply with this requirement may be disqualified from the competition process at our absolute discretion.

Responsibility to Submit a Complete Tender

* 1. It is the Potential Providers responsibility to ensure that their submitted tender is complete, prepared and submitted in accordance with the instructions contained herein, and signed and dated where required. We are not obliged to consider any tender which is incomplete or not prepared or submitted in accordance with such instructions, but at our sole discretion we may offer a Potential Provider who submits such a tender, the opportunity to remedy the omission before the evaluation stage of the tender commence (provided that in our judgement this does not adversely affect the integrity and fairness of the tender exercise).

Bid Costs

* 1. Potential Providers agree and acknowledge that we will not be liable for any costs, expenditure, work, or effort incurred in association with submitting a tender in accordance with this ITT. This will include if any stage of the procurement process is delayed, withdrawn/terminated, or amended by Social Work England.

1. Social Work England’s Rights
   1. Social Work England reserves the right to:
      1. seek additional information or clarification from Potential Providers at any time during the tender process;
      2. conduct an interview process following the initial desktop evaluation, as required, and at our absolute sole discretion;
      3. choose not to invite any Potential Provider to the interview stage, if their score is equal to or lower than 60% at desktop evaluation;
      4. disqualify any Potential Provider whose tender submission is deemed non-compliant in accordance with the instructions given in this ITT;
      5. disqualify any Potential Provider that is guilty of serious misrepresentation in relation to its tender submission (or any part of the overall procurement process);
      6. amend, clarify, add to, or withdraw all or any part of this ITT at any time, and to re-invite Potential Providers to re-submit bids on the same or any other alternative basis;
      7. choose not to award any contract for some or all of the goods and/or services (as applicable) for which Potential Providers are invited;
      8. to cancel all or part of the further competition at any stage at any time (without the award of contract or re-invitation of tender); and
      9. retain copies of all tender submissions (for a period of 7 years) to satisfy its audit and data retention/handling obligations.
2. Confidentiality and Freedom of Information Act
   1. This ITT is made available on condition that its contents (including the fact that the potential provider has received this ITT) is kept confidential by the Potential Provider and is not copied, reproduced, distributed or passed to any other person at any time, except for the purpose of enabling the Potential Provider to submit a tender.
   2. As a public body, we are subject to the provisions of the [Freedom of Information Act 2000](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents) (FOIA) in respect of information it holds (including third-party information). Any member of the public or other interested party may make a request for information.
   3. We will treat all Potential Providers' responses as confidential during the procurement process. Requests for information received following the procurement process shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, applying the principles of the FOIA.
   4. Whilst we aim to consult with third-party providers of information before it is disclosed, we cannot guarantee that this will be done. Therefore, Potential Providers are responsible for ensuring that any confidential or commercially sensitive information has been clearly identified to us in the Freedom of Information Exclusion Schedule provided in the tender submission document (Part B of this document).
   5. Potential Providers should be aware that, in compliance with our public procurement and contracting transparency obligations, we may publish details of any contract resulting from this ITT on our website and the Contracts Finder portal. We will make best efforts to redact the contract as to not include any of the Potential Providers confidential/commercial sensitive information, however, the final version of the published contract shall be at our absolutely discretion.

Publicity

* 1. No publicity regarding the contract or the award of any contract will be permitted unless and certainly until we have given express written consent to the relevant communication. For example, no statements may be made to the media regarding the nature of any tender, its contents or any proposals relating to it without our prior written consent.

1. Evaluation of Invitation to Tender
   1. Potential Providers tender submissions will be evaluated on the basis of 70% response to non-price (quality) questions and 30% response to price questions. The evaluation will be based on the Potential Provider’s response to the requirement detailed within this ITT and consideration of the following criteria:
      1. understanding of our needs and the specific requirements of this contract;
      2. evidence of the Potential Provider’s ability to comprehend and communicate key information with clarity and understanding;
      3. evidence of the Potential Provider’s experience in conducting research within the health and social care sector;
      4. evidence of the Potential Provider’s ability to work collaboratively with us to achieve a desired outcome;
      5. evidence of the Potential Provider’s commitment to corporate social responsibility and equality, diversity and inclusion; and
      6. the ability to work to strict deadlines.
   2. All compliant tender submissions received will be evaluated by officers of Social Work England (as appropriate). This evaluation panel will consist of between 3-6 individuals.
   3. In order to be transparent, and to ensure that Potential Providers fully understand how their tender submission will be evaluated, full details of the evaluation process are described below. The following price and quality weightings will be used to determine the most economically advantageous tender:
      1. Non-Price (quality) represents 70%
      2. Price represents 30%
   4. NOTE: Failure by Potential Providers to comply with these instructions may invalidate their bid.
   5. Potential Providers will be asked to provide a response to the following sections within the tender submission document (Part B of this document).

