**Request for information (RFI)**

This is a Request for Information (RFI) and does not constitute a commitment, implied or otherwise, that Stonewater will take procurement action for the Out of Hours service at this time. Further Stonewater will not be responsible for any cost incurred in furnishing this information.

This RFI is being used to gather market research for Stonewater to make decisions regarding development and procurement of Stonewaters service for Out of Hours communication with our customers. Stonewater’s Out of Hours service needs to provide a professional and timely response to customer’s emergency and immediate needs during the periods that Stonewaters Contact Centre is closed. This service ranges from the raising of Emergency repairs with Stonewaters nominated repairs contractors through to queries on Rent Accounts, the logging of Antisocial behaviour within Stonewater properties as well as the recording of communication through digital services.

**Introduction to Stonewater:**

Stonewater is a leading social housing provider, with a mission to deliver good quality, affordable homes to people who need them most. We manage around 33,600 homes in England for over 75,000 customers, including affordable properties for general rent, shared ownership and sale, alongside specialist accommodation such as retirement and supported living schemes for older and vulnerable people, domestic abuse refuges, a dedicated LGBTQ+ Safe Space, and young people’s foyers.

Our significant and progressive house-building programme aims to build a minimum of 1,500 new homes a year from 2022/23 and we have a good pipeline of development to achieve this, driven by our vision of everyone having the opportunity to have a place that they can call home. We plough our surplus into building new homes, improving our existing housing stock and investing in customer services.

We are also the largest management partner for Legal & General Affordable Homes, supporting the organisation in delivering its ambitious development plan of building 3,000 homes by 2022, by leading on Legal & General's housing operations across England.

We recognise that the way we work matters too. We are committed to providing homes that are energy efficient and are working towards Government's targets for carbon neutrality. Our Environment Strategy helps us minimise the resources we use as an organisation and manage our impact on the environment.

Our talented 800+ employees embody our values – being ambitious, passionate, agile, commercial and ethical. For the second consecutive year we achieved a ‘One Star’ rating in the 2020 Best Companies Top 100 best not-for-profit organisations to work for and made the list for the top 25 best housing sector organisations to work for in the UK.

With an annual turnover of around £191 million and £1.8 billion in assets, Stonewater is a strong, dynamic and well-managed social business, with a long-term rating of A+ by independent credit ratings agency, S&P Global Ratings and a top G1/V1 governance and viability ranking from the Regulator of Social Housing.

**Scope of the service:**

Stonewaters Contact Centre provides a sensitive, efficient and cost effective service, receiving and processing a wide range of housing enquiries from customers regarding the repair and maintenance of their homes, Enquiries on their Rent Accounts, Antisocial Behaviour and services provided to communal areas around their homes. The Out of Hours Call Handling Service supports the Contact Centre maintaining professional and sensitive customer service during periods that the Contact Centre is closed.

Stonewaters Contact Centre is open from 08:00 through to 20:00 Monday to Friday and 09:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays; with the Centres services being closed on Sundays. An Out of Hours Service is required to cover 00:00 – 08:05 & 19:55 – 00:00 Monday to Friday, 00:00 - 09:05 & 12:55 – 00:00 Saturday as well as all day Sunday. This will ensure that customers are able to contact Stonewater at anytime without a customer being left without a response, or action in situations that are an emergency.

Stonewater are looking for providers who can provide consistency of their service throughout the year and maintain a service at all times, this includes back-up processes and systems to ensure customers are not left without a service as well as maintaining response times during fluctuating and increased demand.

A key objective is to maintain the efficiency of our services including logging key information from all customer communication, which informs and directs the actions of colleagues across Stonewater. To meet this requirement Stonewater are interested in knowing the capability of providers to integrate directly into Stonewater Customer Management Software ActiveH, to log calls and actions, including raised repairs, directly onto the system during Out of Hours.   
Stonewater also require providers who understand the requirements of Social Housing including the responsibilities of Landlords for the repair and maintenance of properties and are able to respond and raise emergency repairs with Stonewaters Repair and Maintenance contractors during Out of Hours.

