**Call-Off Schedule 20 (Call-Off Specification)**



**Contract Reference: CCZW25A01**

**Contract Title: Provision of Essex Pension Fund Printing & Posting Procurement Specification**

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# PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THE REQUIREMENT

* 1. Essex Pension Fund must ensure the Printing and Posting (and associated digital services when specified) of its key legislative communications is carried out each year by the timeframe dictated by Legislation.
	2. Due to the risks associated with the timeliness and completeness of issuing of EPF’s legislative documents, which could result in fines issued to EPF by The Pensions Regulator (TPR) should the Supplier fail to meet expectations, an evidence-based procurement exercise will be undertaken whereby only companies with qualifying Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) experience will be considered for this Procurement.

# BACKGROUND TO THE BUYER

* 1. Essex County Council (ECC) is the Administering Authority for Essex Pension Fund (“EPF”) which forms part of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The LGPS is a national scheme administered on a local basis by EPF, providing current and future benefits for over 184,000 Scheme Members.
	2. EPF is governed by the Superannuation Act 1972 and the Public Services Pensions Act 2013. EPF is administered in accordance with the following secondary legislation:
		1. the LGPS Regulations 2013 (as amended)
		2. the LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) regulations 2014 (as amended);
		3. The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016; and
		4. the Public Services Pensions (Information about Benefits) Directions 2014 [with effect from 1/4/15]
	3. As of 31 March 2024, there were over 800 actively contributing employer organisations in EPF, [including ECC].
	4. In terms of Membership numbers, those were as follows:
		1. Active members: 58,853
		2. Pensioner members: 52,142
		3. Deferred members: 73,395
		4. Total membership: 184,390

## 2.5 In addition to the LGPS and Councillors, ECC also carry out the administrative functions for Police, Fire and Teachers Pensions.

## 2.6 EPF is required to communicate timely documentation to its Scheme Members ranging from April to September each year. These are legislative documents and must be produced to the highest standards according to strict deadlines.

# BACKGROUND TO THE REQUIREMENT

* 1. Prior experience with LGPS;

The supplier shall be able to demonstrate LGPS experience and shall have a proven track records of meeting their legislative timeframes.

* 1. Specifically, the Supplier shall have produced the following items for an LGPS Fund:
		1. P60s;
		2. Payslips;
		3. Combined P60 and Payslips;
		4. Active Annual Benefit Statement Booklets;
		5. Deferred Annual Benefit Statements;
		6. Pensions Increase;
		7. Multiple Template Jobs;
		8. Enveloping; and
		9. Mailing, posting and emailing.

# DEFINITIONS

#

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Expression or Acronym | Definition |
| ECC | Essex County Council |
| EPF | Essex Pension Fund |
| LGPS  | Local Government Pension Scheme |
| TPR | The Pensions Regulator |

# SCOPE OF THE REQUIREMENT

* 1. EPF requires a supplier capable of delivering a print management service to assist EPF in meeting is statutory obligations through the printing and posting of key communications to its Scheme Members.
	2. The service provided by the supplier to EPF shall include Data Management, Print, sort, transport, processing and posting.
	3. The supplier shall be responsible for accurately producing all necessary statements and sending all communications to EPF Scheme members on time.
	4. The supplier shall assist EPF with its 2026/2027 digitalisation target. This will require the supplier to ensure secure digital communications replace print communications as per a schedule agreed with EPF.
	5. The supplier shall be responsible for content formatting; specifically ensuring that the documents provided by the find are edited, formatted and standardized for print and digital distribution.
	6. The supplier shall also be responsible for personalising each document with member specific data and for ensuring all documents comply with accessibility standards.
	7. The Supplier will be required to print / email various personalised letters on a weekly basis with a timeline agreed with the customer. Letter / Email templates will be held by the Supplier. Data will be provided on a weekly basis containing a unique coding to determine which template should be populated. An automated system needs to be in place to process the data and merge and issue to the individual.
	8. The supplier shall provide EPF with PDF copies of all the documents issued.
	9. To assist the supplier with the above deliverables, EPF will provide templates / artwork and relevant data to the Supplier using a secure data transfer system.
1. **MANDATORY DELIVERABLES (SUPPLIER RESPONSIBILITIES)**

6.1. On behalf of EPF, the supplier shall manage all aspects of the emailing/print production, data processing, personalisation, enclosure and postage of the following 8 mandatory communications each calendar year.

