



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

National Careers Service: Area Based Contracts

Generic - Once Only (OO) Questionnaire Template for completion.

NOTE: Organisations choosing to subcontract some or all of their delivery are accountable and responsible for the performance of each subcontractor. The ESFAs assessment of Prime Contractors' performance will also take into account the performance of any subcontractors and will be marked accordingly.

It is Mandatory to complete only once all of the questions listed, irrespective of your Bidding Area(s) selected and upload once in the relevant place in the online technical envelope.

Adviza Partnership

Question [OO-01]: Understanding of context

Please describe how the National Careers Service contributes to the Governments economic growth and social mobility agenda's.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Sound knowledge of policy context such as DfE Careers Strategy, Fuller working lives, Industrial Strategy and other relevant policy documents, and how you will keep up to date with policy changes;
- How you will support both the strategic direction and the delivery priorities for the National Careers Service and explain how your business model will respond to changes in policy;
- How your strategic planning will be aligned to government policies and priorities;
- Sound knowledge of key National Careers Service principles such as:
 - Universal and impartial service;
 - Service is independent from learning provision;
 - Tailored to the needs of the individual;
 - Sound knowledge of advice and guidance that supports career management for individuals;
 - Focusing on priority groups customers; and
 - Encouraging customers to self-serve using the digital service.

Maximum score 150 points – weight = 1

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

We have in depth knowledge of the policy context & understand that economic growth & improving social mobility are key challenges. We are members of Careers England (our CEO is Chair), ERSA & CDI, & the Director for Careers at Education Development Trust (EDT, a key subcontractor) is the President

of CDI. We receive daily press & Parliamentary reports to stay up to date with policy, maintain networks & respond quickly to change.

The Service can play a transformational role by supporting more people into good jobs, helping primary customers develop career management skills & upskilling secondary customers. Economic growth & social mobility are key themes in the Industrial & Careers Strategies & Fuller Working Lives (FWL); they are about creating opportunity for all, tapping into talent, a prosperous post-Brexit economy & enabling local & national responses through collaboration & devolution. They underpin the key principles of the Service illustrating its important role in achieving economic & social change.

The Service supports the Industrial Strategy ambition of building a Britain fit for the future; creating more good jobs & better pay through bespoke, varied services focussed on getting customers into the right job & learning outcomes. We will help people benefit from technological innovation; the jobs & skills it creates & the careers tools it provides. We will work with customers to challenge & enable them to self-serve, develop knowledge & digital skills & identify upskilling opportunities to fill skills shortages (eg through the new technical education system & national retraining scheme). This is particularly important for underrepresented customers who need tailored support. We will work with Skills Advisory Panels to inform LMI, which we push out to Advisers via our daily digital LMI service, enabling us to communicate opportunities to customers quickly.

Integral to the Service is the Careers Strategy aspiration to make the most of everyone's skills & talents; a thriving careers system, accessible to all, is at the heart of our social mobility focus. Markets change rapidly; new industries & jobs emerge & careers guidance must keep up. Many SW employers struggle to recruit due to low unemployment. This creates competition to secure good staff leading to rising wages & (with the right guidance & support) opportunities for those furthest from work. We will provide high quality, up to date careers support to help customers navigate changing markets, appreciate the benefits of change & ensure they understand the need for lifelong learning & training, as working lives get longer. To do this we need Advisers who are confident & comfortable with digital tools, with a desire to learn & able to respond quickly & effectively to changing markets, including breaking down customers' barriers, challenging them to take their next career steps (including apprenticeships).

FWL emphasises that the future labour market will need older people to participate to meet demand. This requires a focus on retrain & retain; "training, development & active career planning... to ensure older workers have the skills to remain competitive". We will be able to flex resources between priority groups as required & in response to changing markets, eg to respond to national or local economic "shocks" or the impact of Brexit. Our staff are incorporating the FWL agenda in their work with older customers & employers.

The strategic direction & delivery priorities of Adviza & the Service are strongly aligned. Our values include a strong commitment to social mobility (eg through our portfolio of services such as the Bucks County Council Wellbeing project), innovation & wise use of resources. Supporting customer progression is in our DNA; we are careers guidance experts with an excellent track record of supporting disadvantaged people into learning & work. Our business model responds to changes in the service specification, eg the shift to more disadvantaged priority groups & social mobility. We will deploy additional, bespoke resource to support priority customers furthest from work to progress to JLOs. We encourage self-service & use of digital tools; over 50% of our customers are already using these. We invest heavily in partnerships & have good relationships with stakeholders in our current area; all our delivery is co-located with partners & we are confident this experience & expertise (plus that of EDT) will mean we can do the same in areas new to us (eg in the Combined Authority & West Somerset Opportunity Area). We have wide access to primary & secondary customers through the breadth of our other work eg for LEPs, employability work, Big Lottery projects, Schools & Local Authorities. We model good practice by employing apprentices, providing excellent support to disabled staff & encouraging older workers (25% of our staff are 50+, 14% 60+).