Stonewaters customers expect excellent customer service that is not only timely and responsive and professional but also sensitive to their needs and understanding of the customers journey. Stonewater support a wide range of the community with different Housing options from Retirement Living, Supported Housing, Shared Ownership and General Needs rented homes. Stonewater are proud to support a diverse range of customers and require a Service Provider who appreciates this diversity within their delivery of customer service.

Stonewater are interested in a price per property model for the contract hoping to secure the best value for money with a partnering service provider and to ensure a manageable and predicted budget for both the Service Provider as well as Stonewater. This will support with having a service first approach to our customers with a focus on ensuring a timely answer to inbound call volumes and an emphasis on the service provided during the call.

**Responding to this RFI:**

Organisations responding to this RFI must be able to provide a call handling service providing a local call rate (01) number for calls to be diverted to. They must be able to manage calls throughout the hours that Stonewaters Contact Centre is closed including bank holidays. They should be able to offer the service when required, and at set scheduled times, during the Contact Centres opening hours for training or special events, holidays.

RFI responses must include:

* Name of the primary point of contact for the response
* Company Name
* Email
* Phone
* A brief summary (300 word limit) description of previous relevant experience in providing an Out of Hours Call Handling Service.

Please send all queries and completed responses to the Request for Information to [Procurement@stonewater.org](mailto:Procurement@stonewater.org) by 13th May 2021.

**RFI Questions**

Stonewater are requesting responses to the following questions:

1. Please confirm that your organisation be interested in tendering for the Out of Hours Call Handling service in line with the Scope advised in this RFI?
2. Please advise if your organisation would be able to price their services in line with a price per property all inclusive service. How would you ensure that Value for Money was obtained for Stonewater within this pricing model?   
   What key considerations would be involved in formulating the pricing while still ensuring a competitive price was submitted?  
    - Please be aware this is not a request for pricing or quotes to the service but an understanding of your organisations capability to price towards this model and key considerations.
3. Please confirm that your organisation able to input information directly onto Stonewaters Customer Management Software ActiveH?
4. Please confirm your organisation is able to maintain and back-up services to ensure that a service is maintained at all times.
5. Part of the Out of Hours future requirements will be monitoring Social Media and providing holding messages and a log of important social media communication during periods the Contact Centre is closed. Does your organisation offer digital Out of Hours Communication? While not part of the current scope can you advise of Digital Out of Hours services provided alongside Call Handling services?

Although all comments received will be carefully reviewed with feedback and key information used to support later action, the initiators of this request make no commitment to include any particular recommendations.

There is not active tender for these services with this FRI seeking to understand the market conditions, where a tender is run it will be advised through Contracts Finder and Find a Tender and will be ran through Stonewater’s E-tendering software Delta. It is the responsibility of potential offerors/bidders to monitor these sites for the advertisement of any tendering of this service.

**Response Submission Deadline:**

Responses to this RFI must be submitted no later than 17:00 on 13th May 2021.

**RFI Responses**

Please return responses to the Request for Information to [Procurement@stonewater.org](mailto:Procurement@stonewater.org)

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| --- | --- |
| Company details |  |
| Responders Name |  |
| Company Name |  |
| Email |  |
| Phone |  |
| Summary of experience (300 words) | |
|  | |
| 1. Please confirm that your organisation be interested in tendering for the Out of Hours Call Handling service in line with the Scope advised in this RFI | |
| Yes: | No: |
| Clarification Comments (300 words) | |
|  | |
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|  | |
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| Yes: | No: |
| Clarification Comments (300 words) | |
|  | |
| 1. Please confirm your organisation is able to maintain and back-up services to ensure that a service is maintained at all times. | |
| Yes: | No: |
| Clarification Comments (300 words) | |
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