Except for the envelopes, all statements shall be printed using 100 gsm paper.

**LGPS Active Benefit Statements**

Booklet.

-12 pages

-A5

-Quantity: ~ 30,000

-4 different templates with indicator within data to identify required template.

Letter:

-1 Page

-A4

-Quantity: ~ 24,000

- The letter is to form part of a mail merge with the data securely exchanged with the supplier.

Leaflet:

-2 pages

-A5

-Quantity: ~ 54,000

-Inserted into each booklet / letter

-Mailing Requirements – In total 54,000 packs will require mailing; 30,000 will contain the booklets with a leaflet whilst the remaining 24,000 will contain a letter with a leaflet. The supplier shall be responsible for ensuring the correct mail composition and mix.

*Artwork/designs validation*

Artwork will be produced by the supplier in line with EPF requirements. This artwork will require validation. The following tests are proposed to achieve this milestone:

* + - * 1. Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 18th July 2025
				2. Receive TEST Data approx. 18th July 2025
				3. Receive LIVE Data approx. 11th August 2025 for Mailing on 25th August 2025

Test data and live data for each mailing item must be available to be reviewed by EPF via either hard copy proofs, PDF electronic proofs or both if required. This will ensure EPF can de risk the process and have sight of what the actual jobs will look like prior to the mailing stage.

**Police and Fire Active Benefit Statements**

Booklet

- 16 pages

- A5

- Quantity: ~ 5,000

- 2 different templates with indicator within data to identify required template

- Similarly, to the Active Benefit Statement, the booklet will be fully personalised (mail merge) and the letter shall be part of the booklet.

-Mailing requirements - The supplier shall be responsible for ensuring the correct mail composition.

*Artwork/ designs validation*

-Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 18th July 2025

-Receive TEST Data approx. 18th July 2025

-Receive LIVE Data approx. 11th August 2025 for Mailing on 25th August 2025

**LGPS Deferred Benefit Statements**

Booklet

-4 sides

-A4

-Quantity: ~ 30,000

-2 different templates with indicator within data to identify required template

Letter

-1 Page

-A4

-Quantity: ~ 25,000

- The letter is to form part of a mail merge with the data securely exchanged with the supplier.

Leaflet

- 2 Pages

- A5

- Quantity: ~ 55,000

*Artwork/designs validation*

-Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 21st April 2025

-Receive TEST Data approx. 21st April 2025

-Receive LIVE Data approx. 30th April 2025 for Mailing on 19th May 2025

- Mailing requirements – In total, 54,000 packs will require mailing; 30,000 will contain the booklets with a leaflet whilst the remaining 25,000 will contain a letter with a leaflet. The supplier shall be responsible for ensuring the correct mail composition and Mix

-The booklet shall be appropriately folded prior to enclosure in C5 envelope.

**Police and Fire Deferred Benefit Statements**

Booklet

-16 Sides

-A4

-Quantity: ~ 2,000

-2 different templates with indicator within data to identify required template

- The booklet will be fully personalised (mail merge) and the letter shall be part of the booklet.

-Mailing requirements – The booklet shall be appropriately folded prior to enclosure in C5 envelope.

*Artwork/design validation*

-Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 21st April 2025

-Receive TEST Data approx. 21st April 2025

-Receive LIVE Data approx. 30th April 2025 for Mailing on 19th May 2025

**May Payslip**

Letter

-1 Side

- A4

-Quantity: ~ 55,000

- Mailing requirements – The booklet shall be appropriately folded prior to enclosure in C5 envelope.

*Artwork/ design validation*

-Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 9th May 2025

-Receive TEST Data approx. 9th May 2025

-Receive LIVE Data approx. 19th May 2025 for Mailing on 29th May 2025

**P60 Payslip**

Letter

-2 Sides

-A4

-Quantity: ~ 55,000

- Mailing requirements – The booklet shall be appropriately folded prior to enclosure in C5 envelope.