| **Section** | **Total Score Available** |
| --- | --- |
| Company Details | Information Only |
| Compliance with Specification | Pass / Fail |
| Non-Price Questions | 70 points |
| Price Questions | 30 Points |

* 1. Please note that the ‘Compliance with Specification’ section will be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. If a Potential Providers cannot or is unwilling to comply with the specification, their tender submission will be deemed as non-compliant and will be excluded from further consideration.
  2. When completing the response to questions, Potential Providers must make sure that they answer what is being asked. Anything that is not directly relevant to the question should not be included, but wherever possible Potential Providers should demonstrate how they will go further than what is being asked for, to add value. When requested, appendices can be provided to provide further supporting evidence within the Potential Provider’s response.
  3. Potential Providers should also make sure that their answers inform not just what they will do, but how they will do it, and what their proposed timescales are (as relevant). It is useful to give examples or provide evidence to support your responses.
  4. Potential Providers are encouraged to use the full word count allowance to answer each question as fully as possible. The purpose should be to include as much relevant detail as required, so that the evaluation panel gets the fullest possible picture.
  5. Each tender submission will be evaluated by the panel individually, with each question response evaluated one by one in order. When scoring each answer, no consideration is given to information included in other answers so Potential Providers must not cross reference across responses or provide supporting information in their tender submission unless expressly requested. Once the evaluation panel have evaluated all tender submissions individually, the panel will come together to agree on a cumulative score.
  6. If deemed to be required, Potential Providers may be called for interview and will be asked to provide further information/evidence alongside a series of additional questions as part of the interview process. Interviews will be evaluated, with this additional score being combined with the score from the initial desktop evaluation to provide a total overall score and enable Social Work England to award a contract.

1. Scoring
   1. Answers to both non-price and price responses (unless otherwise stated within this ITT document) will be scored on a scale of 0 to 4 points, as detailed in the table below:

| **In the evaluating officers’ reasoned opinion, the response provided is a(n):** | | **Points available** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0 | **Unacceptable Response.** No response, response not relevant or question not answered. | 0 points. |
| 1 | **Poor Response.** The response is partially compliant, but with serious deficiencies in meeting service requirements (any supporting evidence is minimal). | 25% of points available. |
| 2 | **Fair Response.** The response is compliant (some evidence may be provided which supports compliant elements) with shortfalls in meeting service requirements. Any concerns are of a minor nature. | 50% of points available. |
| 3 | **Good Response.** The response is compliant and offers relevant evidence to support their claims, clearly indicating that service requirements would be met. | 75% of points available. |
| 4 | **Excellent Response.** The response is compliant and offers relevant detailed evidence to support their claims, clearly demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the service requirements. | 100% of points available. |

* 1. Please note that scoring ‘0’ for any one or more question(s) will give grounds for excluding the tender submission from further consideration. For any tender submissions that are deemed excludable on this basis, the Potential Provider’s price shall automatically be excluded from the ‘price’ evaluation.

Response to non-price (quality) questions

* 1. Potential Providers must provide answers in response to the non-price (quality) questions below, to describe how they will meet the requirements of the contract. There are five (5) questions in total. Each question has been weighted to highlight the relative importance, with the number of points available shown in the table below.
  2. Potential Providers are required to respond to all the questions below. Questions should be answered in full on the template provided in Part B of this document.
  3. For each question, there is a maximum word limit. Potential Providers must not alter/amend the tender submission document (Part B of this document), other than to adjust the size of each ‘response’ box in order to accommodate their response, as necessary. Where appendices have been requested, Potential Providers are encouraged to attach as part of their tender submission to provide further supporting evidence.