Our strategic planning is strong; we have proven ability to align with Government priorities & policies (eg our response to the custody contract change has been to develop our own offer for Prisons, which

is already being purchased). Our national & local networks are excellent & we have high calibre, active Trustees, many of whom are well connected to national policy & influence our responses. Our digital & self-service track record is strong; staff & customers have access to & are used to using a wide range of digital tools with high take up rates, including Morrisby & our own digital products eg our online FIS (Framework for Intensive Support) & eclips (online careers information & LMI). We are continuously growing employer engagement (supported by our CRM) & promoting the case for priorities such as: recruiting adults to apprenticeships & using the levy to retrain 50+ workers.

Our knowledge of the key Service principles is sound. Providing a universal & impartial service is integral to everything we do. As a current Prime we manage the split between priority/non-priority customers well, signposting all to appropriate customer journeys, always with career management actions.

Our bid provides a strong, mixed supply chain that helps ensure independence from learning provision; neither Adviza nor EDT are learning providers, we harness the advantages of including learning providers, especially for priority customers (while assuring their independence through our excellent compliance team). Our services are highly tailored to individual needs through our Assessment, Action, Aftercare model ensuring customers are directed to the right service, making best use of self-service & focusing support on those in priority groups who need it.

We have unrivalled knowledge of advice & guidance, which we apply to ensure customers meet career management goals. All staff access our daily digital LMI service; we pull current LMI from many sources to make it easily accessible to Advisers & both primary & secondary customers. Our focus is on progression & ensuring customers take positive steps to achieve a job or learning outcome. Priority customers are at the heart of our charitable purposes. We use data effectively (eg who and where priority customers are) to build partnerships to access customers in venues comfortable for them (we are investing further in analyst resource & reporting functionality). Our expertise derives from our wide range of services & is supported by training & access to innovative resources such as our digital FIS.

Question [OO-02]: Marketing, Social Media and Branding

Please explain how you will support a nationally co-ordinated marketing and social media strategy for the service as detailed in PART C - Marketing and Branding of the ITT.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your capability and experience of supporting media activities through radio and press interviews, and digital media activities such as on-line interviews, engagement through social media, webinars, etc. You should include details of how you have measured the impact of media activity;
- Your capability and experience of producing content which can be used across a range of media platforms including print, digital and social media;
- Your ability to use digital and social media to raise awareness of the value of careers advice through differentiated activities which address the needs of particular audiences;
- Your experience of managing co-ordinated marketing activity across different media (including digital and social media) in support of national campaigns and promotions, so that consistent messages reach local areas and venues.
- How you will ensure that all careers advisers use social media strategy to promote the service by generating and sharing local relevant content which exemplifies how the service benefits customers;
- What you will include in your marketing strategy for each of the geographical areas that you are bidding for and the impact measures that will be used;
- What investment you will make to achieve these requirements and in what timescale
- How you (and your subcontractors) will ensure you comply with the brand for the Service and any related brand values and guidelines as detailed the tender specification.

Maximum score 150 points – weight = 3

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

With 15+ years' experience of promoting the value of professional careers advice across all media channels, we are pro-active & a regular commentator on careers matters. We have a core of media-trained staff, experienced in giving local & national press, radio & TV interviews. We use the Meltwater media monitoring tool to send press releases, monitor engagement & track impact. We use digital tools such as webchat for 1:1 advice & webinars for CV writing, job search, interview skills etc. We are experienced at producing videos to showcase our work & provide advice to customers. We promote services to customers, partners & employers using our social media channels via Hootsuite & email marketing via Campaign Monitor. We use our members only web platform & e-learning portal to keep Advisers & subcontractors up to date with LMI, careers news & CPD.

Our activity must demonstrate impact, we know that certain activities are linked to a spike in customer demand or an increased response; the most effective activities include survey monkey tracking, pushing vacancies out through social media, running digital drop in sessions (skype/webchat). We continuously measure marketing impact using the tools above & use this information to plan, evaluate & refine marketing strategies/activities (eg to reach target groups). We monitor visitor flow & device usage via Google Analytics & analyse usage spikes & centre attendance related to marketing activity (eg asking customers how they heard of us).

We have an experienced PR/marketing team, supplemented when required by specialist associates (eg Cosmic). We regularly consult the national marketing team for approval & understand the most appropriate platforms/media for different campaigns. We produce content to inform & advise customers, partners & employers across a range of media eg news items, blog posts, leaflets, graphics, web & print articles, emailshots, newsletters, social media, etc. Recent content includes information on apprenticeships, local LMI spotlights, redundancy support & advice for career changers.