*Artwork/ design validation*

-Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 1st April 2025

-Receive TEST Data approx. 1st April 2025

-Receive LIVE Data approx. 21st April 2025 for Mailing on 28th April 2025

**PI Letter**

Letter

-1 Side

-A4

-Quantity: ~ 55,000

*Artwork/ design validation*

-Receive provisional ARTWORK approx. 27th February 2025

-Receive TEST Data approx. 27th February 2025

-Receive LIVE Data approx. 17th March 2025 for Mailing on 28th March 2025

**Envelopes**

-C5 Window

-Quantity: ~ 281,000

-Printed with “Private and Confidential” & return address

-Paper quality: 90gsm

-Window size 50mm x 90mm

-Window position from foot: 60mm

-Window position from left: 20mm

-The unused stock shall be returned to EPF

* 1. Where the delivery is digital, all files shall published in PDF format.
	2. Fully personalised booklets shall act as an addressed carrier.
	3. The Supplier shall manage the returns of all undelivered mail. Receive, scan, send return data file to EPF and securely destroy all returns.
	4. All production spoils must be regenerated. 100% of the mail file to be released to the mail.
	5. The Suppliers shall provide mailing and related services to include liaison with and management of postal providers.
	6. The above-mentioned dates have been based on calendar year 2025 and would be similar in 2026 and each year thereafter.
	7. EPF will provide the relevant data to the supplier within either a csv or txt format document to be merged into the layouts.
	8. The Supplier shall work with the EPF Communications Analyst to produce the artwork for all the above statements, with the timeline adhered to as illustrated above.
	9. In line with EPF commitment to digitalise its operation and achieve Net Zero by 2050, as part of 2025/26 Business plan, EPF will no longer automatically provide Scheme Member annual benefit statements to them through the post.
	10. The Supplier shall assist EPF in complying with LGPS Scheme regulations and notify all its Members that their statement is available online through the EPF self-service portal. For 2025/26, this notification will be sent by letter. EPF expects the 2026/27 Business Plan to show that this notification will be issued via email which the supplier shall carry out on behalf of EPF.
	11. Dates on these deliverables will be confirmed by EPF at the beginning of each calendar year. EPF will be giving its members the option to opt in to receiving their statements in hard copy form. EPF does not hold email addresses for some of its members and therefore, it is expected that hard copy statements will likely be required each year but the quantity should progressively decrease. The supplier shall ensure it plans its operations so that this change does not adversely impact the printing costs, quality and delivery time for those remaining members.
	12. The print quality shall be clear, readable and accurate and match the template provided by EPF.
	13. The supplier shall have the following standards or equivalent as a minimum:
		1. Cyber Essentials Plus
		2. ISO 27001 – Information Security Management
		3. Data Protection Act – Registered as a data controller with the ICO
	14. The supplier must provide a secure and legally compliant method of transferring data to and from EPF.

# LOCATION

* 1. Supplier address.

# BUYER RESPONSIBILITIES

* 1. Approval to proceed will be provided by EPF when the test and live artwork is issued for approval by the supplier on the dates set by EPF.

# KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

* 1. The contract will focus on the delivery of the following key performance indicators

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Milestone /Deliverable | Description | Timeframe or Delivery Date |
| 1 | All active annual benefit statements to haveentered the postal system / or email sent | 31 August each year |
| 2 | All deferred annual benefit statements to have entered the postal system / or email sent | 30 June each year |
| 3 | All May payslips to have entered the postalsystem | 31 May each year |
| 4 | All P60 payslips to have entered the postalsystem | 30 April each year |
| 5 | All PI letters to have entered the postal system | 31 March each year |

# SOCIAL VALUE

* 1. You must refer to the Commercial Agreement that you are buying from to see which social value themes apply to this requirement.
	2. Please include any relevant and proportionate social value requirements that suppliers need to support under this contract. Your Procurement Lead will help you write a social value question(s) that suppliers will need to include in their bid.
	3. If you feel you need a better understanding of social value you may wish to:
		1. Read Annex A - Toms Social Value Calculator and Annex B - ECC Social Value Bidder Guidance.
		2. Explore our [social value website](https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/social-value) which has lots of useful information or read our [Procurement Essentials article](https://www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/news/social-value-procurement-ccs)
		3. Complete a Government Commercial College e-learning course - [‘Social Value for Commercial Success’](https://www.govcommercialcollege.co.uk/). It takes less than one hour to complete and will help you to better understand what social value is, why it is important and how to implement it.

# STAFF AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

## The Supplier shall provide a sufficient level of resource throughout the duration of the Contract in order to consistently deliver a quality service.

## The Supplier’s staff assigned to the Contract shall have the relevant qualifications and experience (as detailed in the Mandatory Requirements Section) to deliver the Contract to the required standard.

