Market Consultation

Social Care and Health Policy MSc

Project: 178511

Version Number: 1.2

Date: 06/06/2023

# Introduction

* 1. This information note and accompanying information is being made publicly available to any organisations that are interested in providing **a MSc qualification in Social care and Health policy.**
  2. For avoidance of doubt **THIS IS NOT** a call for competition or a call for grant funding applications to be submitted.
  3. This is a market consultation. The purpose is to advise suppliers of the forthcoming Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) procurement and seek feedback from potential suppliers that may inform the final specifications and/or procurement approach to the services.
  4. This builds on a commitment to engage with the market, by sharing information and seeking input from the market to enable us to develop the final requirement and tender documentation in a fair and transparent manner. This exercise is to ensure that all tenderers have a clear understanding of the Department’s requirement and help reduce the number of questions that may be raised in the Tender Period.

# Background

* 1. The Head of Policy Profession and the Permanent Secretary are keen to secure a MSc-level qualification for policy professionals to build on current skills and improve policy making in DHSC. This will improve the quality of DHSC policy by embracing new policy changes and linking to public services, thus reducing ineffective policy making, improving quality of policy and meeting operational targets at the same time.
  2. This qualification will also be made available to members of DHSC staff and those in the wider social care and health family, including policy makers in other government departments, and operational partners, including arm’s length bodies, local authorities and charity partners.
  3. The DHSC is seeking to appoint a competent and independent supplier that will manage and deliver the MSc programme. An open tender process will be used to identify the supplier.

1. **requirement** 
   1. DHSC is seeking feedback on two sets of specifications. These are:
      * Administration Specifications: The requirements expected of the supplier managing and awarding the MSc qualification.
      * Course Specifications: The requirements/criterion of the qualification
   2. **Administration specifications:**
   3. The contractor will be a university that can award degrees.
   4. The course director shall be an academic with relevant experience. Lecturers and course tutors are expected to be experts in the fields of social care and/or health policy, whether as academics, policy practitioners, or health or social care practitioners.
   5. The Authority will select participants for the course but would welcome suggestions from the provider in setting the selection criteria for internal candidates. Access to students from non-academic backgrounds must be made available in line with the Civil Service commitment to diversity and inclusion.
   6. In person elements must be accessible within one hour via public transport of one of our headquarters’ locations (Leeds and London). DHSC will be seeking to appoint a maximum of one supplier in each location and **is particularly interested in a single supplier that can deliver in both locations**. This supplier may consider working in partnership with other organisations.
   7. **Course specifications and delivery**
   8. DHSC requires a MSc to be supplied over the following period

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 |
| Cohort 1 | 1st year | 2nd year | Optional 3rd year |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cohort 2 |  | 1st year | 2nd year | Optional 3rd year |  |  |  |  |
| Cohort 3 |  |  | 1st year | 2nd year | Optional 3rd year |  |  |  |
| Cohort 4  (possible extension) |  |  |  | 1st year | 2nd year | Optional 3rd year |  |  |
| Cohort 5  (possible extension) |  |  |  |  | 1st year | 2nd year | Optional 3rd year |  |
| Cohort 6  (possible extension) |  |  |  |  |  | 1st year | 2nd year | Optional 3rd year |