We communicate daily with customers using a range of digital & social media platforms, our messaging is differentiated (eg young adults & some disabled customers prefer online communications) & we use

google translate to reach ESOL customers. We provide information, vacancies, opportunities, events, news & developments in careers through Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter (almost 3,000 followers) & Facebook channels & share/re-Tweet from the National Careers Service, National Apprenticeship Service & other partners. We use LinkedIn (corporate & adviser profiles) to share information & best practice with other professionals, gather feedback & connect with potential customers. We vary/differentiate content & platforms to ensure maximum impact for those we are targeting, including visual imagery to attract different customer groups (eg 50+), addressing any under-representation & promoting the benefits of career management.

We are experienced in working with a range of funders including ESFA, DWP, ESF, Local Authorities & Big Lottery; complying with the specific brand values & guidelines of each. We are skilled in managing complimentary marketing across different media to support national campaigns including National Careers Week, National Apprenticeship Week & Get in Go Far. We have planned, managed & coordinated a variety of activities including events, blogs & social media, making sure we communicate & share key messages & imagery provided nationally.

Our Marketing supports staff & subcontractors, monitoring impact & ensuring that brand integrity is maintained. We promote & comply with brand requirements by providing rigorous training & guidance for staff & subcontractors, supported by robust policies & quality assurance processes (we hold ISO9001, matrix & Merlin). Our Merlin accredited approaches ensure clear communication with our supply chain to support national promotion of the Service & we monitor effectiveness & compliance through contract monitoring procedures.

Our training for advisers & subcontractors ensures they: understand & promote the Service offer & brand values & are equipped to promote multichannel access; share & contribute to the creation of relevant content; use social media (eg Tweets/re-Tweets) to promote the Service/reinforce the key messages; & support customers to use online tools. Advisers produce local case studies demonstrating customer benefit for use in the press, websites & social media (one was used recently in the National Careers Strategy publication). Advisers & subcontractors are held to account for this through supervision & subcontract reviews. Teams informally monitor what works; their feedback has informed our investment strategy.

Our overarching marketing strategy for the region, consistent with national messaging, strategies & standards, will be underpinned by collaborative working with LEPs, Councils, the Combined Authority, employers & employer bodies etc to reflect local needs. We will increase Service visibility through our successful multi-channel marketing approach (including Advisers, a strong network of local partners & subcontractors), complemented by comprehensive digital marketing capabilities. We will monitor marketing activity against customer volumes to ensure that real impact is made across the area with local activity booked to support key local events. We are committed to investing additional resources from the beginning of this contract, experience has shown that this investment will primarily be of time & creativity; we work very effectively to ensure maximum impact for minimum cost & our local strategies will include:

- Service branding in every delivery location, including branding packs for Advisers (signage, name badges, contact cards, posters) & the customer charter
- Encouraging customers to recommend the Service to others (97.93% of current customers are satisfied with the Service)
- Marketing targeted at local audiences, eg postcard drops for venues in deprived areas if online channels are unsuccessful
- Investing extra resources to publicise the Service in isolated rural areas eg social media, online careers 'meetup' groups, local careers/employer events
- Piggy back promotions via partner/supply chain events, articles in their newsletters & social media
- Printed materials including posters, flyers & leaflets in all venues (delivery, partners, subcontractors & other local/community)
- Listings on local websites, adverts/advertorials in local magazines, local press releases & slots on local/community radio to promote 1:1 & group sessions, workshops, events, new venues, case studies

- Attending local job fairs & partner events & stands in shopping centres/high streets using branded promotional materials
- Promotional emails to target groups
- E-newsletters to Job Centre Plus staff
- National Careers Service pages on our website including LMI & local service information, blogs & other content
- Social media (promoted on printed literature, action plans & email signatures) to promote the Service & provide information, advice & local opportunities
- Setting up our own YouTube Channel to provide local advice on opportunities & target support to particular priority groups eg short films for customers with special needs addressing particular barriers that they may face
- Instagram to post short videos aimed at particular priority groups such as 18-24 year old NEETs

Question [OO-03]: Information Technology (IT) Systems

Please provide evidence of your capability to meet information technology requirements and the systems and resources you will have in place to deliver the service integration by the required timescale.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your current or proposed operational IT systems and the changes required to them to support the delivery of the service; ensuring the security measures are in place that reduce the risk of exposure of sensitive information from these systems;
- A plan that demonstrates how you will integrate with the Data Sharing Service from October 2018;
- Your approach to delivering the obligations set out on the Code of Connection;
- Your approach to delivering the data interfacing defined in the tender specification;
- Your approach to establishing/amending service management arrangements to ensure continuity of services and ability to develop/enhance services over time;
- Your planned 'end-to-end' service solution, clearly describing the key components including telephone capability;
- Your service integration plans, highlighting any bespoke aspects that need development and when they will be delivered;
- How the IT systems and the business processes will be tested;
- What criteria will be used to demonstrate readiness;
- How you will drive and support growth (scalability) through information technology;
- How you will cater for change and evolution of the service;
- Your track record of delivering projects for ICT integration to agreed deadlines; and
- How subcontractors will use IT systems;

Maximum score 150 points Weight = 3

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

We actively pursue a 'digital first' agenda, aiming at cost effective delivery processes that are simple & effective for users. Our operational IT systems are provided by UK-based suppliers with many years' experience of successfully delivering National Careers Service IT solutions that are intuitive, focussed on the customer & easily scalable (per-user per-month contracts give us precise budget control & easy expansion).

