**What Works Centre for Children’s Social Care – Procurement FAQs**

*Can you clarify what is meant by developing and testing the WWC ‘internally’?*

The initial WWC model should be developed internally within the incubator – i.e. within the contracted entity – no new legal entity can be formed as a result.

*Could you clarify the expected division of roles in sector engagement between the incubator and research partner?*

The incubator and research partner will be expected to work together to develop a sector engagement strategy. The precise breakdown of responsibilities for sector engagement is therefore expected to be agreed between the two once they are in place. At selection stage, we are looking for ideas and proposals from bidders as to potential avenues for engagement – these can include activities that may be carried out in partnership with the incubator. These activities should include both specific dissemination tools for research, and proposals to develop a wider culture of learning in the sector.

*What is the envisaged relationship between the WWC and the National Assessment and Accreditation System?*

It is our expectation that the successful incubator and research partner bidders will support the development of these relationships.

*Do you expect large scale RCTs/evaluations to be completed within the contract period up to 2020?*

The research partner will be expected to identify opportunities for RCTs alongside other research and trial methodologies. These could be conducted by the research partner, or commissioned depending on the scope, scale and timeframe. Bidders should take into account both shorter and longer term priorities for building the evidence base, which should focus on the needs of frontline practitioners. Studies would not necessarily be expected to be complete within the timeframe of the contract.

*Would the Department support the inclusion of non-RCT research?*

Bidders should set out opportunities for high quality research and trial methodologies that they deem appropriate. It is not expected that all of the research will be conducted through RCTs.

*Is there a deadline for submitting queries during the procurement process?*

Yes, all queries should be submitted by cop 24th May. We will aim to respond to all queries by 31st May.

*Is there any updated thinking on timelines for the selection process, given purdah and the election?*

The timings set out in the ITTs are indicative and subject to the views of new Ministers. We will keep bidders informed of any changes.

*What role does the Department envisage having in the development of the What Works Centre?*

The What Works Centre will be independent of government and directed by the needs of frontline practitioners. The incubation period will test and trial the initial model, including its distance from government. The Department expects to feed into the activities of both the incubator and the research partner via its Contract Management relationship and will agree the details of this with the successful bidders.

*Would the Department consider a charging model for dissemination activities?*

It is expected that online resources created by the WWC will be accessible free of charge to users. Options for charging for a small number of dissemination activities may be considered, but should be developed with the priority in mind for a wide-reaching dissemination and engagement strategy.

*Are there any constraints on what budgets can be spent on?*

Bidders should set out their estimated costs in their proposals. Final budgets will be subject to review at award stage.

*Where should the cost matrix be set out and does it have to fit within the 500 word limit of question 4?*

The cost matrix/breakdown only needs to be set out once, and does not count towards the 500 words in question 4.

*Does the Department expect to pay VAT on the contracts?*

The total budgets outlined include VAT. It is the responsibility of providers to determine whether VAT is payable and to factor in costs accordingly.

*Who will own intellectual property rights?*

This is currently under consideration and the successful bidders will be advised at award stage.

*Can one provider be a partner/subcontractor in both of the successful bids?*

The lead provider for the research partner contract must be different to the lead provider for the incubator contract – if a proposed lead provider has submitted bids for both, they will need to withdraw their research partner bid if they are successful for the incubator contract. Subcontractors/partners can be part of the successful bids for both contracts. Lead providers will be responsible for ensuring that their subcontractors/partners have capacity to deliver.

*Would the successful WWC incubator or research partner be precluded from bidding for other DfE programmes (and vice versa), including the Innovation Programme; evaluation contracts within the Innovation Programme; support to the Partners in Practice; or any other programme of social work reform?*

The successful WWC incubator and research partner will not be precluded from bidding for future evaluation or delivery partner contracts for the Innovation Programme or Partners in Practice, although they would be required to demonstrate sufficient capacity. The incubator and research partner providers would not be able to bid to run Innovation Programme projects if any future funding were announced, given Departmental ambitions for the WWC to potentially play a strategic role in the Innovation Programme in the future.

*What will be the relationship between the What Works Centre and the Innovation Programme?*

The Department has ambitions for the WWC to potentially play a strategic role in the Innovation Programme in the future. This relationship will be determined once the incubator and research contracts are awarded.

*What will be the relationship between the What Works Centre and other research centres?*

The WWC will be expected to build relationships with other research centres as part of the development of a wider learning infrastructure in children’s social care.

*How will the Department handle potential conflicts of interest in the research partner selection process if the successful incubator bidder is involved in research partner bids?*

The successful incubator bidder’s involvement in the research partner selection process will be determined once the incubator contract has been awarded. The Department would like the successful incubator bidder/s to be involved in the selection process for the research partner if possible. The priority, however, will be to ensure that the selection process is undertaken transparently and that no individual bidders are given undue favours.

*Should I include an organogram? Should this be included within the wordcount?*

Bidders can provide an organogram. This can be provided in addition to the wordcount.

*Can a risk register be attached as an appendix?*

A risk register can be used to present part of the response to Qu4 on risks and mitigation, as long as it is included in the word count. Alternatively, a risk register can be attached as an appendix in addition to the word count, but it won’t be scored.

*Does cyber essentials accreditation apply to just the lead contractor or all bid partners?*

The lead provider bidding for this agreement must be able to certify that they meet the cyber essential scheme, if partner/subtiers are handling personal data the lead bidder will need to ensure that all their subtiers comply with the scheme.

*Should responses to Document 2 Section 8 be provided within the table in the ITT, or as a separate document.*

Section 8 responses should be provided as a separate document.

*Do subcontractors need to complete the Standard Selection Questionnaire?*

All participants (including sub-contractors) should complete Part 1 & 2. Part 3 responses need only be completed by the lead organisation.

*Page 8, paragraph 44 sets out Section 2 Management Summary as part of the tender – what are the expectations for this section?*

The Management Summary is essentially the covering letter for the proposal, which should briefly express your interest, experience and suitability. There is no word limit on this per se.

*What references do you require?*

Bidders’ response to references needs to be set out against the table – Section 6, Page 32.

*Should bidders include a plan of work or timetable as an appendix to their tender?*

Bidders can include a plan of work if they wish, but it won’t be scored in the selection process.

*Is there a minimum turnover required for bidders?*

We don’t request a minimum turnover per se, however, we will run a financial evaluation of shortlisted bidders to highlight if there any concerns with a bidder’s ability to meet their financial obligations during the course of the contract and that the bidder has a good financial standing.

*With regards to Attachment 1, Terms and Conditions, please could you advise which notice period would be used or if this would be determined at contract award stage?*

The notice period will be determined at contract award stage.

*Is there scope to negotiate the terms and conditions of the contract with the successful bidder?*

Yes, please mark up the appropriate clauses that you wish to qualify as part of the tender submission, these will be reviewed prior to award.

*Is the section on steel relevant to this tender?*

Please disregard this clause.

*In Document 4, Part 3, Suppliers Past Performance, are questions 8.05-8.09 relevant to this tender, as the contract value is below £20m?*

No, please disregard these clauses.