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**Expression of Interest and Market Engagement for Provision of “Omnichannel Contact Solution”, with interoperable functionality.**

**Introduction**

Together Housing Association Limited (THA) is a charitable housing association registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 and is the parent company to a number of subsidiaries. The main subsidiary being Together Housing Association (THA), which is where the social housing stock is owned and managed. THA manages over 38,000 properties, providing a comprehensive range of support services which affect over 80,000 people’s lives over a huge geographical area in the North of England. Employing approximately 1,500 staff, the Group’s corporate vision is to be ‘A groundbreaking Company, building homes, communities and futures. For future information please visit [www.togetherhousing.co.uk](http://www.togetherhousing.co.uk)

**Expression of Interest Purpose**

This Expression of Interest exercise is intended to:

* Engage with the market to understand the support capabilities for our requirement.
* Develop an understanding of suitably qualified and capable support providers for an Omnichannel Contact Solution.
* Develop a wider understanding of available Procurement Routes and Routes to Market.
* Develop an understanding of what information that market would require from Together Housing for any Future Procurement exercise.

**Requirements**

This is a call for Expressions of Interest (“EOI”) pertaining to an intended procurement exercise by THA. This is not a call for competition at this stage.

THA are currently reviewing and developing a requirement for the provision of an “Omnichannel Contact Solution”. As such, THA wishes to engage with the market, both to understand the scope of suitably qualified and capable providers for an interoperable and integrated solution within the market, and to help inform on its planned procurement strategy.

Together Housing understands an omnichannel contact centre solution as a solution through which a customer service function can utilise contact centre software to handle interactions with customers through multiple contact channels, in a way that allows customers to seamlessly switch back and forth across channels. These channels might include (but are not limited to) phone, video, web chat, email, text (SMS), WhatsApp and social media. A consistent experience across customer service channels and for the transaction history to be available at every touchpoint is required, and the intended purpose behind the planned procurement of an Omnichannel Solution.

At this stage THG is open to cloud, on premise or a hybrid option.

As part of the procurement and implementation of the solution, THA is also exploring the option of consolidating all interlinked and interoperable elements, that would support an Omnichannel solution, within a single procurement and contractual agreement. Such elements (together the overall “Omnichannel Solution Service Provision”) include:

* Inbound SIP telephony
* PCI-DSS SAQ-A compliant
* Non-GEO 0300 inbound platform
* Full Disaster Recovery
* Underlying agent telephony with Microsoft Teams consideration
* Multi platform access
* Microsoft Power Platform and Dataverse integration

Such provision is in support of the ongoing modernisation of THA’s digital product suite and will create efficiencies and better customer service using the best-in-class products available. THA digital strategy aims to empower all with best-in-class products that are proven to support our ambition. Our platform of choice is Microsoft power platform and its associated products. Integration into these products and existing core applications is required of the planned Omnichannel solution.

This Service will span across an estate of 1,700 users, supporting 2,300 Endpoint devices (inclusive of iOS and Windows), plus 900 Virtual Desktops and 4 primary physical sites. The service provides a single point of access for all customers who require THG support with issues on our services. Service operated 24/7: Staff operated 9am to 6pm and diverted Out of Hours 6pm – 8.59am. It is our ambition to, following the procurement exercise and award, work in partnership with a fully customer focused company, who will support THG to deliver high quality and cost-effective service to our customers.

Calls and communications to be received through the Omnichannel Solution include:

* Repairs maintenance
* Anti-social behaviour
* Rent and payments
* Lettings and new homes

Primarily, it is expected that the successful supplier shall provide a comprehensive solution and service provision – providing a 24/7 Managed Response Service and key performance and management information (available both in real time and through regular performance and management meetings) on the provision of service.

Whilst the procurement timelines and expected contract duration has yet to be determined, THA expects this procurement exercise to take place in or prior to August 2024, with the aim of full solution deployment on or prior to April 2025. The contract will run with a period of handover with current suppliers to ensure business continuity.

This Expression of Interest Exercise is thus intended to develop a further understanding of the Market Capability, market trends and innovations pertaining to the provision of Omnichannel Contact Solutions, and to help develop THA’s market insight and procurement requirements and specification(s).

Such Expression of Interest exercise is intended to inform Together Housing’s Planned Procurement Activity, and response in no way constitutes any form of agreement or assurance from Together Housing regarding the development of its procurement process or selection of Procurement “Route to market” for this provision*.*

**Expression of Interest – Timeline and Requirements**

* The timeline for responses of this Expression of Interest Exercise are as follows:

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| --- | --- |
| Issuing of the EOI | Tuesday the 13th of February 2024 |
| Deadline for Responses | 17:00 on Thursday the 14th of March 2024 |

Prospective organisations who wish to express their interest must ensure that they have completed and returned the document, with all questions completed and responded to with the document, in advance of the EOI Closure deadline.

All responses to this EOI should be sent to [THG.Procurement@togetherhousing.co.uk](mailto:THG.Procurement@togetherhousing.co.uk), with the email subject “THG Omnichannel EOI response”.