Our providers are CogniSoft (CRM), ICS (telephony) & Connect Systems (other IT systems). We & they will all have Cyber Essential Plus accreditation by 1 October & all align with ISO27001, ISO27002 & ISO22301 standards. Cognisoft supplies its YETI CRM solution to a number of current Primes & has a strong track record of data security & integrity/quality & of delivering changes required by ESFA for National Careers Service systems (eg CDS integration & XML MI Collection).

The key components of our end-to-end solution are the best digital careers tools (including local LMI, job profiles, vacancies & training options) & high quality face-to-face Adviser services supported by an efficient CRM solution & integrated in-house phone, email & SMS systems for tracking & ensuring

customers quickly get to the person who can best help them. As a current Prime, these compliant systems are in place & can easily be upgraded to new requirements.

YETI is used to manage all customer data, internal reporting & transfer of data to ESFA. Security measures, including annual penetration testing, minimise the risk of exposure of sensitive information. YETI Security Groups are created on a permissions-granted basis.

CogniSoft's hosting is provided with Equinix (holding all key security certifications including ISOs 27001 & 22301), a leading provider of secure data centres (audited by the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure), including permanent security presence & multi-layered physical security. Physical access to CogniSoft infrastructure is limited to nominated staff & all controls are governed by their ISO27001 Certification. All their systems/services are tested to CREST standards by a CESG CLAS consultant.

Our cloud-based infrastructure is secure, resilient & can be fully recovered within hours of a data centre failure. Data is held in a full specification, ISO27001 certified, Tier 4 data centre. A nightly backup is performed replicating to a target VMWare server at a secondary disaster recover suite. A weekly backup is removed to separate secure offices. All systems & hardware are fully protected (security & antivirus) & compliant with FIPS 140-2 & 197 security standards.

Our hosted, expandable telephone system runs on the reliable Gamma Horizon platform. It provides simple call routing, auto-attendant features & remote agent login. It allows us to monitor response times, call volumes & durations enabling easy reporting against standards. Calls from the National Contact Centre are immediately answered by our call handlers & distributed to the correct Adviser. Call queuing & recording (stored on secure UK-based servers) are supported by our system. Out of hours messages are picked-up immediately service resumes. Staff have access to Language Line for callers who cannot communicate clearly in English.

Our solutions maximise the benefits of integration with YETI including telephony & Adviser/group bookings. All system exchanges are fully audited, delivered over SSL encrypted connections with appropriate authentication & handshaking.

Our IT & MI teams work very closely with our suppliers to implement & support all our systems. We & all suppliers have the required resources available & are committed to meeting the ESFA's timescales & requirements, including stand-by contingency support to ensure continuity of service. The main changes required for service integration under the new contract are implementing specification changes for the Data Sharing Service, migration of new data into YETI & addition of new users. Our plan to integrate with the Data Sharing Service from October 2018 is:

- establish a test environment for data transfers once API etc. published (Aug 2018)
- structured end-to-end testing process (Sep 2018)
- acceptance/integration test passed (Sep 2018)
- staff/subcontractor training (Sep/Oct 2018)
- system live (1 Oct 2018)

We & CogniSoft have worked to the Code of Connection since 2014 & satisfied all annual security audits. Structure, policies & processes are in place that set out how we meet these obligations.

CogniSoft's dedicated National Careers Service infrastructure employs the physical & logical separation from other environments required by the Code & meets all security policies & testing regimes set out in the agreement.

CogniSoft have extensive experience of delivering RESTful services, having produced & consumed RESTful services covering over 200 methods across several implementations. Many of these can be seen in core YETI functionality, eg Universal Job Match integration. All CogniSoft's applications are built with compatibility for RESTful services.

YETI provides substantial flexibility allowing complex requirements to be met with no or minimal development changes. CogniSoft view the changes outlined in the ITT as an evolution of the current system & assure us it can easily be delivered. They favour Agile methodologies & will work with the ESFA in this way on the Data Sharing Service to meet the agreed timescales.