| **Ref** | **Non-Price Questions** | **Look Fors** | **Weighting** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Q1 | What would your approach include to enable the successful delivery of this research and how would it address the key questions in the specification?  *Maximum Word Count: 1,250.* | * Plans to engage with social work students, course providers and placements providers that reflect the richness and complexity of the profession. * Full consideration and response to key questions set out in the specification. * A considered and complete ethics checklist. * Considers the context of professional regulation and social work as part of overall approach. * Considers the impact of national social movements (e.g. Covid-19 lockdown). | 15 Points |
| Q2 | How do you propose to deliver this research activity? How will you ensure that final report is delivered by the deadline identified within this ITT?  Please attach an overarching plan as part of your tender submission (any delivery plan submitted as an appendix will not be included within the word count).  *Maximum Word Count: 1,500 (any plan submitted as an appendix will not be included within the word count).* | * Clear plan and timeline in place for each aspect of activity. * Considerations of both research workstreams. * Considerations of the risks to delivery and proposed mitigations. * Evidence of clear project management methodology. * Resource/key personnel availability. | 15 Points |
| Q3 | What experience do you have to demonstrate your ability to deliver research for Social Work England?  Please include a minimum of one example. Please include contact details of a client(s) (within the last 3 years) who would be prepared to provide a reference, on request from Social Work England.  Please include key personnel CVs.  *Maximum Word Count: 1,250.* | * Skills, knowledge, and experience of personnel delivering services (please include CVs as an Appendix). * Evidence of the team working with/having access to social work students, course providers and placements providers. * Evidence of ability to meet outcomes and to deliver the research to a high-quality standard and on time. * Evidence of a relevant example (for a similar research commission). * Demonstrates understanding of Social Work England, its values, approach to professional regulation and the importance of research to our work. | 15 Points |
| Q4 | What is your approach to data collection? What is your approach to processing all data in the delivery of this research activity?  *Maximum Word Count: 1,000.* | * Consideration of stakeholders and the potential sensitivity of some of the research matter. * Clear explanation of how the participants in workstream 1 will be represented across the protected characteristics, including ethnicity. * Clear evaluation of research methods, setting out the rationale for the methods preferred. * Evaluation and rationale for proposed sample sizes of groups, including why the proposed is the most appropriate for the research. * Clear plan of how data will be collected, collated and processed. | 15 Points |
| Q5 | What is your approach to reporting?  Please include an example as part of your tender submission (any example report submitted as an appendix will not be included within the word count).  *Maximum Word Count: 750.* | * An overview of the approach to the research, including the vision for the final report. * Considers reporting at key stages of research activity, including any anticipated advice and support from Social Work England. * Considers audience, tone and placement of information in terms of public accessibility. * Can demonstrate experience of producing reports to a high standard, including resource for graphic design. * Evidence of at least one relevant example (of a final report produced as part of a previous research project delivered). | 10 Points |

Response to price questions

* 1. Price questions carry 30% of the overall score. Questions for price are weighted to highlight the relative importance of each question, with the number of points available shown in the table below.
  2. Prices included in the tender submission should be **net** costs (excluding VAT). Associated VAT costs should be shown separately as part of your tender submission.
  3. We request a price breakdown based on the requirements identified within this ITT. Prices required are:
     1. a total price for the delivery over the term of the contract.
  4. We also expect Potential Providers to demonstrate how they can provide added value throughout the lifetime of the contract, and also describe how they will manage risk to avoid any additional costs.
  5. Potential Providers are required to respond to all the price questions below. Questions should be answered in full. In respect to question 1, pricing should be submitted via the cost matrix template provided. For questions 2 and 3 there will be a maximum word limit. Please adjust as necessary the size of the ‘cost matrix’ template and/or the ‘response’ box in order to accommodate your response.
  6. Potential Providers should note that the maximum budget for the provision of the required services is **£54,000 (net)**. However, we would encourage Potential Providers to submit tenders at their ‘best possible price’ rather than aligning any submission with the maximum budget available (as the budget may be subject to change).

| **Ref** | **Price Questions** | **Look Fors** | **Weighting** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Q1 | Please provide a total cost for the delivery of the services as described in the statement of requirements. | * Pricing as per table provided. * Includes assumptions/breakdowns. * Includes VAT as a separate item. | 15 points |
| Q2 | How would you seek to manage the risk of unexpected delays and its impact on additional costs?  *Maximum Word Count: 750* | * Identifies risk areas. * Provides solutions to mitigate risks. * Provides past experience of risk management. | 10 points |
| Q3 | Please provide evidence that your price provides value for money and identifies areas of value-added activity?  *Maximum Word Count: 500* | * Identifies areas that provide value for money. * Identifies value added activity. | 5 points |