* 1. The delivery schedule is designed to allow for completion of the MSc within two years, with an optional third year for the dissertation for those students who would find this a more manageable time commitment.
  2. The minimum requirements for the delivery of the course are listed below. Suppliers are invited to offer innovative proposals in addressing these requirements, which will offer value for money.
  3. The course should be suitable for participants in demanding roles. Course participants will be allocated a set amount of time for scheduled elements of the course and will be expected to carry out background reading and complete assignments and any dissertation in their own time.
  4. The focus of the course is primarily on deepening subject-specific knowledge and developing relevant policy and analytical skills. It is not primarily about soft skills, but interactions between participants will be an important element of the course. The course should develop participants’ credibility as experts in social care and health, with the ability to build relationships with a peer group, develop ideas, and defend an argument. The course will complement other soft skills training available to people, for example through leadership training (which are available through other training offers).
  5. The course should include taught elements, delivered face-to-face. The contractor may wish to complement these elements with online/remote learning.
  6. The scheduling and/or location of the taught elements should be designed to minimise the impact of the course on participants and on Departmental business.
  7. In order to minimise the impact on Departmental business, scheduled teaching time (including any scheduled online/remote learning, such as webinars) and assessment deadlines for participants in years 1 and 2 of the course should not coincide.
  8. Assessments should be designed and spaced to minimise stress on participants, should assess the breadth of knowledge gained from the course and demonstrate the skills necessary to work in policy roles.
  9. DHSC is committed to principals of equality and diversity. To this end:
     1. the course should be designed to be accessible to those with significant caring commitments, and the in person/ hybrid split should recognise this; and
     2. arrangements should be in place to assess applicants sponsored by the Department who do not possess a first degree and to admit successful applicants to the course.
  10. Desirable requirements:
  11. A two-site or multi-site solution, to cater for staff based in Leeds and London. Bidders are welcome to form partnerships for the purpose of bidding, which could be as consortia or subcontracting arrangements. These arrangements must be detailed in your responses and formalised before the start of the contract.
  12. The availability of individual modules, a Post Graduate Certificate and a Postgraduate Diploma as a staging post to, or alternative to, a MSc qualification, for participants unable to commit to completing a MSc.
  13. Further clarification of the essential/desirable requirements:
* It is at the discretion of supplier whether to offer an online/remote learning element. We have decided not to specify the forms this could take.
* We have decided not to specify a minimum number of face-to-face teaching weeks per year; the maximum should be four per year.
* We have decided not to specify the form that assessments should take.
* Face-to-face teaching need not take place on university premises, provided that the key performance indicators are met.
* Teaching should take place in the course of standard office hours, and not at evenings or weekends.
* The Authority is unable to offer use of its premises for the provision of services.
* The current arrangements require participants from the Department to invest a significant amount of their own time into their studies. The Department offers two weeks’ paid study leave per year for attendance of teaching blocks, and participants use two weeks of annual leave or unpaid leave per year to attend the remaining teaching blocks. Any additional study leave for completion of the dissertation is discretionary.
  1. **Course price**
  2. Given the high volume of participants under this contract, the Authority expects suppliers to offer highly competitive unit costs, which compare very favourably with the standard fees for home students.
  3. The budget available for a 3-cohort contract for a minimum of 10 students per intake year per location will be £288,750, giving a total budget of £577,500 for both sites (Leeds and London). The expected maximum budget is based on 40 students across both sites and is £1,076,250 for a 3-chort contract.
  4. Suppliers are also invited to offer proposals for a minimum cohort size up to a maximum of 40 for the full 6 cohorts. The Authority will expect keen pricing reflecting economies of scale as these arise, for example larger cohorts.
  5. **Course outcomes**
  6. The course will equip participants for future roles as leading social care and health policy-makers. It will cover the social care and health system in its widest sense, including public health, primary care, community care, the acute sector, and social care. Graduates will have gained:
     1. A strong understanding of the health and care systems in England and an understanding of why structures and processes are set up as they are.
     2. A strong understanding of the NHS, local government and public health components of health and adult social care systems in England, the interactions between them, and insights into policy and implementation issues
     3. Insight into a range of health and care systems in other countries and global health issues
     4. A strong understanding of how health and social care policy interact with wider social and economic policy as well as developments in science, and technology and digital
     5. Insight into how to effect change at national level through implementation of policy in government and regional and local systems
     6. A strong understanding of key skills needed for a successful policy role including analysis, empirical methods, statistics and micro and macroeconomics.
  7. An ability to deploy policy-making tools and techniques particularly relevant to health and social care:
     1. Quickly and systematically building up a knowledge base
     2. Framing and critiquing policy questions
     3. Building an evidence base through handling and interpreting data and statistics and qualitative research
     4. Understanding and applying the principles of health economics
     5. Assessing the performance of social care and health systems
     6. Strong peer and academic networks and a tested ability to develop, present and defend ideas and arguments

1. **Guidance for completion of questionairre** 
   * 1. The questionnaire which forms part of this consultation is to support the future procurement of a supplier for an MSc in Social Care and Health Policy by exploring the market interest in this project, as well as to identify critical success factors and potential barriers for a future formal procurement process.
     2. To maximise the success of this subsequent procurement process we request that suppliers are open and honest in their responses and provide as much detail as possible.
     3. Participation in this market consultation is voluntary. It is not required to provide an answer to every question if questions are not relevant.
     4. The Department wishes to encourage participation at this stage in order to ensure a wide number of responses. This market consultation process does not form part of the formal procurement process. When and if the formal procurement process commences, any interested supplier will need to take the actions communicated by DHSC at that time in order to participate in the procurement. All supplier bids will be evaluated on the same basis.
     5. The completed questionnaire should be returned via email to [ccsinbox@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:ccsinbox@dhsc.gov.uk) quoting **‘MSc in Health and Social Care’** **no later than 6pm on Friday 7th July 2023.**
     6. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) applies to the Department. You should be aware of the Department 's obligations and responsibilities under the FOIA to disclose, on written request, recorded information held. Information provided by you in connection with this procurement exercise, or with any Contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, may therefore have to be disclosed in response to such a request, unless the Department decides that one of the statutory exemptions under the FOIA applies. The Department may also include certain information in the publication scheme which it maintains under the FOIA.
     7. In certain circumstances, and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued under section 45 of the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the Department may consider it appropriate to ask you for your views as to the release of any information before a decision on how to respond to a request is made. In dealing with requests for information under the FOIA, the Department must comply with a strict timetable and the Department would, therefore, expect a timely response to any consultation within two working days.
     8. You may provide information which is confidential in nature and which you may wish to be held in confidence. You must give a clear indication which type of material is to be considered confidential and why it is considered to be so, along with the time period for which it will remain confidential in nature. The use of blanket protective markings such as "commercial in confidence" will no longer be appropriate. In addition, marking any material as confidential or equivalent should not be taken to mean that the Department accepts any duty of confidentiality by virtue of such marking. Please note that even where you have indicated that information is confidential the Department may be required to disclose it under the FOIA if a request is received.
     9. The Department cannot accept that trivial information or information which by its very nature cannot be regarded as confidential should be subject to any obligation of confidence.
     10. In certain circumstances where information has not been provided in confidence, the Department may still wish to consult with you about the application of any other exemption such as that relating to disclosure that will prejudice the commercial interests of any party.
     11. The decision as to which information will be disclosed is reserved to the Department notwithstanding any consultation with you.
     12. Whilst the Department expects to proceed to procurement in due course, there is no obligation to do so as a consequence of this early market engagement activity.
     13. The publication of any documents at this stage is intended to provide potential suppliers with the opportunity to view and comment on a draft specification and proposed procurement routes for the requirement. The Department does not intend to be bound by any information at this stage. The Department makes no commitment to accept recommendations or suggestions. Once published, the Invitation to Tender will contain the final requirements in relation to this service. All previous versions, including any documents published at this stage should be disregarded.
     14. The DHSC (The Department) will make the final decision whether to proceed to a formal procurement and if so, on the content of the Invitation to Tender documentation having considered feedback.