YETI is a proven system for the National Careers Service. CogniSoft will work with ESFA to fulfil the required testing regime for go-live, as they have with previous system changes instigated by ESFA. Our criteria for demonstrating system readiness include:

- successful robust system tests of YETI & Data Sharing Service interface across the new geography
- phone system capacity tests
- successful completion of all ESFA required acceptance tests

We have over 15 years' experience of developing, managing & operating data, MI & CRM systems to meet Government standards & drive growth, including National Careers Service, DWP, CCIS-compliant & other databases for large public sector contracts. We gather & proactively analyse MI to drive service delivery & growth, identify gaps, local trends & needs & to design interventions. We draw in customers through high quality, self-service digital information/tools & encourage them into other channels according to need. We & our suppliers have consistently shown that we are early adopters of new technologies & approaches.

Subcontractor staff will have appropriate access to YETI according to their roles, with their Advisers having the same access as our own Advisers. YETI uses 'System ID' technology to create a ringfenced subset of the data for each subcontractor, restricting customer data to those entitled to it. YETI has all ESFA business rules embedded to validate & ensure data quality, including workflow processes to support & streamline referrals between subcontractor & prime, promoting consistency & driving performance in customer outcomes.

Our policies ensure staff & subcontractors understand the importance of proper use of systems, particularly security, & we have passed all UK Government IT security & provider assurance tests over many years. Our systems are routinely Business Continuity tested & audited through independent tests. We are ISO9001 accredited & all contracts with suppliers are covered by robust agreements & service management standards.

Question [OO-04]: Subcontracting

Please explain how you intend to manage the risks associated with delivering the service through a network of subcontractors to meet ESFA requirements?

In your response please provide evidence of:

- The capacity in which you intend to use subcontractors in the delivery of the service, including:
 - o Information, Advice and Guidance services; and
 - o Supporting services including, but not limited to, technology, telephony, marketing, advertising, administration and finance.
- The processes you will put in place to:
 - o Select and appoint subcontractors; and
 - o Monitor, measure and manage the performance of all subcontractors including how you will deal with poor quality and under or over performance; and
 - o Manage risks and mitigation.
- How you will ensure they meet the mandatory requirements and the minimum service requirements as set out in the ITT;
- How you will ensure consistent quality in the delivery of the service;

Please **supply details on the Subcontractor pro forma** of all of the organisations (name and type of organisation) with whom you intend to subcontract with and how they will support your delivery model.

Maximum score 150 points Weight = 2
Maximum 5000 characters (2 pages)

We use subcontractors to add value & expertise, share learning & spark innovation through creative trusting partnerships developed using Merlin accredited supply chain design & development. Our subcontractors meet all contract & specification requirements including matrix & Cyber Essentials Plus accreditations, conformity with ISOs 27001, 27002 & 22301, GDPR compliance & Advisers qualified to level 3+ (majority at level 4/6). All have a proven track record & share our values of putting customers at the centre.

We will use industry leading support service suppliers with whom we have long established relationships for CRM (CogniSoft); telephony (ICS) & IT systems (Connect). Other suppliers will support marketing/digital (Cosmic), long term archiving & finance.

We will subcontract 55% of delivery. Education Development Trust will be a key subcontractor; as existing Prime in Dorset they are well placed to extend delivery to Somerset/N Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Torbay, Plymouth & the Scillies (we will deliver in our existing area of Oxon, Swindon, Wilts & Glous, expanding to the Combined Authority). Other subcontractors will be colleges and specialist providers to provide differentiated local access to priority customers. We will combine expertise to provide services tailored to customer needs in accessible community, co-located & pop-up settings. Our Procurement & Commissioning Policy guides subcontractor selection. We have held Merlin since 2013 (last accredited Nov 2017 - overall outcome 83%, Excellent supply chain design (93%) & finding that we 'put customers at the heart of our design & approach').

Having developed a business case for subcontractors we sought expressions of interest against clear requirements through an open call & existing networks. Responses were evaluated against requirements (& due diligence for all shortlisted) using a scoring matrix to ensure mandatory requirements are met & sufficient capacity, capability, quality, track record, financial/legal standing & policies in place.

Sub-contracts will pass through all requirements of the main contract & require compliance with our robust subcontractor management & support regime set out in a comprehensive Subcontractor Handbook (explaining each party's obligations, performance management & all mandatory requirements, eg branding/communications, staffing levels & qualifications, DBS/vetting, data/GDPR/MI, health & safety, insurance & quality accreditations). Subcontractor delivery plans will set out service delivery requirements, incorporating performance monitoring & payment schedules.

We achieve high quality, excellent performance from subcontractors according to principles of transparency, best value, accountability, efficiency & integrity. We measure, monitor & manage delivery against clear criteria, targets & KPIs, monitoring in real time using our CRM (which allows segmentation by subcontractor, geography, priority group, advisers etc). We benchmark performance across our supply chain & against third parties. Our ISO9001 accredited quality monitoring includes: observation of professional practice; mystery shopping; quality & accuracy of evidence; safeguarding, data protection/security & audit checks; & customer feedback. This ensures: swift escalation of non-conformance; consistent delivery; & sharing/celebrating good practice.

