**NHS England – Diabetic Eye Screening Programmes across the East of England**

**Prior Information Notice – Information**

NHS England East of England (The Commissioner) seeks to re-commission Diabetic Eye Screening Programmes (DESP) to deliver screening to eligible populations across the East of England region.

This notice is placed as a Prior Information Notice (PIN) in order to facilitate engagement with potential providers and relates only to a pre-procurement market engagement questionnaire and event/s. Responses will help to inform the commissioning strategy in respect of geographical delivery (Lots), payment arrangements and the contract term.

*Objectives of the service:*

The aim of the Diabetic Eye Screening programme is to reduce the risk of sight loss amongst people with diabetes by the prompt identification and effective treatment, if necessary, of sight threatening diabetic retinopathy, at the appropriate stage during the disease process.

The eligible population includes patients aged 12 or over diagnosed with diabetes mellitus (excluding gestational diabetes) and registered with, or eligible to be registered with a GP, as well as individuals within prisons, secure units and the armed forces.

All NHS diabetic eye screening services (DES) will be provided in accordance with published DES programme standards and speciation. [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/diabetic-eye-screening-programme-standards]. The aims of the service will be achieved by delivering an evidence-based service that:

* Identifies the eligible population and ensures effective delivery with maximum coverage
* Is safe, effective, high quality, externally and independently monitored, and quality assured
* Leads to earlier detection, appropriate referral, effective treatment and improved outcomes
* Is delivered and supported by suitably trained, competent and qualified clinical and non-clinical staff who, where relevant, participate in recognised ongoing continuing medical education (CME), continuous professional development (CPD) and quality assurance (EQA) schemes
* Has audit and service evaluation embedded in the service
* Has a seamless pathway at the interface between screening and diagnosis and a treatment pathway that ensures people are referred promptly and safely to treatment services

There are three key elements of service delivery, namely:

* Call/recall for all people with diabetes invited for routine digital screening – this is currently undertaken on an annual basis, but screening intervals are likely to extend to two years for people at low risk during the contract term in line with national guidance
* Digital surveillance where individuals need more frequent screening
* Slit lamp bio-microscopy (SLB) for those individuals where normal photography is inappropriate (e.g., those having cataracts).

There is an expectation that the contract holder(s) for all lots will work with screening and immunisation teams, NHSE commissioners and other system commissioners across the geography/s to maximise collaboration and opportunities for integrated service offer and delivery.

The precise scope is to be confirmed, but is likely to include the below geographies:

* Bedfordshire
* Milton Keynes\* (Buckinghamshire)
* Cambridgeshire
* Essex
* Hertfordshire
* Norfolk
* Suffolk

\*Please note Milton Keyes falls under the delegated authority of NHS England East

Consideration is being given to potential lotting strategies, with the outcomes of market engagement being used to inform the final decision. The invitation to tender is likely to be published March/April/May 2023 and the contract is due to begin in April 2024.

*Future developments :*

There is an expectation that providers will be expected to reduce their carbon footprint and are committed to NHS net zero plan (as per PPN 06/21 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0621-taking-account-of-carbon-reduction-plans-in-the-procurement-of-major-government-contracts) and give due consideration to the Social Value Act.

Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) currently does not form part of the Section 7A Contract. This position may change as NHS England and systems develop and collaborate further therefore this may become a component of the contract in line with national guidance .We would be interested in your considerations with our approach at any subsequent market engagement questionnaire / meeting.

There will be an extension to 2-year interval screening for low risk (R0M0) patients. It is anticipated that DES services that meet the criteria assessment framework - yet to be circulated - can implement two-yearly intervals extension for low-risk individuals from Q3 23-24 for some sites and 24 for all programmes.

The NHSEI Collaborative Live Information Technology (IT) Board is considering actions to achieve greater consistency in DESP IT arrangements; this is in advance of NHSX’s development of a new digital screening platform. Commissioners will work with DES providers to ensure any recommendations are implemented.

It is anticipated that the contracts will commence on 1st April 2024. The contract term is yet to be confirmed and will be formed after due consideration post any questionnaire / market engagement meeting

At this time, Commissioners would like to determine the level of provider interest in this opportunity and seek responses to a market engagement questionnaire, the aim of which is to obtain feedback from the market to help inform re-commissioning. This may then be followed by market engagement events as deemed appropriate, e.g. 1:1 meetings with the Commissioner / a briefing event. Details of any events undertaken will be provided to those who express an interest.

Expressions of interest are welcome from providers who may be interested in bidding for these services, either in their own right or as a subcontractor or partner. If 1:1 meetings are facilitated, these will be held with potential contract holding / lead providers only.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please register on the e-procurement portal, Atamis , and submit a completed provider market engagement questionnaire by 28th December 2022.

This exercise is being carried out by Arden GEM CSU on behalf of the Commissioner(s).