Responses received after this deadline may not be considered or accounted for by Together Housing.

Please be advised that any additional documentation is welcome to be submitted where appropriate or relevant, so long as supplied alongside this completed EOI.

Responses that, following Together Housing’s review, provide a reasonable or suitable response may lead to a request from THA for a further discussion or demonstration meeting, to be held virtually.

THA in no way provides any assurance that invitation or attendance at such meetings will result in a guarantee of invitation to tender, nor that a response that does not warrant invitation for further discussion by THA constitutes exclusion of that prospective organisation from future procurement activity (the form of such procurement activity to be determined at the point of publication of this EOI).

**Requirements of THA**

**Functional requirements**

* Telephony –
  + 1-2-1 calls
  + Hunt groups
  + queues/skills etc
  + call transfer and divert
  + Recording
  + IVR – Inc pre contact automation and checks
* Text messaging –
  + 1-2-1
  + Many-2-1
  + 1-2-many
* Video calling -
  + External and internal video calls
  + Annotated screen shots
  + Camera control
  + End-to-end encryption
  + Recording
  + Branding
  + Language translation
  + Meet now and scheduled meetings
* Work force management -
  + Forecasting
  + Adaptation data
  + Provide adherence data
* Social media -
  + Direct messaging and interaction management
  + Pre contact automation
* Web chat -
  + Pre contact automation
  + Interaction management
* RBAC permission structure inc full admin access
* Payments -
  + Maintain the agent interaction while the payment is taking place
* Mobile and desktop -
  + All functionality available
* Time management
* Quality control mechanism
  + Call evaluations
  + Evaluation grids
* Robust SLA’s and KPI’s, in relation to contact centre interactions and the platform, including a minimum platform uptime of 99.5%

**Non-Functional**

* Underlying telephony
* Inbound SIP
* Outbound SIP
* Non-geographical number platform and routing
* PCI DSS – SAQ Type A
* Business continuity model and disaster recovery processes
* Best in class bolt on solutions
* All contracts to be concurrent in term, whether consolidated or segmented
* Cyber essentials plus
* Defined API framework
* ISO27001 or SOC 2 Type 1 accreditation
* All data stored within the EU, preferably UK
* The system must be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have an expected availability greater than 99.5% (i.e., unavailable less than 48 hours a year
* Flexible licensing arrangement to satisfy current and future needs
* Proactive and responsive contract management, including:
  + Access to Account Manager
  + Access to Technical Manger
  + Access to Development Team
  + Access to Product Testing & Development
* Regular face to face (Virtual) meetings
* Service review meetings and Partnership Working

**Together Housing Omnichannel Contact Centre Solution EOI – Questions for Response**

Please ensure that you have responded to all questions included within the section below as part of your response to this Expression of Interest exercise.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 1 | Based on the current specification, do you believe that the market would provide a suitably capable response to Together Housing’s requirements, if and when a procurement exercise was conducted? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 2 | Does the current specification provide a suitable level of detail and clarity on our requirements, and what information would you expect to be included that is currently absent or would benefit from further development? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 3 | What are the tangible benefits of seeking to procure our requirements through a single contract? Does this offer a beneficial commercial route, compared to procuring multiple concurrent agreements?  Are there tangible benefits (whether commercial or operational) in segmenting these requirements (for example a call solution, integrated with a webchat/social media solution)? |
| Answer |  |

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| --- | --- |
| Question 4 | How long is a standard implementation and deployment period for this type of service? (Both overall and for each aspect) |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 5 | What market trends and developments within omnichannel contact solutions should Together Housing be aware of as we seek to develop this procurement exercise (for example – new trends and technologies, developments in efficiencies, strategic partnerships or acquisitions). |
| Answer |  |

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| --- | --- |
| Question 6 | What should THG expect in regard to costs and commercial proposals (both for a consolidated agreement and for segmented requirements) if undertaking a procurement exercise for this requirement? (please note this is indicative only, and does not form any obligation on THG or your organisation in the event of a procurement exercise). |
| Answer |  |

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| --- | --- |
| Question 7 | What resource and support would you expect to require from THG for the delivery and implementation of such a service. |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 8 | Is there any information missing, insufficiently defined, or that would benefit from further elaboration, included within the current version of Together Housing’s specification? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 9 | What public sector procurement frameworks is your organisation registered under, if any? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 10 | Is your proposed (or hypothetically proposed) solution interoperable with any secondary functionality, such as that any inbound/outbound SIP provision? Or are specific (for example SIP) products required (if not preferred)? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 11 | Can you describe industry standards certification and quality assurance methodology that would be related and/or applicable to a procurement of this nature, and the business continuity and disaster recovery procedures and methodologies that exist within the market for services of this nature? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 12 | Based on THA’s specification and information provided within this EOI, is an omnichannel contact solution most suited to our requirements? Or would an alternative provision or service design be potentially more suitable? Are there alternative solution types that offer greater or wider benefits in this regard? |
| Answer |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Question 13 | Is there any other information that your organisation wishes to make Together Housing aware of in relation to this specification and EOI exercise? |
| Answer |  |