We evaluate quantitative & qualitative measures to give overall ratings, reported to monthly Project Management Group meetings (including Heads of Delivery & Compliance plus MI, Performance & Subcontractor Managers). The agenda includes: performance, risk register & action logs, addressing local need, filling local skills gaps, equality & diversity, LMI, quality, compliance & safeguarding. 4-6 weekly subcontractor management meetings focus on good practice & concerns. We address under/over delivery or quality issues early & provide support to prevent impact on customers or overall performance. Meetings are more frequent if risk ratings highlight concerns. A Notice to Improve & Improvement Plan set out actions to be addressed before meetings. This robust, consistent, bespoke approach helps us identify concerns quickly & take appropriate action. Should delivery not achieve appropriate quality, or targets not be met, we reprofile within our supply chain or source the best alternative provision.

We promote innovation & collaboration in our supply chain through quarterly sharing practice meetings & action learning to address emerging issues. We communicate via our weekly staff & subcontractor newsletter, on-line webinars, email & phone/video calls, ensuring national messages are disseminated, understood & actioned. Subcontractor feedback enables continuous improvement (eg recent development of a CV audit tool) & we support them by giving access to our learning & development programme, sharing resources & inviting them to our events.

Question [OO-05]: Performance Management

Please include details of your performance management processes that will ensure your performance (and that of any of your subcontractors) is maintained at the agreed level and explain how your performance management will result in an improved service and improved Outcomes for Customers.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- Your performance monitoring measures, the relationships between them and how they are used to get a holistic view of performance;
- How you use benchmarking to measure performance;
- How you utilise trends to measure improvements;
- How you use performance management to improve Outcomes for Customers;
- The intervention activities you will have in place and how are these will be implemented and monitored;
- How you will use accurate and timely data to provide a targeted, relevant personalised service offering;

Maximum score 150 points Weight =2

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

Our ISO9001 accredited performance management approach gives us a holistic view & performance measures are interrelated to ensure a complete, accurate picture. The hierarchy starts at Board level with regular reports to, & rigorous challenge from, our Performance & Quality Committee. Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) reviews a balanced scorecard monthly; success is celebrated & learnt from, underperformance is addressed through improvement plans & includes an SLT challenge session to identify issues & the help needed to resolve them. This is as a learning exercise, not a punishment; relationships are the key to effective performance management!

Manager meetings identify concerns & appropriate corrective actions for Advisers & subcontractors. All Managers are accountable & expected to adhere to high performance standards themselves. Our compliance team is independent of delivery. It monitors all staff/subcontractor compliance & ensures mandatory training is completed.

We set all advisers/subcontractors targets & analyse additional KPIs to complement contractual targets & give a holistic picture eg failure to attend rates, venue footfall compared to engagement, priority group penetration, group work evaluations, multi-channel marketing penetration & impact, CV/Skills Action Plan etc audits & customer outcomes compared to LEP priorities.

We apply a formula (using FTE & delivery days) to monitor individual performance fairly & accurately (daily target of 4 new customers) & predict total performance (taking account of risk factors eg extreme weather). We measure performance in the round & will not accept anyone hitting their new customer target if they do not achieve consistently high customer satisfaction (97%) or appropriate CMO & JLO progression. All are expected to achieve 100% of these realistic but stretching targets, with a tolerance of 98% for new staff to develop & establish themselves over an initial 2-months.

Our interventions fall into 2 categories; positive intervention to encourage & promote excellence (our constant aspiration); & intervention triggered by performance concerns. Positive interventions

include; monthly 1:1s, reflective practice using case studies, personal reflection, annual & 6 monthly appraisals, best practice events, observations, shadowing colleagues & a performance toolkit. Good practice is continually shared both formally and informally, including through quarterly sharing practice meetings (staff & subcontractors) & monthly team meetings.

Performance concerns are raised when defined thresholds are not reached eg outcome rates; any observations or action plans not graded at least good; issues from mystery shopping; & spot checks (including adherence to brand guidelines, customer charter etc). If there are temporary mitigating circumstances, the situation will be carefully monitored without remedial action. Otherwise, we introduce & monitor a supported improvement plan, including training, sampling, a mentor, opportunity to shadow another Adviser etc. If improvement is limited, we instigate formal capability procedures. In the current contract we inherited a poor cohort of Advisers who did not meet our performance thresholds; as a result only 16% of the original team remain. We have learnt from this & will ensure a rigorous skills assessment of the new team to identify strengths we can build on & performance issues to be dealt with swiftly.