Kind regards,

**Corporate and Clinical Services, Commercial Lifecycle**

**Commercial Directorate, Department of Health & Social Care**

**39 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0EU**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Name of Supplier:**

Name of authorised representative in block letters:

Position:

Date:

Signature:

**(This should be completed by the Supplier or an authorised representative in his / her own name and on behalf of the company / organisation completing this questionnaire)**

**Please do not sell your organisation, this is just to understand your interest in the project and gather feedback.**

1. **gauging the level of interest**
   1. Are you interested in this project?

*Enter text here*

* 1. If you have answered yes to the above, what option applies to you?
     1. We can currently provide a service that meets the requirements in full
     2. We currently provide a service that could meet the requirements in full if developed further with the Department/Buyer
     3. We can develop a new service to meet the requirements
  2. Is the one-hour time limit from Leeds or London restrictive?

*Enter text here*

* 1. If you have an answered yes to 5.3, what would you suggest as a reasonable timeframe and what solutions could be offered to meet the needs of participants travelling for longer periods (participants will often have longer total journey time than the measurement from the city centres)?

*Enter text here*

* 1. Which location are you proposing to deliver the offer?

*Enter text here*

* 1. Is your organisation considering submitting a tender for this project?

If so, would you be doing this as an individual organisation or part of a consortium?

If not, is there any reason why? Could the Department take any steps to encourage greater participation?

*Enter text here*

1. **requirements**
   1. Do the Requirements and Service Specification provide you with a clear understanding of the Service being procured? Is it structured in a clear and straightforward way? Would you require any additional information in a full specification?

*Enter text here*

* 1. Are there any features of the service that are of concern to you and why? How might these be addressed?

*Enter text here*

* 1. Are there any components of the requirements that you feel, if removed or altered, would result in the Authority achieving the same deliverables/outcomes but at greater efficiency?

*Enter text here*

1. **Implementation activities**
   1. What would be the required timescales for developing the Masters before delivery could start?

*Enter text here*

* 1. What would be the approximate development costs to deliver the requirements in full?

*Enter text here*

* 1. If you are not currently considering offering the MSc in both locations, what could be done to support this?

*Enter text here*

1. **COmmercial**

8.1Do you consider the budget a barrier to your intention to bid for this Service? Please provide reasons.

*Enter text here*

8.2Would there be a barrier to offering (a) individual modules (b) Post graduate certificate (c) Post graduate diploma; and if so, what could be done to overcome these?

*Enter text here*

8.3 DHSC are considering a model where individual ALBs are invoiced individually by the Supplier for their own cohort. Are there any factors DHSC would need to be aware of for this to be successful?

*Enter text here*

1. **SOCIAL VALUE**

DHSC aims to secure additional social value through the procurement of these services in accordance with [Procurement Policy Note 06/20](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0620-taking-account-of-social-value-in-the-award-of-central-government-contracts). We have selected the following criteria:

Theme 4: Equal opportunity

Model Award Criteria (MAC) 6.1 - Demonstrate action to identify and tackle inequality in employment, skills and pay in the contract workforce.

which will be measured using these reporting metrics

● Total percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE) people from groups under-represented in the workforce employed under the contract, as a proportion of the total FTE contract workforce, by UK region.

● Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) people from groups under-represented in the workforce employed under the contract, by UK region.

9.1Do you think this theme, outcome and Model Award Criteria (MAC) are suitable and achievable? If not provide reasons.

*Enter text here*

9.2Do you think there are other themes and MAC that could be added?

*Enter text here*

9.3Do you consider this a barrier in your intention to bid for this service?

*Enter text here*

1. **Critical Success factors**
   1. What are the key critical success factors for the project?

*Enter text here*

* 1. What are the major barriers to success? How might these be overcome?

*Enter text here*

1. **Other feedback**
   1. Please use this section to provide any additional information or questions which you feel might be of value or to highlight any additional items that need to be taken into consideration.

*Enter text here*