1. Moderation of Scores
   1. The evaluation panel will be made up of officers from Social Work England. Once each member of the evaluation panel has scored each tender submission individually, an appropriate representative will lead a moderation session, where all members of the evaluation panel will meet to discuss their individual scores; subsequently seeking to agree on a cumulative score for each tender submission.
   2. Upon conclusion of the evaluation of the ITT, the score for price and non-price will be combined to give a total score out of 100.
   3. Following the completion of desktop evaluation, we reserve the right to conduct an interview stage. If deemed to be required, interviews will consist of a series of additional questions that will then be evaluated, with this additional score being combined with the score from the initial desktop evaluation to provide a total overall score out of 100. The desktop evaluation and the interview stage will both represent an equal 50% of the score.
   4. Potential Providers should note that we are not currently expecting to run an interview stage in relation to this ITT. An example of when interviews may be required is in the event of the two (2) highest scoring bidders scoring within 1-3% of each other, and we feel that we are unable to award a contract without further evaluation.
2. Award of Contract
   1. The Potential Provider who obtains the highest total score from the desktop evaluation (or the highest total score from a combination of the desktop evaluation and the interview stage, if interviews are deemed to be required) will be awarded the contract.
   2. The Potential Provider offered the contract will be advised by email. The award offered pursuant to this ITT will be based on the most economically advantageous tender.
   3. Potential Providers whom it is proposed will not be offered the contract will be advised of this by email and will be entitled to receive feedback upon request.
   4. The awarded contractual agreement between Social Work England and the Potential Provider will be made up of:
      1. the specifications and details set out in this ITT document;
      2. the Potential Provider’s responses in the tender submission document (Part B of this document), including the pricing details; and
      3. Social Work England’s Supplier Terms and Conditions as set out within section 18 (additional documents).

If the Potential Provider is unwilling to accept any of the above, we reserve the right to exclude their tender submission from consideration, and if they receive the highest total score following the evaluation stage, re-award the contract to next highest scoring bidder.

1. Additional Documents

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Social Work England Supplier Terms and Conditions |  |

# Social Work England

**Contracts Finder**

**Part B – Response to Tender**

**Commission for research into social work education and training: specialist regulation, Covid-19 response, and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)**

# Reference - Social Work England 00339

**Closing date for submission of tender:**

**Friday 4th December 2020 at 17:00**

Please complete your tender submission in accordance with the instructions provided.

# PART B - To be completed in response to Invitation to Tender

1. Company Details and Compliance with Tender

2. Response to Specification

3. Response to Pricing

4. Appendix A - Freedom of Information Exclusion Schedule

5. Appendix B - Tendering Declaration

Please complete all the information requested below and **return Part B by the latest Friday 4th December at 17:00 hrs.**

# Company Details

General information questions are asked for information purposes only and the responses will not be evaluated. The answers do however give the evaluation panel an overview of the organisation and its structure. Please complete in full.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **ORGANISATION DETAILS** | |
|  | **Please state the full name of the organisation submitting this tender:** | |
|  | |
|  | **Is your organisation classified as a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME)?** | |
| Yes/No. | |
|  | **Please state your registered office address:** | |
| Address: | |
| Postcode: | |
|  | **Please state your company registration number (if a sole trader, please mark N/A):** | |
|  | |
|  | **Please state your VAT registration number (please mark N/A if your organisation is not VAT registered):** | |
|  | |
|  | **To the best of your knowledge, does any director or senior officer of your organisation have any personal or financial connection with any member or senior officer of Social Work England?** | YES / NO |
| If yes, please provide details: | |
|  | **Contact Details** (for communications, correspondence and enquiries relating to this tender submission) | |
|  | **Please state the contact’s name, and position within the organisation:** | |
| Name:  Position: | |
|  | **Please state the contact’s business address:** | |
| Address:  Postcode: | |
|  | **Please state the contact’s business telephone number and email address:** | |
| Telephone Number:  Email: | |