We treat subcontractors the same as our own staff & expect them to have equally robust performance management that aligns with ours. We monitor, report & share performance by sub-contractor (using our CRM), ensuring they understand their contribution to whole service performance. We apply the same performance hierarchy to subcontractors (commended by Ofsted) including interventions such as sharing good practice widely & inviting subcontractors to joint events. Where performance is of concern we instigate an improvement plan with enhanced monitoring. Subcontracts are terminated where performance does not return to targets, with delivery volumes reallocated within the supply chain or to openly procured new specialist subcontractors. All interventions for Adviser & subcontractor poor performance are supported & reviewed by senior staff & our Board.

We use benchmarking to measure our performance, analysing performance between individuals, teams, subcontractors, other Primes & sub regionally. We review Ofsted & IPSOS Mori reports & Nomis datasets to compare ourselves with statistical neighbours, particularly for target group engagement.

We are regularly the best in the country for quality & satisfaction measures. While our volumes have been lower, Ofsted have confirmed that our remedial actions have led to a sustained improvement. We are enhancing our MI reports to drill down by LEP area so we can benchmark between them. We use products such as our digital Framework for Intensive Support (FIS) to benchmark the distance customers travel for each Adviser; this enables us to identify & share best practice. All benchmarking is used to drive continuous improvement in performance & quality & to stretch our aspirations (eg to set new targets).

We use trends to measure improvements regularly & systematically, led by our Continuous Improvement Group. Our balanced scorecard is used for systematic trend data monitoring, which is crucial to decisions on continuing/extending or discontinuing practice. Our 360 performance monitoring (including daily outcome reporting for Advisers) allows easy & early identification of trends in performance/outcomes & other factors eg venue usage & customer progress/demographics. This allows us to measure improvements & identify “what works” which is shared through our best practice events.

We match trends that we see internally with labour market intelligence (including new & emerging markets identified by LEPs or redundancy/restructuring identified by DWP/Unions). We use this information to quickly improve/develop our delivery to meet emerging needs & target under-represented customer groups (we use weekly diary sheets to analyse supply & demand & redeploy accordingly). Monthly data deep dives analyse trends across hard to reach customers, eg SEND, lone parents, 50+ etc, eg recent analysis showed an increase in SEND customers which led to specialist training from our in house specialists who work on other contracts. For customers where data trends show them at a ‘standstill’, we aim to be creative in our thinking eg our digital FIS tool helps

customers follow & understand their progress, use of social media & pop-ups/outreach to reach isolated priority customers.

Our performance management helps us to improve outcomes for customers by:

- identifying new activity that may help individuals eg encouraging new customers into group activity in Job Centres based on analysis of outcomes from such interventions, focussing on customers' needs identified in interviews & challenging them to achieve their goals

- identifying training needs & trends to address with our staff eg Advisers were not challenging customers enough because of a concern about CSOs, additional training was offered resulting in interviews that are more challenging with no diminution in satisfaction levels

Since 2016 our productivity has increased by 45% due to the fair & consistent application of our excellent performance management processes both internally & with subcontractors.

Question [OO-06]: Security Standards and Business Continuity

Please describe how your organisation is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of National Careers Service data will be protected.

In your response please provide evidence of:

- How your organisation, and any appointed sub-contractors or third parties, will meet all the National Careers Service security standards as set out in the relevant sections of the attached document set
- How you can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected. GDPR data processors must only be appointed if they can provide sufficient guarantees that the requirements of the GDPR will be met and the rights of data subjects protected.

Please attach a copy of your organisations overall security policy and any other relevant documentation that demonstrates your organisations active commitment to security and how this policy is implemented. **Attach this policy to the appropriately marked section in the Technical envelope.**

Please attach a copy of your organisations business continuity and disaster recovery policies and plans to ensure continuity of service in the event of a business continuity incident. **Attach this policy to the appropriately marked section in the Technical envelope.**

Maximum score 150 points Weight =2

Maximum 7500 characters (3 pages)

We & all our suppliers/subcontractors will conform to required security standards & requirements including:

- complying with all Data Protection (DP) legislation
- achieving Cyber Essentials Plus before 1 October 2018
- conforming to ISOs 27001, 27002 & 22301 (some already certified)
- appropriate physical & virtual/logical protective & security measures

For subcontractors & suppliers, we specify these requirements in service agreements/contracts.

We will conform to Government Security Classifications (we will have considerably more than 1000 customer records), with data classed as OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. As a current Prime & provider of a wide range of ESFA & other Government services, we have extensive experience of processing such data securely.

Through Merlin accredited supply chain design & management we are experienced in managing subcontractors who must comply with all security standards. Subcontracts include all main contract requirements, expanded on in our comprehensive Subcontractor Handbook. We will conduct robust due diligence on security & DP prior to contract award. DP compliance is reviewed in subcontractor quarterly reviews & security compliance audited at least annually. With the advent of GDPR, we have recently strengthened subcontracts & provided further DP training.