## The Supplier shall ensure that staff understand the Buyer’s vision and objectives and will provide excellent customer service to the Buyer throughout the duration of the Contract.

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

* 1. The supplier shall assist EPF in continually improving its digital footprint to reduce printing and posting costs over the coming years.
	2. The Suppliers shall provide EPF with recommendations for postal service improvements and cost improvements. The Supplier shall use their expertise and up to date market intelligence to provide guidance to EPF to enable the optimisation of postal discounts (including any applicable volume related discounts and promotional discounts) and maximise savings.
	3. Changes to the way in which the Services are to be delivered must be brought to the Buyer’s attention and agreed prior to any changes being implemented.

# SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENTS

## Bidders will be required to complete the Information Security Self-Assessment questionnaire as provided in the Standard Selection Questionnaire (SSQ).

## Bidders will be required to adhere to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and UK General data Protection Regulations.

## The preferred bidder may be required to provide evidence of its security policy / policies following award of contract.

# PRICING MECHANISM

## The pricing will be fixed for the duration of the contract.

## However, the supplier will be permitted to submit a price review request to EPF in the event the cost of any traded commodity has demonstrably increased over a period of 12 months by more than 10%. Equally, EPF reserves the right to audit the suppliers’ costs upon serving a minimum of 10 days’ notice and request a price review in case the suppliers’ costs relating to traded commodities have decreased by the same percentage (10%) over the same period.

## The supplier will be expected to keep an open book pricing through the duration of the contract and share its pricing model with EPF.

## All prices are excluding VAT

## In terms of postage costs, those shall not at any point exceed Royal Mail prices. The Supplier shall be able to demonstrate to EPF that all price changes are justified by cost variations.

## All prices are inclusive of expenses, such as travel and subsistence.

# PAYMENT AND INVOICING

* 1. Marketplace is a Proactis Solution. It is a web-based system used by ECC to submit purchase orders electronically and receive and process e-invoices and e-credits.
	2. The Marketplace supplier interface is both simple and secure. The Supplier will access Marketplace using an Internet browser. Marketplace supports the latest release of web browser technologies, for example, Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari etc.
	3. Electronic Ordering

A record on Marketplace will be created for the Supplier and a user ID and password will be issued via e-mail.

The user ID and password will allow the Supplier to:

1. view their purchase orders online;
2. update their status;
3. notify delivery;
4. submit and monitor the status of electronic invoices and credits, once they have been submitted.

Purchase orders will be sent electronically to the Supplier’s central e-mail address.

* 1. Emailed Purchase Orders

Orders will be sent electronically, via Marketplace, to the Supplier’s preferred central e-mail address from the contract start date. To ensure continuity of service, the Supplier will be responsible for ensuring that orders are processed quickly and efficiently. It is therefore not advisable to provide individual e-mail addresses unless appropriate access is available, to ensure that orders are still processed if the main contact is unavailable. There is no transaction charge for e-mail orders which are sent to a preferred central e-mail address, via Marketplace.

* 1. Electronic Invoicing

The Supplier will submit electronic invoices and credit notes via Marketplace by utilising the PO Flip method from the contract start date. On approval of the electronic invoice an automatic payment will be made via BACS, direct to the Supplier’s bank account, in line with the Authority’s contracted payment terms. In addition to the above, the Supplier will be able to view the status of their invoices, via the Marketplace system.

* 1. Purchase Order Flip (PO Flip)

The Supplier will be able to gain access to the Marketplace system via a web browser, to view their Purchase Orders and turn any outstanding Purchase Orders into electronic invoices, by choosing the PO Flip method. There is no charge for this method.

Further information about all of the above can be found on the Authority’s website:

<http://www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Supplying-Council/Pages/IDeA-Marketplace.aspx>.

* 1. The Supplier will be registered onto the Authority’s Finance system, Oracle. The Supplier will in turn receive a registration email to activate their iSupplier portal account. This account is used to:

-view the status of invoice payments

-amend the Supplier’s details e.g. address, contact details, bank details

-create additional user accounts.

* 1. E-Procurement Terms of Trading

The Supplier must provide a preferred central e-mail address, (where orders will be sent electronically via Marketplace). It is the responsibility of the Supplier to ensure that they can provide a central e-mail address for orders sent electronically via Marketplace from the contract start date. The Supplier will be asked to submit this e-mail address. The Supplier must ensure that continuity of service is maintained at all times and that orders are processed promptly.

