

**Invitation to Tender for Research and Consultancy Services**

**C0517a: London Regional Adoption – Communications Workstream Lead**

London Councils is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London’s 33 councils. We act as a catalyst for effective sharing of practice, knowledge, information and services between boroughs.

On behalf of the Association of London Directors of Children’s Services as the project lead and sponsor, London Councils is now seeking to fill a number of roles which will be key to developing the outline business case for the future London regional adoption agency in collaboration with stakeholders across the region.

Regular communication and engagement will be important throughout the development to ensure future buy-in to the plans.

**Background**

The Department for Education (DfE) paper, [*Regionalising Adoption*](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219661/Further_20Action_20on_20Adoption.pdf), set out the government proposals to move to regional adoption agencies to speed up matching, markedly improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children, improve adopter recruitment and adoption support; and reduce costs.

In September 2015, the London Adoption Board submitted a proposal to the DfE to establish a London-wide adoption and special guardianship service with London local authorities, the voluntary sector and national partners working together to deliver recruitment, matching and adoption and special guardianship support functions. This proposal included all London local authorities (LAs) and 10 voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs).

During the first year of the London Regional Adoption project, a high level operational and governance model was developed for the future London Regional Adoption Agency (LRAA). Participating organisations recently sought formal ‘in principle’ sign up to the future agency through their local political governance arrangements, based on this initial work, and 26 LAs have signed up at this stage.

From January to March 2017, the project developed the next level of detail for the operational design of the future agency and began discussions on the future workforce needs. In the next phase of work we are developing the outline business case.

As the project is now beyond the initial scoping phase, the Communication Workstream Lead will run regular and bespoke communication and engagement activity with diverse and complex groups of stakeholders. Key stakeholders for communications include elected members in London boroughs, Directors of Children’s Services and Assistant Directors, Chief Executives, service heads, adoption teams, adopters and adopted children and young people. They will work in close collaboration with the project team and all other workstreams, including leads for service design, finance, legal, workforce and IT.

London Councils is seeking a Communication Workstream Lead to run the communications and engagement workstream until a permanent post holder is in post. The work will initially be confirmed for June to August 2017.

For more information, please visit the London Councils website – [here](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/children-and-young-people/regionalising-adoption-vision-london).

**Objectives**

During this phase, the requirements for communications and engagement are as follows:

1. Plan and manage communication and engagement activity.
* Develop the communications and engagement approach for this phase of work.
* Report progress against the workstream plans.
* Maintain engagement trackers and update stakeholder mapping.
* Evaluate success of stakeholder engagement and advise on associated risks.
1. Develop and maintain regular communications.
* Create and distribute regular email newsletters.
* Update website content.
1. Engage with service users to ensure workstream plans are focussed on their needs.
* Hold at least one engagement session for prospective adopters and adopters every three months. This may be virtual or physical.
* Work with voluntary adoption agencies who have been commissioned to lead on the development of pan-London teenager engagement and support groups.
1. Engage with members and decision makers to enable buy-in to the developing plans.
* Develop members’ briefings at the end of each phase of development.
* Organise and run an engagement event for members prior to completion of the outline business case.
1. Engage with current borough and voluntary agency workforce to support development of plans for the outline business case.
* Work with service design and finance workstream leads to ensure stakeholder.contribution to developing plans and to facilitate engagement events.
* Develop standard line manager briefings in collaboration with other workstream leads.
1. Promote the work of the project externally.
* Update the facebook page to engage with a wider audience.
* Develop media briefings as appropriate.

**Methodology**

Regular communication approaches have been developed using the London Councils website, Mail Chimp newsletters, and facebook. Stakeholder engagement has often taken place face to face, but we would be pleased to hear about options for greater virtual engagement as our stakeholders sometimes struggle to attend in person.

Close working with the project team and other workstreams is expected throughout, as the communication and engagement activity should be coordinated across the whole programme.

**Project Costs and Timetable**

Costs should be clearly presented and be inclusive of all fees, direct and indirect costs, expenses but exclusive of VAT. An example of a clear cost structure is provided in Annex 2. You should indicate based on the timings below how you would envisage the project progressing based on your suggested methodology.

This project is being included in the government’s Contracts Finder database to comply with recent changes in national procurement policy which specifies that any procurement opportunities and contract awards above certain low thresholds (£25,000) are published on [Contracts Finder](https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder).

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| **Activity** | **Date** |
| Deadline for receiving tender | 3pm, 9 June 2017 |
| Contractors informed of outcome | w/c 12 June 2017 |
| Contract awarded | w/c 12 June 2017 |

**Tender Requirements**

Bidders should provide the following information in their tender:

1. Proposed methodology and approach
2. An outline of all outputs from the project.
3. Arrangements for project management, reporting and quality control.
4. Research timetable with key milestones, including any risks that may affect the timing or delivery of outputs and contingencies.
5. Clear structure of charges including day/hour rates, time spent on tasks, expenses. VAT will be paid at the applicable rate (an example of a clear cost structure is given in annex 2).