No customer data is allowed to be stored on local devices, everything must be on the encrypted CRM customer record. CRM access is controlled through Security Groups, created on a permissions-granted basis; specific rights must be granted to each feature, section or sub-section (pages). If permissions are not granted, a user cannot gain access, which is restricted to those who need it for their role & only after DBS checks & training (CRM, DP & information security plus annual refreshers)

are complete. This also forms part of our quarterly staff practice sharing workshops & regular reminders are included in our weekly staff & subcontractor newsletter.

Our CRM uses System ID technology to create ringfenced data subsets for each subcontractor, restricting customer data to those entitled to it. All ESFA business rules are embedded to validate & ensure consistent data quality. Subcontractor data reports highlight any errors for which rapid resolution will be required.

Our Business Continuity & Disaster Recovery (BC&DR) policy & plans are regularly updated & tested/exercised to ensure they are effective as possible. They cover all significant business continuity risks including major incidents, IT failures, venue unavailability, staff absences etc. BC&DR is primarily tested by our key suppliers. Most recent exercises were in July 17 (IT systems), Oct 17 (CRM & premises) & Dec 17 (telephony) with all learning points incorporated in revisions. Our next corporate BC&DR test for is scheduled for Spring 18. All subcontractors & suppliers are required in subcontracts & SLAs to have in place comprehensive, tested BC&DR policies & plans.

Our cloud IT infrastructure is secure, resilient & can be fully recovered within hours of a data centre failure. A nightly backup is performed replicating to a target VMWare server at a secondary disaster recover suite. A weekly backup is removed to separate secure offices. All systems & hardware are fully protected & compliant with FIPS 140-2 & 197 security standards. Our hosted, expandable telephone system adheres to ISO27001 requirements.

CogniSoft's hosting is provided by Equinix, a leading provider of secure data centres (audited by the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure), including permanent security presence & multi-layered physical security. Physical access to CogniSoft infrastructure is limited to nominated staff & all controls are governed by their ISO27001 Certification. All their systems/services are tested to CREST standards by a CESG CLAS consultant.

Our Compliance Team oversee robust procedures to ensure customer data & outcomes evidence is processed in accordance with GDPR. All outcomes have an audit trail, including who has delivered them & what evidence we are expecting to archive. Collation, labelling & return instructions are provided for all staff & subcontractors. All data is securely archived & will be securely cleansed or destroyed in line with contractual requirements.

'Exit forms' are used when an adviser or subcontractor leaves the contract, to ensure continuity of service to the customer & to confirm there are no potential DP issues. All data is securely stored. All passwords are withdrawn immediately anyone with access to systems leaves.

As Data Processor (ESFA being the Controller) we recognise that the only processing we undertake is that authorised by ESFA under Schedule 8 of the contract.

Our company-wide GDPR working group, led by a senior manager, oversees implementation of changes required to our already robust DP systems required to comply with GDPR. We have a comprehensive Compliance Action Plan, following the Information Commissioner's 12 step plan, to ensure we are ready for 25 May 18. Our Head of Compliance is our DP Officer.

We have been controlling & processing special category data for many years without any significant breach. We adopt a 'privacy by design' approach, promoting privacy & DP compliance from the outset of any service/activity. All suppliers & subcontractors are fully compliant with all requirements & these are enforced through subcontracts/SLAs with regular monitoring & compliance audits.

We have completed a Privacy Impact Assessment in accordance with ICO guidance, including a full information audit of the data we currently process, how it is stored, the purpose & legal basis for processing, any joint controllers/processors, types of data, how we protect it & retention periods.

Our privacy notices have been revised to ensure they are compliant. Other actions include:

- ensuring we can comply with all data subject rights, including timely response to Subject Access Requests & the right to erasure

- reviewing how we seek, record, evidence & manage consent ensuring it is as easy to withdraw as it is to give it

- ensuring we have in place comprehensive GDPR compliant policies & procedures including to detect, report & investigate personal data breach or potential breach

-maintaining comprehensive & accurate data processing records

-revising our induction & annual refresher training

To ensure all staff across our supply chain meet all required security & DP requirements we require & provide comprehensive training on both the CRM & Information Security. System access will only be granted once all training has been completed. All staff will be required to complete annual Information Security training to retain system access rights.

CogniSoft have introduced CRM functionality to ensure we & they meet all our obligations as data processors. Rules can be applied to implement & manage data retention policies, a right to be forgotten function pseudonymises records & a Subject Access Request report exists to generate a copy of the subject's data should you as controllers require us to produce that information. The CRM includes a facility to record categorisation of information under the lawful processing principles.

Where the principle is defined as consent, reminders are provided to confirm & obtain informed consent. On accessing the CRM, users will be reminded of their obligations via a message that must be accepted before any customer data can be accessed.