Compliance with Specification

Potential Providers must provide a response to the Compliance with Specification section included below. Potential Providers should note that this section will be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. If a Potential Provider cannot or is unwilling to answer ‘Yes’, their tender will be deemed non-compliant and will be excluded from further consideration. Potential Providers should confirm by deleting the inappropriate answer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I confirm I/we comply with all elements of the requirement and specification as outlined in part A of this Invitation to Tender. | YES / NO |
| Please use this space to outline any areas where you cannot comply, or to provide any further information regarding compliance with the specification that you have not been able to state elsewhere in your tender submission. | |
| I confirm that I/we accept Social Work England’s Supplier Terms and Conditions as set out within section 18 (additional documents), forming the basis of any contract executed between Social Work England and the successful bidder, pursuant to this ITT. | YES / NO |
| Please use this space to outline any areas where you cannot comply, making specific reference to any clauses within the terms and conditions which are an area of concern. | |
| **I confirm that I/we have completed (if applicable) the Freedom of Information Exclusion Schedule; included as Appendix A of this Response to Tender.** | **YES / NO** |
| Please use the space provided in Appendix A to identify any information that you regard as confidential and/or commercially sensitive. | |
| **I confirm that I/we have attached a signed copy of the Tendering Declaration, using the wording included as Appendix B to this Response to Tender.** | **YES / NO** |
| Appendix B sets out the wording of the Tendering Declaration. This should be reproduced on headed paper, scanned and embedded within your bid response. | |
| **I confirm I/we meet the standard requirements and hold the necessary qualifications to deliver the required services.** | **YES / NO** |
| Please use this space to outline any areas where you cannot comply, or to provide any further information regarding compliance with the specification that you have not been able to state elsewhere in your tender submission. | |
| I confirm upon request, that I/we will provide the services outlined in the ITT. | YES / NO |
| Please use this space to outline any areas where you cannot comply, or to provide any further information regarding compliance with the specification that you have not been able to state elsewhere in your tender submission. | |

Response to Specification

Potential Providers are referred to (Part A) of the ITT and reminded that evaluation of their non-price question responses will account for 70% of their total score.

Potential Providers must provide answers in response to the questions below, to describe how they will meet the requirements of the contract. There are five (5) questions in total.

Potential Providers are required to respond to all the questions below. Questions should be answered in full and should not refer to other documents or appendices unless requested.

For each question, there is a maximum word limit. Please adjust as necessary the size of the ‘response’ box in order to accommodate your response.

| **Ref** | **Non-Price Questions** |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | ***Question:***What would your approach include to enable the successful delivery of this research and how would it address the key questions in the specification?  *A maximum number of 1,250 words should be submitted for this section.*  *A maximum of 15 points are available for this response.* |
| **Response:** | |
| 2 | ***Question****:* How do you propose to deliver this research activity? How will you ensure that final report is delivered by the deadline identified within this ITT?  Please attach an overarching plan as part of your tender submission.  *Maximum Word Count: 1,500 (any plan submitted as an appendix will not be included within the word count).*  *A maximum of 15 points are available for this response.* |
| **Response:** | |
| 3 | ***Question:***What experience do you have to demonstrate your ability to deliver research for Social Work England?  Please include a minimum of one example. Please include contact details of a client(s) (within the last 3 years) who would be prepared to provide a reference, on request from Social Work England.  Please include key personnel CVs.  *A maximum number of 1,250 words should be submitted for this section.*  *A maximum of 15 points are available for this response.* |
| **Response:** | |
| 4 | ***Question:*** What is your approach to data collection? What is your approach to processing all data in the delivery of this research activity?  *A maximum number of 1,000 words should be submitted for this section.*  *A maximum of 15 points are available for this response.* |
| **Response:** | |
| 5 | ***Question:*** What is your approach to reporting?  Please include an example as part of your tender submission.  *A maximum number of 750 words should be submitted for this section (any example report submitted as an appendix will not be included within the word count).*  *A maximum of 10 points are available for this response.* |
| **Response:** | |

Response to Pricing

Potential Providers are referred to Part A of the ITT and reminded that evaluation of pricing questions will account for 30% of their total score.

Responses to pricing for question 1 should be completed within the cost matrix template provide below. Response to questions 2 and 3 should be completed within the response section provided.