We will evaluate your response against the evaluation criteria given below.

**80/20:** 80% quality and 20% cost

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| **Evaluation criteria – Quality [80% of the total]** | **Weighting** |
| 1. Understanding of the aims and objectives of the London Regional Adoption project.
* Evidence of a clear understanding of the most effective approaches to communicating with a diverse range of stakeholders
* Good political judgement and ability to plan for and deliver effective engagement with elected members

Demonstrable understanding of the national policy landscape and priorities for London in that context. | 20% |
| 1. Your experience of undertaking similar projects in local authority environments.
* Evidence of experience delivering a communications strategy involving complex organisational development and change, with a particular emphasis on engagement and consultation with political and professional leads as well as service users and service commissioners.
* Evidence of using communications effectively to mitigate project risks.

Evidence of working successfully with complex stakeholder groups. | 40% |
| 1. A clear methodology and approach to the work described above.

A clear and realistic plan for communications between now and August, including priorities for the communications lead and milestones. | 40% |

**Format of Tender Response**

If you wish to apply, **an electronic copy of your tender response with completed FOI and Equal Opportunities documents** (available on the website) should be sent by email to, tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk, quoting reference number **C0517a** to arrive by **3pm on 9th June 2017.**

**All submission documents should be provided in Microsoft Word format.**

If necessary, you may seek clarification on the procurement process or the specification by contacting Sorcha Rooney via Sorcha.Rooney@londoncouncils.gov.uk.

Enquiries will not be answered if received within **2** days of the date for submissions of tenders. Bidders should note that responses to each enquiry will be copied to all organisations bidding (though will not identify the originator of the enquiry) through the London Councils website.

If you are aware that the submission of your tender may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, please inform the officer to whom you are making the application.

***Full instructions to bidders are also provided in Annex One. Bidders are advised to read all instructions before submitting their tender.***

**Freedom of Information Act**

You should be aware that the information you submit may be subject to a request for information. The provision of any information to external parties by London Councils is determined by statutory conditions provided for in the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**Equality Opportunities**

The successful contractor will be required to comply with London Councils Equal Opportunity Policy and bidders should complete the Equal Opportunities Questionnaire with their tender submission.

**Terms and Conditions**

Please see accompanying terms and conditions and confirm acceptance in your submission.

Annex One: Instructions to bidders

1. **Tender Submissions**
	1. All pages of the bidder’s tender should be sequentially numbered (including any annexes and supporting documents).
	2. Bidders are advised to submit tenders by email to tenders@londoncouncils.gov.uk.
	3. The tender must not arrive later than the date and time stipulated. Tenders received after that time may not be considered unless the bidder can prove that the tender was dispatched in sufficient time to meet the deadline.
	4. By submitting a tender, the bidder agrees to keep that tender open for acceptance by London Councils for 90 days following the closing date.
	5. London Councils does not accept suppliers’ Terms and Conditions.
2. **Amendments to Tender Documents**
	1. Prior to the deadline, London Councils may modify the tender documents by amendments in writing. London Councils may extend the deadline for tenders to allow for significant amendments to be fully assessed and taken into account.
	2. The bidder may modify the tender prior to the deadline for receipt by giving notice in writing or by email.
	3. No tender may be modified after the deadline for receipt.
	4. The contractor may not transfer, assign or sublet the contract, or any part thereof, without the prior written consent of London Councils. If such consent is given the contractor will remain liable for the performance of the contract in its entirely as if such assignment or sublet had not taken place.
3. **Tender Charges**
	1. Charges must be in pounds sterling and be inclusive of all costs but can be exclusive of VAT.
	2. Charges shall be fixed for the duration of the Contract and will not be subject to any variation unless detailed in the Contract document.
	3. London Councils shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the production of the tender submission.
4. **Tender Evaluations**
	1. London Councils intends to commission the most economically advantageous Tender and reserves the right to accept or reject all or any part of any tender.
	2. London Councils does not bind itself to accept the lowest charged tender.
	3. London Councils reserves the right to change the timing or any other aspect of the procurement process or to cancel the procurement process at any stage without prior notice.
5. **Intellectual property rights**
	1. All information provided by London Councils shall be treated by the Contractor as confidential except where prior written consent has been given by London Councils that such information may be disclosed. The dissemination of information within your organisation should be on a need-to-know basis.
	2. All intellectual property rights arising from the work will reside with London Councils.

Annex Two: Example of cost structure

**Example of cost table**

Below is an example of a clear cost structure. Other cost breakdowns will be accepted; however a clear structure that will allow London Councils to easily assess value for money – including cost per stage and/or days/hours per person - should be used.