All invoices and credit notes must be submitted electronically by the Supplier to the Authority and as a minimum must be raised using the PO Flip method via Marketplace from the contract start date.

Services should only be provided/carried out on receipt of an Official Purchase Order which has been issued via Marketplace by the Authority.

The Supplier assumes full responsibility for ensuring that programs or other data downloaded uploaded or in any way transmitted electronically to the Authority are free from viruses, or any other items of a destructive nature whatsoever. The Authority makes every effort to virus check information made available for download from Marketplace. The Authority cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, disruption or damage to the Supplier’s data or computer system which may occur whilst using material derived from Marketplace. The Authority recommends that the Supplier recheck all downloaded material with their own virus check software.

## Payment can only be made following satisfactory delivery of pre-agreed certified products and deliverables.

## Before payment can be considered, each invoice must include a detailed elemental breakdown of work completed and the associated costs.

# CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

## The Parties shall meet at least every twelve (12) months to review the Services provided, the Performance Standards, the terms of this Agreement and any other matters with a view to deciding whether any improvements can be made and implemented during the Contract Term. The Authority may also wish to review the performance of the Supplier to assist the Authority in deciding on the exercise of its powers under Clause 22 (termination).

## The supplier’s performance will be assessed regularly by EPF.

## As a minimum, the supplier shall ensure the following KPI are met and promptly reported on throughout the duration of the contract.

## The Buyer will measure the quality of the Supplier’s delivery by:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| KPI/SLA | Service Area | Target | Other |
| 1 | All active Annual Benefit statements have entered the postal system | 31st August of each year | May be different for Non UK |
| 2 | All deferred AnnualBenefit Statementshave entered thepostal system | 30th June of each year  | May be Different forNon UK |
| 3 | All Septemberpayslips haveentered the system | 30th September of each year | Non UK TBC |
| 4 | All May payslips have entered the postal system | 31st May of each year | Non UK TBC |
| 5 | All P60 Payslips have entered the postal system | 30th April of each year | Non UK TBC |
| 6 | All PI Letters have entered the postal system | 31st March of each year | Non UK TBC |
| 7 | No fine/ warning of have been received by EPF in relation to the performance of this contract | Quarterly review  |  |

* 1. Further KPI will be agreed between the supplier and EPF at the onset of the contract and may vary during the contract to ensure performance against this statement of requirements is meaningfully assessed and tracked.
	2. Implementation/mobilisation:

If a new supplier is awarded, a period of six months from the start of the contract date will be used for testing purposes.

* 1. Intellectual Property Right:

Copyright, patent rights or other intellectual property rights and title in any material specifically created for the Authority as part of the delivery against these requirements shall vest in the Authority unless otherwise expressly agreed or approved by the Authority in writing.

* 1. Risk:

The Supplier will ensure that they have a documented strategy and defined approach within their organisation that will effectively manage risk(s) associated with this Agreement plus any risks associated with their organisation for the term of this Agreement. The Supplier will ensure that it identifies and documents key risks associated with this Agreement and its business. The Authority reserves the right to request a copy of any risk management documentation, including any risk register(s) held by the Supplier.

* 1. Insurance requirements:

Insurance and warranties

Employer’s (Compulsory) liability insurance - £5 million.

Public liability insurance - £10 million.

Professional indemnity insurance - £5 million.

Other insurances for works related requirements.

* 1. Data processing - Please refer to Joint Schedule 11 - (Data Processing)
	2. Indemnity

 TBC

* 1. Liability (current clause)

Please refer to Maximum Liability within Attachment 5 - Contract Order Form

* 1. Agreement length

The Agreement term for this agreement will be 2 years with an option to extend with an option to extend for a period of 24 months. The decision to extend the Agreement is at the sole discretion of Essex Pension Fund.

* 1. Transfer plan

The supplier shall submit a plan no later than 6 months before the contract expiry date. This plan needs to account for transfer of the Authority IP, data, any other assets and people if applicable.

* 1. Termination

With appropriate notice the Authority may terminate the Agreement on any of the following Authority Break Point Dates: Should the Supplier fail to meet the statutory deadlines for publication of the documents listed within section 10, the contract will cease from a convenient date and time that suits the Customer. Therefore, it is advised that the Supplier makes it clear with their Business Continuity Plans the turnaround times for recovery of services.