All prices should be quoted in GBP(£), and be **net** of VAT. Please ensure all assumptions (e.g. breakdowns of costs) on price are detailed within the table and against each costed item.

| **Ref** | | **Price Questions** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | | Please provide a total cost for the delivery of the services as described in the statement of requirements.  *A maximum of 15 points are available for your response.* |
| **Response: Please provide your response in the tables below.** | | |
| **2.** | How would you seek to manage the risk of unexpected delays and its impact on additional costs?  *Maximum Word Count: 750.*  *A maximum of 10 points are available for your response.* | |
| **Response:** | | |
| **3.** | Please provide evidence that your price provides value for money and identifies areas of value-added activity?  *Maximum Word Count: 500.*  *A maximum of 5 points are available for your response.* | |
| **Response:** | | |

Question 1 – Cost Matrix Template (to be completed by bidder).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **2020-2021** | **2020-2021** | **2020-2021** | **Assumptions** |
|  | Net Costs | VAT | Overall Cost (inc VAT) |  |
| Fixed costs *(Please provide a list of all your fixed costs. Please add columns as required).* |  |  |  | *Please provide any cost assumptions that you may have in this area.* |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Variable Costs *(Please provide a list of all variable costs. Please add columns as required).* |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Travel |  |  |  |  |
| Accommodation |  |  |  |  |
| Disbursements |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Profit Margin *(Please identify your applied profit margin)* |  |  |  | *In line with Government open book accounting principles, please identify your proposed profit margin.* |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Cost** |  |  |  | *Note – as attendance at meetings will be upon Social Work England’s request, please do not include travel, accommodation and disbursements within your total cost (unless you intend for meetings to be included within your delivery plan).* |

Appendix A – Freedom of Information Exclusion Schedule

Potential Providers attention is drawn to the conditions of this ITT. Potential Providers should state here which items of information (if any) supplied by them in their tender they regard as confidential and/or commercially sensitive, or which they believe should not be disclosed in response to a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. Potential Providers should state why they consider the information to be confidential or commercially sensitive.

The final disclosure of information shall be at the sole discretion of Social Work England.

**Commercially Sensitive Information**

I declare that I wish the following information to be designated as Commercially Sensitive:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

The reason(s) it is considered that this information should be exempt under Freedom of Information Act 2000 is:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

The period of time for which it is considered this information should be exempt is until award of contract **OR** during the period of the contract **OR** for a period of 7 years.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature:** |  |
| **Name of Signatory and Position:** |  |
| **Name of Organisation:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

Appendix B – Tendering Declaration

[Wording to be produced on Responder’s headed paper]

Dear Social Work England Commercial Team,

SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND 00339 – TENDER FOR RESEARCH INTO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Having examined the ITT and all of its Appendices and, subject to and upon the terms specified in those documents, we do hereby offer to enter into an agreement with Social Work England for the provision of the services specified in those documents at the rates/prices detailed in the Response to the Tender.

If this offer is accepted, we will execute an Agreement substantially in the form identified in the ITT within the timetable set in Part A of the Tender (or as subsequently amended by Social Work England).

Unless and until a formal Agreement has been executed by us both, your written acceptance of this Tender with all its enclosures shall not constitute a binding contract between us. We understand that you are not bound to accept the lowest price or any Tender.

We agree that any other terms or conditions of contract or any general reservations which may be printed on any correspondence emanating from us in connection with this Tender, or with the Agreement, shall not be applicable to the Agreement.

We agree that any Agreement that may result from this Tender shall be subject to the laws of England and Wales, as interpreted by a Court in that jurisdiction, and furthermore, we submit to the jurisdiction of the English and Welsh Courts.

We undertake to keep this Tender open for acceptance by Social Work England for a period of sixty (60) working days following the Tender Submission Deadline (Friday 4th December).

Non-Collusion Certificate

We certify that this is a bona-fide tender intended to be competitive and that we have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the Tender or the rates and prices quoted, by, or under or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person.

We certify that we have not, and undertake that we will not, at any time:

a) communicate to any person other than Social Work England’s Commercial Team the amount or approximate amount of our proposed Tender (other than to obtain necessary quotations for the preparation of this Tender and/or as necessary to obtain appropriate insurance cover);

b) enter into any agreement or collusion or arrangement (whether paid or unpaid) with any other person to the effect that they shall refrain from submitting a tender, or in relation to the contents or amounts of any tender to be submitted;

c) offer any inducement, fee or reward directly or indirectly to any employee (including temporary appointments), board member or any other related associate of Social Work England in order to influence the outcome of this Tender; or

d) do anything which would constitute a breach of the Bribery Act 2010.

I warrant that I have all requisite authority to sign this Tendering Declaration and confirm that I have complied with all the requirements of the ITT.

For and on behalf of: (Name of organisation)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature:** |  |
| **Name of Signatory and Position:** |  |
| **Name of Organisation:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

1. <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/publications/research-reports/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)